



Helping people encounter God in His Word



For use on Sunday, October 19, 2003

Introduction

30

*Core Competencies
of a follower
of Christ*

10 Core Beliefs

TRINITY
SALVATION BY GRACE
AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE
PERSONAL GOD
IDENTITY IN CHRIST
CHURCH
HUMANITY
COMPASSION
ETERNITY
STEWARDSHIP

10 Core Practices

WORSHIP
PRAYER
BIBLE STUDY
SINGLE-MINDEDNESS
BIBLICAL COMMUNITY
SPIRITUAL GIFTS
GIVING AWAY MY TIME
GIVING AWAY MY MONEY
GIVING AWAY MY FAITH
GIVING AWAY MY LIFE

10 Core Virtues

LOVE
JOY
PEACE
PATIENCE
KINDNESS/GOODNESS
FAITHFULNESS
GENTLENESS
SELF-CONTROL
HOPE
HUMILITY

This week's Core Competency:

Gentleness

*I am thoughtful,
considerate and calm in
dealing with others.*

Reality Check: When Life Requires a Balance

Shock Talk . . . When Words are Weapons

Joyce cordially said, "Hello," while she set her purse down on the counter. Frank shot her an angry glance and said accusatively, "You went shopping didn't you?" Joyce, hearing Frank's stern voice, said defensively, "Just window shopping this time." Frank erupted, "I just got the credit card bill and noticed that you bought \$300 of clothes! You know we can't afford that! Why did you defy me after we talked about this? You are so irresponsible when it comes to money! How could you buy the clothes when you know that we have \$4500 on the credit card from your other purchases!?" "Don't you raise your voice at me!" Joyce said in anger at her husband's outburst. "I'll yell at you when you deserve it, woman! Are you deliberately trying to destroy this family?" yelled Frank. "Enough, Frank! I will not have you talk to me this way! Either you get in control or I'm walking out that door and taking a long drive," said Joyce threateningly as she grabbed for her purse. Frank jumped up and ripped the purse out of her hands and took her wallet out of the purse. As he opened her wallet he deliberately threw the credit cards onto the kitchen counter top and yelled, "Fine take a drive! But make sure you leave the credit cards!" Joyce grabbed her purse and wallet back and began crying as she ran to the garage. She said as she went out the door, "I can't believe you did that! You are so disrespectful and mean." She slammed the door with such force the windows rattled. "That woman is going to be the death of me," muttered Frank angrily under his breath as the telephone rang. The phone's ringing irritated Frank's anger even more and he yelled at the phone as he went to pick it up, "What do you want!? If you're a telemarketer, boy, are you going to get an earful!" Frank picked up the phone and gruffly said, "What!" The voice on the other end said, "Uh, is this the Swofford home? Frank?" "Who is this?" Frank said in a demanding and unpleasant tone. "This is Pastor Wenton. Did I call at a bad time?" asked Pastor Wenton. "No. No, Pastor Wenton, not at all. Sorry for my gruff voice when I first answered. It has been a bad day so far," said Frank changing quickly to an upbeat and positive tone. "What can I do for you, Pastor?" "Sorry to hear about your day. Is everything alright?" asked Pastor Wenton. "No, no major problem just a slight disagreement between the Missus and me. You know how it goes," laughed Frank uncomfortably. "Yes, we all have disagreements unfortunately. Since everything is okay, I wondered if you could bring the architect designs with you for our sanctuary upgrade meeting tonight," responded Pastor Wenton. "Sure, I can do that," said Frank sheepishly. "Okay, we'll see you then. And tell Joyce 'hello' for me will you? She's a great lady," asserted Pastor Wenton. "Yeah, she sure is," said Frank feeling guilty, "I'll let her know. Goodbye, Pastor."

Observation

What do you see?

Ephesians 4:29-32

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

James 3:1-12 *Taming the Tongue*

¹Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ²We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. ³When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. ⁷All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, ⁸but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹²My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Record your first impressions from what you read.

Interact with the passages

- In James highlight the words “likewise” and “tongue.” Draw arrows to what the tongue does.
- Underline James 3:10. Put a square around “this should not be.”
- In the Ephesians 4 passage circle all the commands.
- In Ephesians highlight “is helpful for building others up” and “may benefit those who listen.”
- Underline in Ephesians all the things one is to “get rid of.” Define each term.
- From the Matthew passage draw a picture of the good man bringing good out of his mouth and the evil man bringing evil out of his mouth.
- Highlight Matt. 12:36. Circle the word “careless” and draw an arrow from it to “judgment.”

Interpretation

What does it mean?

Constraining the tongue is impossible for humans to do on their own; but believers, when allowing God's Spirit to control them, can resist the evil desire to hurt others with their words when things go awry.

Insights

- In James 3:1 “should presume to be” is a command.
- “You know” is a perfect participle meaning knowledge from past continued into the present. When the participle is tied to “judged more strictly,” it means the knowledge a teacher amassed must be applied in their own life in greater detail.

Matthew 12:33-37

³³"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

- "Stumble" in James 3:2 is a present verb meaning it occurs time and time again.
- "Can" in James 3:8 is a present verb meaning "is able," there is no person who can tame their own tongue currently.
- The "this should not be" is also in Greek "it is not necessary" meaning the necessity expressed by this word signifies the a need resulting from time or from the fitness of things.
- The subjunctive verb in Eph. 4:29 "may benefit" shows purpose for giving grace to others.
- The command to "not grieve" the Spirit emphasizes that the Spirit who makes people speak the truth is put to shame when saints lie to one another or use cursing language.
- In Matthew 12:33 the "make" is a command.
- In v. 34 the "speaks" is a present verb meaning what is currently in the heart is spoken.
- "Brings" in v. 35 in Greek is "throws out or leads out."
- In v. 38 the future passive verbs "acquitted" and "condemned" indicate God is the one who does these action.

Answering Questions of Interpretation

1. James begins in v. 1 talking about teachers, including him, who teach. Do all the 'we' statements and 'brothers' refer only to the teachers he is identifying with or does it pertain to all believers? Can we prove the transition from teachers to all? How?
2. How is the tongue set on fire from 'hell'? "Hell" in Greek was the Jerusalem city dump known as Gehenna. How does this imagery make the phrase understandable? What similarities can be derived from a dump and the misuse of the tongue that makes this understandable?
3. How does one do and not do the things prescribed in Ephesians 4? If one cannot control the tongue like James mentions, can one even speak wholesome and kind words to others consistently? Why or why not? And if so, how?
4. How does one obey Jesus' command to make a tree "good"? How does one go about bearing good fruit from the good stored in them? Likewise how does bad fruit come forth from stored evil? What implication does this passage make regarding judgment for the fruit we bear? How should we understand this in view of eternity?

Application

What do I do?

Have I recently cursed someone? When? What was the circumstance? Why did you react the way you did? What does that tell you about the state of your heart at that time? How did you resolve the conflicting action with your state of being "like Christ"? If you did not resolve the issue, come before God and ask for forgiveness, and if possible contact the person you cursed and ask for forgiveness.

How can you allow the Spirit to help you not react with evil passions when you are wronged? In the heat of confrontation many lose control of their tongue and sometimes even actions. How can you keep your passions from tearing apart another person during conflict? How can you exemplify restraint and gentleness in speech rather than viciousness and vileness?

Correlation

How do we work this into our Home Group, Family, youth group, ministry, class, small group?

Compliment

“I have a word for you to describe that . . .”

Cool
Awesome
Neat
Beautiful
Wonderful

Insult

“I have a word for you to describe that . . .”

Ugly
Weird
Gross
Childish
Boring



Core Competency: Gentleness

Creed: I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Commentary: When we encounter challenges and conflicts we must deal with the battle of the calm logic of the evidence and the emotionally charged issues accompanying the challenge. But when we look at our changing responses to difficult people and situations, both good and bad, we can feel like we are someone with a split personality and in need of some serious help. Fortunately, we do have help to keep us balanced as we encounter others and face challenges in life.

Believers in Christ have the only real means of obtaining genuine gentleness and calmness. The Holy Spirit grants a believer peace and gentleness as fruit of His presence. Only when someone is walking in step with the Spirit can they exhibit truly balanced behavior. The Spirit gives us His character so we will not react in either an overly emotional and irrational manner or in a cold and aloof manner.

Many times we do not allow ourselves to walk in step with the Spirit and struggle in our behavior and approach to difficult situations and people. But the Spirit is always there willing to help us display peace and gentleness. Only our depending upon Him more and more will make us steadier and less apt to change like the wind when facing difficult people and situations.

Question: Tell of a time that you did not speak kindly to a person who made you upset. What was the other person’s response? What do you think triggered you to respond the way you did? Tell of a time that you sensed the Spirit helped you be gentle when someone made you upset. What was the other person’s response since you handled them gently? How can you continually walk with the Spirit so as to display the Fruit of the Spirit?

Kid’s Corner – I Have A Word for You (Get 4 items to have the kids describe, lists found on side panel)

Say: I need two volunteers. Your name is “Compliment,” and your name is “Insult.” Compliment, I will show you something and you will say, “I have a word for you to describe that” and then read 1 word from the list I gave you. Insult when I show you the same item you will say, “I have a word for you to describe that” then read 1 word from your list.

Do: Show the kids the 4 items and let them say 4 words on the list. The last thing you will have the kids describe will be “YOURSELF.” You need to act happy and thankful to Compliment when they give you a compliment & cry when Insult insults you.

Ask: Who said something nice to me? Who said something mean to me? How does it feel when someone says something mean to you? How does it feel when someone says something nice to you?

Say: God wants us to say kind and gentle words to others, not mean words. We can do that when we let God’s Spirit help us.

Say this with me: God helps me use kind and gentle words with others.

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