

June 13th – Sermon Notes

James 1:26, To “bridle” our tongue is not just biting our tongue those are two different things. Bridling it means making it go where we want it to go, not where it wants to go. Like a horse, you want to harness his power for good. So it is with our tongues. We want to harness them for good.

1. Take the way you speak to each other seriously.

I believe one of the biggest hindrances to effective communication in our families is not lack of knowledge but not taking seriously what we already know. I believe if we applied a fraction of the knowledge we’ve gained about communication from sermons, seminars, books, support groups, counseling we would be surprised by the difference it makes.

Why take it seriously? Because the Scriptures are filled with references to our speech. For example, Proverbs 16:21 (NASB77) The wise in heart will be called discerning, And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.

Even if your relationship is great. It can be better. And it can get worse. Bad habits create an unhealthy culture. Good habits create a healthy culture. Taking the way we communicate seriously is a key determinant in which direction our relationships will move.

2. Consciously practice the way you speak.

Without practice, don’t expect progress. Expect a continuation of bad habits. If you get it wrong, don’t get down on yourself and give up. Go back and do it right. That’s practicing.

You haven’t failed until you give up.

What are we practicing?

A. Don’t vent recklessly. Proverbs 12:18 (NIV) Reckless words pierce like a sword... There isn’t a single thing we need to say spontaneously that cannot be said after thought and prayer. And said better and more effectively.

B. Don’t consent and resent. You go along with some situation or condition but you never say a word about not liking it or disagreeing with it. And it is like corrosion underneath its eating away at the integrity of the relationship until one day it shows up.

[Parenthetically] There are no guarantees in this life. What this message and this series is about is healthy maintenance. Not smoking doesn’t guarantee you will live to be 100. But it at least addresses a major reason many won’t. Healthy communication doesn’t guarantee that a marriage will last but it addresses a major reason why many don’t.

C. Stay away from “You always” and “You never.” Why? Because it’s always wrong and it’s never true.

D. Get help. People boast about having a fitness coach. A financial coach. A nutrition coach. Even a life coach, How about a communication coach. When do we need to get help, think of a car stuck in the mud spinning its tires. When rocking and pushing won’t work. It’s time to call a tow truck.

3. Pray about your speech regularly.

What we talked about last week, “Come to Me.” If there is one area that last week's message applies to, this is it. It is good to spend some time with the Lord reviewing our speech. Not just what we said, but what was behind what we said.

Matthew 12:34 tells us “The mouth speaks from that which fills the heart.” For us, as believers that is not an indictment it’s an invitation to share with the Lord what’s going on in there.

4. Celebrate your progress thankfully.

God is at work in you. Thank Him for His work in this area.

Be your most honest critic and biggest fan.

- Critic is not a judge. A judge hurls shame: How could you say such a stupid thing? The kind of critic I’m talking about asks yourself, “How could you have said that differently? Or “Was it necessary to say that at all?” “Do you think that improved your relationship?”
- And be your biggest cheerleader. You are apologizing to them - and sincerely so – but you are apologizing for the Lord, and for yourself. You’re growing. So you celebrate before the Lord and with the Lord.
- “High five” the Lord in your heart.
- Celebrate progress even if it’s small. We often underestimate the "small" adjustments we can make in our lives, and yet the slightest turn of a screw is often the difference between whether an engine sputters or roars.