

TAKE CONTROL

WEEK THREE: SELECT

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January 22, 2012

In this week's *Take Control* message, we'll study the book of Proverbs and the life and words of Jesus. God has a plan for our speech, our words, and our conversations! Words can be harmful, but they can also encourage and bring life. Let's get serious about selecting and saying only what God would have us say!

Where Am I Today?

- 1) You may have some little "t" truths in your life: things are not actually true, but were said to you in anger by a parent, teacher, or friend. And you believe it. "Will you ever get anything right?" "You're not pretty, but you're cute." "You're not the sharpest tool in the shed" "You'll never be the CEO!" Think back to the "truths" that you believed. Are they accurate? Do they line up with what you now know about yourself? Do they line up with what God says about you?

Into the Bible

- 2) We are instructed on what to say and what not to say throughout the Bible. Make a list of types of good/bad words—or good/bad types of communication—from the scriptures below:
 - a. 1 Corinthians 14:26

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- b. Ephesians 5:4-7
 - c. Colossians 3:16
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 4:18
 - e. 1 Timothy 6:3-5
- 3) **Read Matthew 12:33-37.** Have you ever said something totally inappropriate just out of the blue? Something that was embarrassing, but you realized that it was probably your real feeling about a situation or person?

How Does This Apply?

- 4) You are probably doing well in some areas and struggling in others. I know I am! As you look at your typical day and week, answer these two questions:
- 1) What is one area where I need to grow to be more like Jesus with positive words?

 - 2) What is one way I need to stop communicating? What steps should I take to do that?

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- 5) The flip side of watching our own words and communications is forgiving and letting go of the hurtful words that have been directed at us. Forgiving words are powerful. Read the following scriptures and ask God which one you need to take as your own this week. Be willing to share with your group why this speaks to you and your situation—and what you plan to do about it.
- a. Ephesians 4:31-32
 - b. Proverbs 10:12
 - c. 1 Peter 3:8-11

Digging Deeper: Going Further on Your Own

- 6) In the book of Proverbs, Solomon has recorded the wisdom he received as a gift from God because he unselfishly asked for discernment and knowledge. (Check out 1 Kings 3 for the whole story.) We read Proverbs and find short, quotable and very practical principles. We read Ecclesiastes and find that the stuff of life is ultimately unsatisfying: wealth, riches, and food will never completely fill us or make us happy.

Solomon did not always live wisely: he made many bad choices in his lifetime. But, God used him to pass this wisdom down through the Scriptures to His followers today.

Look at Proverbs 26:4-5. These verses seem—at first glance—totally contradictory. Do a little research. Maybe you too can find practical guidelines for things like replying to a critic, an angry email, or a letter to the editor that mentions you or your organization!