

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Power of a Woman's Words

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PART ONE:

The Power We Possess



Lesson 1

Mixed Messages

Power verse:

*Likewise the tongue is a small part of
the body, but it makes great boasts.*

JAMES 3:5

A word has been described as the smallest unit of meaningful linguistic communication. But that tiny entity has great potential.

1. Read James 3:2-6 and answer the following questions.

How is the tongue like the rudder of a ship?

Who is the ship? (There is not necessarily a right answer.)

On any given day, there are many travelers on our ship (our families and friends) or people we pass on the waterways of life. How do our words carry people along the same route we are traveling? How do our words maneuver or bump into those that are passing by?

2. Read the following verses and note how words direct the course of a person's life.

Proverbs 12:5-8

Proverbs 12:13-22

Proverbs 22:6

3. If we want to steer our ship in the right direction, which way do we need to turn the rudder? Read 1 Peter 3:10-11 and fill in the blanks.

“Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their _____ from evil and their _____ from deceitful speech. They must _____ from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it.”

This verse tells us that we must turn the steering wheel from _____ and steer it toward _____.

4. What comes to mind when you hear the word *pursue*?

Is the idea of “pursuing” a passive activity or an active chasing after?

How do we pursue peace with our words?

5. Our words are also like the bit in a horse's mouth. Read James 3:3-5 once again.

Look up and define *bit*.

Describe in your own words the purpose of a bit in a horse's mouth.

How are your words like a bit in a horse's mouth?

6. When a horse is on his way home from being out in the fields and sees the barn in the distance, he may have a tendency to bolt. The horse is comfortable in his stall and wants to go back to what he knows. It takes a practiced rider to keep such a horse under control and walking at a steady pace.

How does this relate to the words we speak?

Who is holding the reins of your bridle?

7. Read the following and note the difference between a woman who is holding the reins and the woman who has handed the reins over to the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:5-6

Galatians 5:16-23

8. On one vacation, my husband, Steve, and I rode horses. After assessing our experience with horses, the trail leaders assigned each member of the group a horse that fit his or her ability. Steve was assigned Old Slow Joe. As we plodded down the dusty trail, Steve and Old Joe fell behind. Steve coaxed, prodded, and kicked the ancient steed in the ribs, but to no avail. Old Joe was more interested in munching on the shrubs along the road than keeping up with the gang. Old Joe was set in his ways, and no amount of urging from Steve was going to change him.

Lest you think your horse and pony show is too far gone to change, let me take you to one of the most comical scenes in the Bible. The prophet Balaam was just about to disobey God when He sent a messenger to confront him.

Read Numbers 22:24-31. Through whom did God speak?

Was Balaam surprised that the donkey was speaking?

If God can speak through a donkey, then, sister, He can take control of our tongues and speak through you and me as well! (I told you we were going to have fun.)

9. Read and record Proverbs 25:11.

The NKJV translation states, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”

Look up the word *fitly* in a dictionary. What new insight do you gather from the definition?

How important is wisdom in determining if a word would be “fitly” spoken?

10. In contrast to “apples of gold,” the writer of Proverbs paints another picture of words spoken without discretion. Read Proverbs 11:22 and note the difference.

Both verses compare words to precious gold. However, one is a treasure and one is a waste. Which do you want your words to be?

11. If you are doing this study in a group, consider sharing a story from your own life in which the words of a woman changed the course of your life for a day or for a lifetime. This can be for the good or the bad. If you are doing this study on your own, use the following space to journal your thoughts.

I can't wait to delve into the Bible to see what God has to say about the words we speak. Let's pray before we begin this journey together.

Dear Father, I know there is great power in the words I speak. I have seen looks of hurt and disappointment when I've spoken a careless word, and I have seen looks of hope and excitement when I have spoken an encouraging word. As I study what Your Word has to say about my words, I pray You will open my eyes to Your power, my heart to Your conviction, my mind to Your truth, and my ways to Your will. In Jesus's name, amen.

Lesson 2

God's Incredible Gift

Power verse:

*The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

PROVERBS 18:21

One of God's most incredible gifts to mankind is the gift of words. He could have chosen to give words to zebras, monkeys, or giraffes. But, amazingly, He chose to give them to mere mortals...created in His very image.

1. Read the following verses, fill in the blanks, and answer the corresponding questions.

How does Paul describe God in Romans 4:17?

“The God who gives life to the dead and _____.”

What does that description of God mean to you?

2. How does the writer of Hebrews define “faith” in Hebrews 11:1?

Do you see any relationship between Romans 4:17 and Hebrews 11:1? When we speak with faith, what are we essentially doing?

3. Read the following verses and fill in the blanks. These verses were taken from the NIV translation. If you are using another translation of the Bible, the words will be similar.

Genesis 1:3: “And _____, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.”

Hebrews 11:3: “By faith we understand that the universe was formed _____, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”

Psalms 33:6: “By the _____ the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.”

Psalms 78:23: “Yet he _____ to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens.”

Psalms 147:15-18: “He sends his command to the earth; _____ runs swiftly. He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes. He hurls down his hail like pebbles. Who can withstand his icy blast? He _____ and melts them; he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow.”

4. Not only did God use words to bring forth all creation, He also passed the power of words on to us. And with that gift comes great responsibility. Read the following verses and note the power we have been given through the gift of words.

Proverbs 18:21

Proverbs 21:23

Matthew 12:37

Revelation 12:11

5. I know of no better words than the ones inspired by God. When we ask, He will give us the words to say. Read Exodus 7:2. How did Moses know what to say to Pharaoh?

6. Read Jeremiah 1:17-19 and fill in the blanks below. Note: How did Jeremiah know what to say to the people of Israel?

“‘Get yourself ready! Stand up and _____.
_____. Do not be terrified by
them, or I will terrify you before them. Today I have made you
_____, _____
and _____ to stand against the whole
land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and
the people of the land. They will fight against you but will not
overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,’ declares
the LORD.”

Jeremiah was a young prophet. What three word pictures did God use to describe the strength God had imparted to him?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

A fortified city was a symbol of security and impregnability. An iron pillar was a symbol of dignity and strength. A bronze wall was also a symbol of strength. A bronze wall was used again to describe Jeremiah in Jeremiah 15:20. Where did that strength come from?

I believe that when we learn how to say the words that God would have us say, we will be a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall—women of security, dignity, and strength.

7. Jesus told His disciples not to worry about the words they were to say if they were arrested for being Christians. What was His promise to them (Luke 12:11-12)?

8. Like Father, like Son. Let's look at what Jesus had to say about the power of words. How did He use His words in the following verses?

Matthew 8:24-27

Mark 9:25

Mark 11:12-14, 20-24

Luke 7:14-15

9. Read and record Matthew 17:20.

In your own words, describe the potential of faith-filled words.

Rather than talk *about* our problems, Jesus was telling us to talk *to* our problems. Is there a mountain in your life that you need to speak to? If so, what do you need to say to it?

10. How was the power of God displayed through the words of Jesus's followers?

Acts 3:1-8

Acts 14:8-10

Acts 16:16-18

11. We have seen the power of God's words to create something out of nothing, the power of Jesus's words to control the physical and spiritual realms, and the power of man's words to bring healing.

Now let's look at the importance of our words to bring new life spiritually. Read the following verses and note the importance of our words in redemption and healing.

Romans 10:9-10

James 5:16

1 John 1:9

12. Read Matthew 16:15-19. What was Jesus's reaction to Peter's confession?

What was Peter's reward?

13. Look up and define the word *confess*. Does the definition add any insight into the verses above?
14. There is power in our confession of faith, and God does not want us to miss the blessing. Jesus could have chosen to quietly go about healing the sick, but He wanted more for His followers. He wanted them to confess their faith with their mouths. Read Luke 8:43-48.

What was the woman's problem?

What happened when she touched Jesus's robe?

How was her touching Jesus's robe different from the multitudes pressing around Him?

Why do you think Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" What did He want the woman to do?

There is power in confession. God wants us to tell our stories (Revelation 12:11).

15. Jesus had another encounter with a woman who desired healing, but this healing was not for herself. It was for her daughter.

Read Matthew 15:21-28 and then describe the scene.

When Jesus used the word *dog*, He was implying that the gospel was first intended for the Jews (lost sheep of Israel) rather than the Gentiles (dogs). She understood exactly what He meant as Gentiles were often referred to as such.

I do not believe that Jesus was speaking down to this woman. His response to her drew out the condition of her heart, and that served as an example of humility and faith to the disciples and to you and me.

What was the woman's response to Jesus in verse 27?

Would you describe her response as prideful or humble? Fearful or faithful?

What was the outcome of her humble, faith-filled words?

Suppose she had responded with prideful words such as, “That’s not fair,” or “I deserve favor too.” What do you think would have been the outcome?

16. Prior to this event, Jesus had engaged in a debate with the prideful Pharisees. The blackness of their hearts serves as a backdrop on which this woman’s luminous humility shines. This same account is recorded in Mark 7:24-30. Mark reveals another aspect of her humble approach to Jesus. How did she address Jesus?

This was the only time Mark recorded someone addressing Jesus as Lord. What does this imply about her view of Jesus and the power of her confession?

17. Read Matthew 12:37 and fill in the blanks. “_____ you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

How does this verse reflect the truths we have learned about the power of words that come out of our mouths thus far?

18. Now for a little fun. In the first lesson we met a talking donkey. Now let's take a look at a scene that reads as though it were a script from a Hollywood movie. Ezekiel was a prophet who lived during one of the many times in the Old Testament when Israel rebelled against God. They resembled a dead, dry nation. Read Ezekiel 37: 1-10 and answer the following questions.

What did Ezekiel see in this vision?

What did God ask him to do?

What occurred when Ezekiel prophesied to the dead bones?

Just for fun, try your hand at drawing a series of pictures depicting these scenes. If you are doing this study in a group, share your frames. This is one instance where stick figures work best!

19. On a more serious note, is there some area of your life that seems hopeless—like a pile of dead, dry bones? A marriage? A rebellious child? A financial struggle? Let me ask you: If God can take a pile of dried, dead bones and make them into a powerful army, do you think He can take your seemingly hopeless situation and transform it?

Take this opportunity to speak to those dry bones in a prayer to God.

Dear Lord,

20. It is not enough just to speak words of faith. We must believe. Read and record 2 Corinthians 4:13. How does this verse relate what we believe to what we speak?

Do you see a connection between 2 Corinthians 4:13 and Ezekiel 37:1-10?

21. We speak words of faith, but God does the work to bring life. After the bones were resurrected, what did God do? Go back to Ezekiel 37:9-10 for your answer.
22. Yes, there is power in the words we speak, but we must always remember that God is sovereign, and He will do as He pleases. His actions will always be for our good (Romans 8:28). He may not always give us what we want, but He will always give us what we need. I am so glad God allows us to participate in His work, aren't you?
23. Summarize what you have learned today about the power of words.