

## Godly Speech

*Ephesians 4:20—5:21*

*Focus on Ephesians 4:29-32*

**INTRO:** James tells us that the tongue is one member of our body that no one can tame. Of course, what comes out of our mouth originates in our heart and mind and manifests in our speech. "If anyone among you seems to be religious but does not bridle the tongue but deceives his own heart, that one's religion is vain." (James 1:26) *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. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. (Jam 3:5-10 NAU)*

If the tongue cannot be tamed by will-power, how does God hold us accountable? It can be tamed by relying on the Holy Spirit, in His filling, to guide our speech and give wisdom to our conversation. Ephesians 4:20ff speaks specifically to this matter.

### I. Let no Unwholesome Word Proceed from Your Mouth

#### A. What is an unwholesome word?

**σαπρός**, *ά, όν* decayed, rotting, rotten; literally, of decaying fish or fruit no longer useful for food; more generally *useless, of no value, unfit* (MT 7.17); neuter as a substantive **τὰ σαπρά** *the unusable ones* (MT 13.48); figuratively, of unedifying speech *harmful, bad, unprofitable* (EP 4.29)

An unwholesome word causes sickness of the soul to those who hear

#### B. Active listening and thoughtful speech mediated by the Holy Spirit

1. Often we spend more time thinking of our response than listening to what is being said
2. We are intended to be instruments of righteousness sharing Godly insight
3. Our words should never cause harm, despair, insult, injury or be spoken harshly
4. We must allow the Holy Spirit to monitor and govern what we say and write

### II. But only such a Word as is Good for Edification, According to the Need of the Moment

#### A. Words that edify

1. Edification is to build up, to strengthen the structure, to make sound and stable
2. Our words should always be aimed at building up and encouraging the others

#### B. What we say, and how we say it, is dependent on the context of the moment—what is appropriate in one setting may be rude or harsh in another. Exhortation is not always appropriate.

### III. To Speak Inappropriately Grieves the Holy Spirit, Wounding Our Relationship with God

#### A. It is the Holy Spirit Who has sealed us for the day of redemption, we need to take care that we do not cause Him Who dwells in us grief and sadness

#### B. Our speech is to give grace to those who hear, we are conduits of His love and mercy

### IV. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you

#### A. Godly speech begins with an attitude reflecting the fullness of God's Spirit

#### B. Godly speech rejects the attitude and behavior of the flesh

#### C. Our speech one to another is governed by our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ

1. Other people do wound us with their words, they often speak harshly, they lash out in anger and say mean and hurtful things, they forget to do what they have promised, etc.
2. Consider how much Christ has done for you and how much He has forgiven, not counting our sins against us; do we reflect our gratitude by treating others as we have been treated by Christ? Do we forgive as we have been forgiven? Does our speech reflect His life in us?