

Speak Life

The words we use are more than tools to communicate - they have creative power. Proverbs 18:21 says, "The tongue has the power of life and death." Our words can fuel hope or snuff it out, build others up or tear them down, bring truth or lies, blessings or curses. It's time to discover the immense power of our words and live each day as those who speak life.

Week 2: Out of the Overflow

1. **Read James 3:2-12 and Luke 6:43-45.** James talks like the tongue is almost independent from us. But Jesus makes a sobering point: **The content of our words reveals the condition of our hearts.** What comes to mind when you hear Jesus' words? Can you think of a time when words came out of your mouth that surprised you?
2. **Proverbs 4:23** says, "*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*" What are effective ways in today's world to guard our hearts? What are environments, content, or forms of entertainment have the potential to deposit things into our hearts that later come out of our mouths?
3. **Read Ezekiel 11:19.** The goal is not behavior modification but inward transformation. God promises to give us a new heart and to put His Spirit inside us. How does the saving work of Jesus change our hearts? (See: *Romans 5:5 and 2 Cor. 5:16-17*) What comes out of our mouths when experience this transformation? (*Colossians 3:16-17*)
4. As an internal practice, **take an inventory of your words this week.** Trace them back to what is in your heart, and bring whatever you find to the Lord. In his book *The Deeply Formed Life* author Rich Villodas provides five helpful questions for taking inventory:
 - What happened?*
 - What am I feeling?*
 - What's the story I'm telling myself?*
 - What does the gospel say?*
 - What counter-instinctual action is needed?*
5. **Read Psalm 86:11-12.** This week **speak life by giving thanks and praise to God.** Finish by sharing something you want to thank God for in your life. As you give thanks, trying using this sentence structure: "I want to thank God for [name the person or circumstance or gift]. _____ is a God-given blessing in my life because..."

