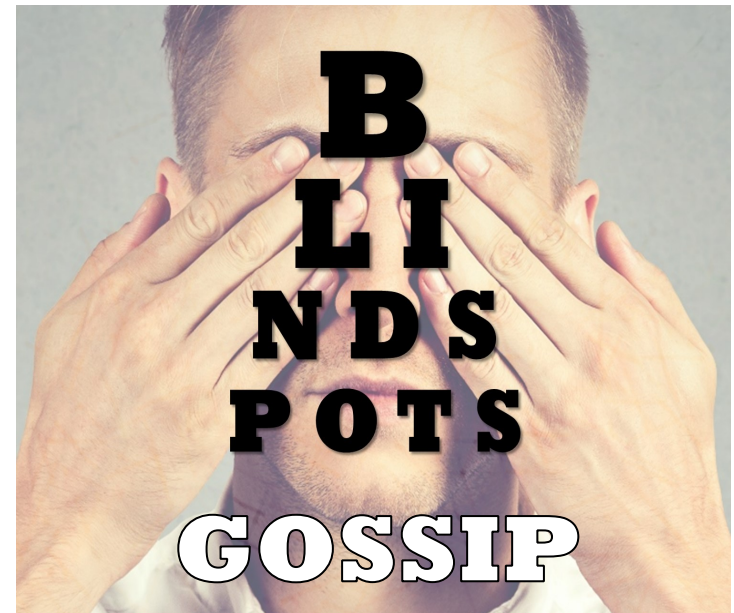


THE FOLLOW UP

*Be sure to get these **FOUR** devos and the Quiet Time Challenge done*



Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. ~ Proverbs 18:21

DEVO #1—The Power of the Tongue

READ: James 3:1-12

Studies show that children who deal with an overabundance of negative words are more at risk to suffer from a host of behavioral and emotional issues. In regards to marriage, a University of Denver study tracked couples for their first ten years of marriage and found that couples that divorced within that ten year period used two to five times as many negative words with each other than those couples that stayed married.

Make no mistake; words are powerful. Words make a difference in the lives of children, in marriages, in friendships, and in churches—for good or for bad.

1. What have been some negative experiences you have had with the power of words?
2. How have you been blessed and encouraged through the power of words?
3. Looking again at verses 5 and 6, why do you think James describes the tongue so graphically?
4. What are you doing to tame your tongue?

PRAYER

- ~Thank God for those in your life who bless and encourage you through their words
- ~Confess to God, if necessary, not doing a good job of taming your tongue
- ~Ask God to help you bless and encourage others with your words

ADDITIONAL NOTE SPACE

POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Talk to your friends and ask for an honest assessment of your words
- ◆ Talk to your family and ask for an honest assessment of your words
- ◆ Take what you have learned and make any changes necessary
- ◆ Commit to saying at least FIVE positive things to people each day

QUIET TIME CHALLENGE

NOTE:

The *Quiet Time Challenge* is NOT a devotional in itself. It is designed for you to do separately apart from your daily devotional time.

HOW IT WORKS:

Find a quiet place with no distractions. Make this between just you and God. Clear your mind then read the Bible verse(s). After doing so, work through the questions. At the end, spend five to ten minutes in "listening mode." Just ask God to speak to you and then be quiet and seek to hear His voice.

PART 1 — READ: Proverbs 10:11

PART 2 — QUESTIONS

Explain this verse in your own words:

Are you building up with your words or tearing down?

PART 3 — LISTEN

Ask God to examine your heart. Ask the Lord to show you where your words have not pleased Him. Then seek to hear God's voice speak to your soul. (Feel free to jot down anything you hear.)

DEVO #2 — Gritty Gossip

READ: Proverbs 18:19-21; 26:18-28

Four preachers met for a friendly gathering. During the conversation one preacher said, "Our people come to us and pour out their hearts, confess certain sins and needs. Let's do the same. Confession is good for the soul." All agreed. One confessed he actually watched *Deadpool* and *Deadpool 2*. The second confessed to smoking cigars and the third confessed to gambling a bit. When it came to the fourth one, he quickly announced, "My secret vice is gossiping, and I can't hardly wait to get out of here!"

Many jokes have been made about gossip. In the end though, gossip is no laughing matter.

1. What has been your experience with gossip? Did you find it to be a laughing matter?
2. Looking again at the verses for today, what are some of the negative effects of wrong words and gossip?
3. Why do you think gossip is such an enticing thing for many people?
4. What can you do to protect yourself and others from being harmed by gossip?

PRAYER

- ~Thank God for those around you who are examples of how to bless with words
- ~Confess to God, if necessary, participating in gossip.
- ~Ask God to help you not to gossip or spread rumors
- ~Ask God to help our church NOT be a church that is full of gossip, innuendo, and rumors

DEVO #3 — Are You a Scandal Monger?

READ: Romans 1:28-32; 2 Corinthians 12:19-21

The word for gossip in the New Testament literally means to "whisper lies" or to "slander in secret." Meanwhile, if you think the New Testament puts a bad spin on gossip, the Old Testament Hebrew word for gossip literally means "scandal monger" or "merchant of tales."

Regardless of the spin we may try to put on gossip, it is sin pure and simple. In fact, as we have seen this week, it is a sin that can separate friends, ruin families, and split a church. This is why "gossip" is listed with all the seemingly "worse sins" in Romans and 2 Corinthians.

1. What things does Paul put alongside gossip in these two Scripture passages?
2. Do you believe gossip is just as bad as these other sins? Why or why not?
3. Had you ever thought of a gossip as being a "secret slanderer" or "scandal monger" before? What do you think about that now?
4. What do you think Paul was trying to impress upon the two churches with these lists?

PRAYER

- ~Thank God for the clarity of His Word and truth
- ~Confess to God, if necessary, not thinking gossip is as bad as it actually is
- ~Ask God to show you the power of words
- ~Ask God to help you be a person who is always blessing and encouraging with your words

DEVO #4 — The Power of Encouragement

READ: Ephesians 4:21-5:14

In the summer of 2017, a high school basketball star, named Luke, was in a serious car accident that left him in a coma for several days. When he awoke, a long rehabilitation process lay ahead. Like most patients with injuries, Luke balked at doing the slow, tedious work that was required to get him back to normal, but Luke's basketball coach at the Christian school he attended had an idea. He told his player that he would reserve a spot on the varsity for him -- if he would cooperate with his therapist and show progress in the tasks he was asked to do. Meanwhile, Luke's parents and fellow teammates spent a lot of time with him, encouraging him to keep going through the long hours of therapy.

Amazingly, within a five months, Luke was riding off the basketball court on his teammates' shoulders. He had made six straight free throws to clinch a double-overtime victory. It was a remarkable testimony to the power of encouragement.

1. How have you been encouraged by the words of others?
2. How often do you make it a point to encourage and bless others with your spoken words or with written words?
3. What do verses 4:29-32 and 5:4 say about the words you should be using?
4. How are you doing at this?

PRAYER

- ~Thank Jesus for the power of encouraging words
- ~Confess to God, if necessary, not purposefully encouraging others
- ~Ask God to use you to encourage and bless others