



The Truth About Words

Focus The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:21)

Open What type of music do you like to listen to?

Read In Matthew 12:33–37, Jesus spoke to the Pharisees about words. He used an analogy to explain how our hearts are like trees that produce fruit that is either good or bad. The fruit of our heart is our words, and our words reveal what is in our hearts.

The truth is that words cost us something. While we can be thankful we live in a country where we have the right to freedom of speech, we shouldn't confuse that freedom with the lie that words are free. We're accountable to God for every word we speak (Matthew 12:36–37). If we speak words that hurt someone, it will cost us something in that relationship. The good news is that our words can also be an investment in someone that builds them up instead of tearing them down.

Another truth is that words hurt. Sometimes we disguise our hurtful words by saying we're only joking, but it still hurts. There is some truth in what we say because our mouths speak from what is in our hearts (Proverbs 26:18–19).

When evil words come out of our mouths, it's an opportunity to examine our hearts. We can confess to God that our hearts need cleansing. We can ask Him to show us what is at the root of our words and how we should deal with it. We can repent and ask forgiveness. The good news is that forgiveness heals the hurtful words we speak *and* the hurtful words spoken to us. Words hurt, but they can also heal.

It's also true that words last. They do not evaporate. Our hurtful words can add to the wounds a person already has and stay with them a long time. In a marriage, words said in arguments can eventually destroy the relationship. The good news is that good words also last—especially our prayers. Our prayers stand before God in heaven, sometimes for years, until He answers them at His perfect time (2 Timothy 1:3, 5).

Talk

1. Which of the three truths about words is speaking to you right now? Words **cost**, words **hurt** or words **last**? Why?
2. Do you know someone who is good at “investing” in others with their words? How do they build others up?
3. Read Psalm 141:3. We need God's help to be able to control our tongues. What role does the Holy Spirit play in teaching us this?
4. Pastor Robert spoke in his sermon about the destructiveness of sarcasm. Have you ever fallen into the habit of communicating with sarcasm? What are some keys to overcoming this habit?
5. Our prayers are good words that last beyond our lifetime. Is there someone for whom you have been praying a really long time? Would you like for the group to pray with you for that person? Spend some time as a group in prayer for the people mentioned.

Live

Memorize Psalm 19:14. Daily ask God to make your words and your heart pleasing to Him.

Pray

Lord, I thank You that You gave us words as a tool to build each other up. I praise You, Father, that You forgive us and give us a brand new start when we sin with our words. Please help me, Lord, to heal others with my words and to be faithful to pray for the people in my life. Psalm 19:14