

Women's Bible Study
1 Peter 4:11a, March 29th, 2023
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1Peter 4:11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Previously, in Chapter 4, Peter had reminded his brothers and sisters in Christ to live for the will of God, using Christ as their example. Last time we were in this section of scripture, we read verses 8-10. Peter gave some direct instructions in these verses –

Keep fervent in your love for one another (v.8),

Be hospitable to one another (v.9), and

Serve one another using the gifts God has given (v.10).

Peter had finished with the command to serve one another with whatever gifts they had. Now, he specifically addresses our speech and ministry to others.

Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God.

Speaking includes talking, teaching, and preaching; basically anytime you open your mouth. Most commentaries agree this instruction is more specifically directed towards teachers and preachers; however this does not mean if you are not teaching, you are off the hook with your speech! But if you do teach there is an even greater responsibility to be careful to represent the Word correctly. Again, this does not give the freedom to be careless with God's holy Word if you are not in a position to teach.

Think of your own speech. According to several sources, women speak an average of 16,000 to over 20,000 words per day, in some cases up to 25,000! Consider how many of your words are spoken from a heart which represents Christ. Our every utterance does not need to be a quote from the Bible, but it does mean that we are mindful to assess our words; that they encourage others in Truth. Kind and careful words can bless, while careless words are a discouragement.

Colossians 4:2-6 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, **so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ**, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. **Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt**, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Grace-filled speech results from God's influence upon our heart. It is a reflection of Him working in our lives. The book of Colossians was written by Paul to the church towards the end of his first imprisonment in Rome. Prayer was instrumental in his ministry; his own and that of others. Notice his prayer was not for his own benefit but for the purpose of sharing Truth. He asked that his words be filled with the mystery of Christ,

and that his words would be sensitive to those who would hear. He reminded the church to use wisdom in how they responded to each person.

Titus 2:1-8 But as for you, **speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine**. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. **Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good**, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, **so that the word of God will not be dishonored**. Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, **sound in speech which is beyond reproach**, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

The book of Titus was written by Paul to Titus who was most likely converted to Christianity by Paul's ministry. These were Paul's instructions to Titus and the church. Look at the emphasis placed on speech. Make sure your words represent truth from the Bible; not being a slanderer but teaching what is right. We can only speak what we know and understand. It is so important for each believer to search God's word for direction.

Think! Does your understanding come from God's holy word? Do your lips speak of His truths? Is He honored by your speech?

Psalm 34:13 **Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.**

David wrote these words when he had fled from Saul's persecution to Gath. King Achish's servants recognized David to be the one who killed Goliath, so David acted like he was insane to protect himself. Then David escaped to the cave of Adullam in Palestine. All the while, throughout his fleeing for safety, the Psalmist was still more concerned with honoring God. He knew God was his protection, and living in righteousness was his goal. In Psalm 34:13, he addresses the area of speech – keep your speech from evil, from mischief, from deceit.

Recognize, the rules do not change dependent on the circumstances. It is easy to use kind and encouraging words when someone is pleasant toward you. **What happens when someone is inconsiderate or just mean with their words? Do you then revert to unprofitable communication?**

Consider. Do you need to share everything? Do your words seek to damage another? What is the result when you are not careful with your words? Others are hurt, slandered, injured, and discouraged. Conveying someone else's faults or shortcomings to another person, only seeks to pull down another while making yourself look better. Psalm 34:13 says *keep your lips from speaking deceit*; add to this flattery and false promises. Say what you mean with careful restraint, be certain your words are true and necessary. Always have the goal of encouraging another in holiness. We need to hold our tongues! There is a saying, 'bite your tongue'. This is an idiom which means to stop yourself from saying something that might upset somebody or cause an argument.

If your relationship with God is right, your speech will be righteous.

In other words, if you are being conformed to the image of His Son through Jesus' death and resurrection, desiring to be used by Him, seeking to carefully follow His commands, then your words will be characterized by His holiness.

“Keep thy tongue from evil. *Guard with careful diligence that dangerous member, the tongue, lest it utter evil, for that evil will recoil upon thee, and mar the enjoyment of thy life. Men cannot spit forth poison without feeling some of the venom burning their own flesh.* **And thy lips from speaking guile.** *Deceit must be very earnestly avoided by the man who desires happiness. A crafty schemer lives like a spy in the enemy's camp, in constant fear of exposure and execution. Clean and honest conversation, by keeping the conscience at ease, promotes happiness, but lying and wicked talk stuffs our pillow with thorns, and makes life a constant whirl of fear and shame”, Treasury of David.*

Don't miss the illustration above. Try stuffing your pillow at night with thorns and see how restful your sleep may be!

Matthew 12:35-37 "The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Careless words are those that are useless, idle, and have no real purpose. They are based on trivial matters, and often unwarranted. Careless words lack a sense of restraint and responsibility.

James 1:19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;

We are to be ready to listen and understand – we cannot be good listeners if we are always interrupting; we are to be slow to speak – this is the opposite of being quick to respond; it *does* mean taking the time to ponder what is being shared and then being careful to base your reply on Truth. We are to be slow to judge – not quick in assessing wrong-doing or fast in our reaction towards another, instead we are to be ‘dull’ or soft, not responding from emotions, but rather from gentleness. *If only we would seek to see others through the eyes of Jesus!*

James 3:5-6 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.

This is a strong warning! Consider how quickly forest fires spread and the destruction left behind. Our speech can spread information to others which can either bless or destroy. We need to be willing to ask ourselves what our purpose is, in sharing information about another person or circumstance. **Are we spreading something that will hurt someone's character? Are we conveying thoughts about a situation that have no merit or fact? Are you careful with the source of your information?** It is not always necessary or profitable to share how others may have hurt or injured you.

1Peter 2:1-3 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

According to the verse above, where *should* our attention be given?

***Speaking the utterances of God.* What is the content of your speech? Are your words grounded in God's Holy Scripture? Does your speech represent God? It may be prudent to consider the message you are trying to get across when you open your mouth. Again, this is not only for those who might be preaching or teaching, but also for all those who claim to follow Jesus. Our words matter! *Think!* Would you speak the same if *everyone* were listening? Would your words change if God were standing next to you? HE IS.**