



LIVE

Week 2
Speak Sweetly

LIKE YOU WERE

DYING

TM

The Tongue of Fire

Have you ever had words come out of your mouth that you wished you could take back even as you spoke them? You let your anger get the best of you and yelled at your child even though you knew you were taking your frustrations out on him. Or you felt trapped in a corner and lashed out at your husband or roommate. When frustration and anger are held inside, they build intensity until they have nowhere to go and explode at the nearest person. It can be your spouse or a total stranger. It can be your cat or dog, for that matter!



James 3:5-6 ***“Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.”***

Our words can do incredible damage. They can abuse. They can tear down one’s self-esteem. They can drive a knife through someone’s heart. Used over and over to wear someone down, they can ruin an entire life.

Words can also do incredible good. They can make a person feel like a million bucks. They can give someone hope. They can give someone courage. They can make someone feel loved and valued. All of this simply by the words we speak.

But words don't come out of a vacuum, either. Jesus taught that what we say begins in the heart.

Luke 6:45

“The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil



Notes—Week 2 Speak Sweetly

things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.”

If we are going to speak sweeter, then the work has to start inside. Bring those angry and hurtful things to the Lord. Get mad at Him if you need to; He can handle it. Let Him replace negative influences with His love and acceptance. Focus on the fruit of the His Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 ***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”***

These are the qualities the Spirit of God is already developing in you, and you can call upon them as needed. These are also the qualities that will sweeten our speech.

As you seek to speak sweeter, here are some practical things to help you.



1. Try not to be reactive. Many of our most damaging words come from knee-jerk reactions to being hurt or wounded.
2. Pause...take sixty seconds. Don't let your emotions bypass your brain. James 1:19 ***“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”*** Learn to think before you speak.
3. Listen, observe, and discover. Find out words that make those you live with and love feel treasured and valued. Our time is short!.

A Kind Word

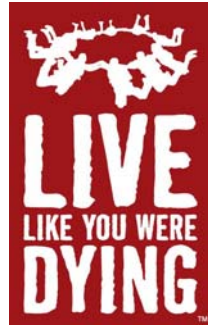
Proverbs 16:24 **“Kind words are like honey — sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.” (NLT)**

Gary Smalley: *“My neighbor walked out of her house the other morning looking like she had the world on her shoulders. All the way to her car, her gaze was fixed on the ground and I could see it from across the street. She was so set on her moody thoughts that she didn’t see me cooling down from a morning jog. My neighbor does a good deal of traveling, so I really meant it when I yelled over to her, “Hi Doris! It’s so nice to see you around these days!””*

“Well you wouldn’t believe the change in countenance that swept instantly over her face. I’ve never seen anything like it—such a dramatic change. I could almost read her thoughts. It was as if she were saying, “Your words are so much better than what I was just thinking about. I’ll choose your version of this moment right now over mine!””

We underestimate the difference we can make in someone’s life, even a stranger’s, with a kind word.

We live such isolated lives these days behind invisible walls. We walk by each other on the street, stand next to each other in the elevator, wash our hands beside each other in the restroom without a word or an acknowledgment that the other exists. So many people are afraid, trapped in their own private loneliness. This isolation presents an incredible opportunity for those of us who are followers of Christ.



Encouraging? Complaining? Negative? Kind? Impatient?

4. **READ Proverbs 18:21 & James 3:9-10**

Small words can have HUGE impact. In what relationship or area of your life do you find it most difficult to “speak sweeter?” How can you be a blessing into that relationship this week?

5. Read the four verses that Gary Smalley talked about in the video. He described them as seeds in his own life which changed his beliefs and ultimately his words.

READ: Romans 5:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Romans 8:28

These are God’s word of encouragement to us as he “speaks sweetly” to us. Share which of these verses most encourage you today.

Live It Out

Here are a list of “sweet words” that God uses with us. Which ones are the hardest for you to use? Easiest?

- Thank you
- Please
- I love you
- I appreciate you
- I’m praying for you
- You mean a lot to me
- Thanks for your friendship
- I am glad you are in my life



HomeTeam Study—Week 2—Speak Sweetly

Before the Video

1. Describe a funny experience when you said something you wished you hadn't..

Watch Video

Talk it Over

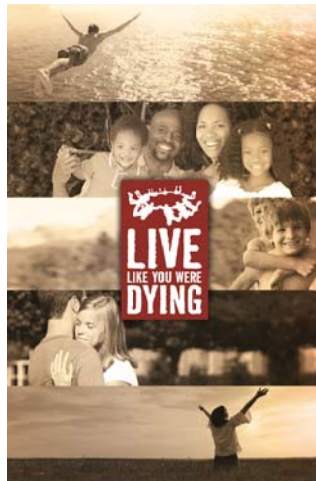
1. As you think back over your life, who has affirmed or encouraged you in such a way that it still has an impact on you today?

2. Matthew 12:34 (NLT) says “**...For whatever is in your heart determines what you say.**”
Matthew 15:18 says “**but evil words come from an evil heart and defile the person who says them.**”

Gary emphasized that the words we speak can be traced back to what's in our heart. What are some things people feed on with their mind, eyes, and heart that negatively impact their words?

What spiritual things can you feed on that will positively impact your words?

3. **Food for thought:** Do a little self-assessment. If someone followed you around this week and listened to your conversations, how would they describe you.....



Galatians 6:10

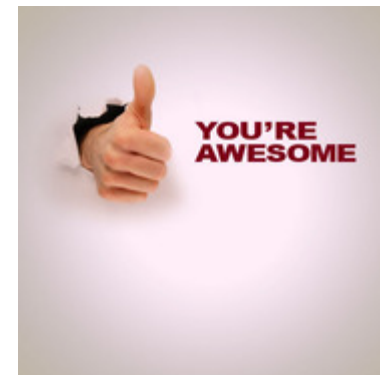
“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people...” (NIV)

Yes, even a smile can do it. When you smile at someone you are saying, “*I see you there. Whoever you are, and whatever you are going through, you are worth noticing.*” Try it and watch people light up.

John Kevin Hines is one of a handful of people who have survived an attempted suicide jump off the Golden Gate Bridge. He claims to have told himself that if any one of the hundreds of people he rubbed shoulders with on the way to the bridge noticed he was distraught, and asked him what was wrong, he wouldn't jump. That's all it would have taken—another human being to acknowledge his existence. No one did. But, as he was falling to the water he literally got a hold of his life and asked God for a second chance. God saved him. He survived the jump!

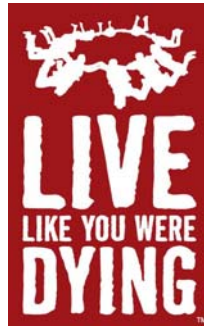
It doesn't take much to affect another person's life. Gary Smalley's “Hello” to his neighbor might have altered her day, or at least put a smile on her face.

Is there someone you see regularly whose life you could touch with a kind word or two?



Finding the Words

What keeps us from saying what we really feel to those we love? If we are afraid, what are we afraid of? What are some of the barriers that keep us from expressing what is really in our hearts? How can we remove them?



I'm sure you know the feeling. The love is there—you may even rehearse what you are going to say—but when you open your mouth something else comes out, or in some cases, nothing at all. You might even noticed yourself doing or saying the exact opposite of what you really want.

We are all victims of the patterns that have formed in our lives and relationships. We fall into these canyons without notice. And, maybe that's the problem right there, we aren't noticing these bad patterns of our behavior. These patterns are so deep within us that it takes something earth-shattering to force us out of them. This change of perspective is precisely the by-product of living like you were dying.

Romans 7:6 ***“But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way..”*** (NIV)

If you were dying, you would find it easier to say the things you always wanted to say to your loved ones. In the Old Testament, when Jacob was about to die, he called his sons together. Genesis 49:28 ***“...these are the blessings with which Jacob blessed his twelve sons. Each received a blessing that was appropriate to him.”*** (NLT)

smile on my face every time I think of him. He brings out the joy that is in my heart.

The world is trying to make us bitter and angry and heartless. Most of what we read on the internet or see on the news channels is discouraging to say the least. But we have a God who encourages us and He wants us to be an authentic instrument of that encouragement to others. No one really likes to be around someone who is always negative. It wears us out. God knows that and wants to protect us.

Hebrews 3:13

“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.”

We are challenged to encourage “today” because when you really think about it, that is really all we have. Yesterday is gone and tomorrow is unknown. If someone were to follow you around without you knowing it, would they witness an “encourager” or a “discourager?”

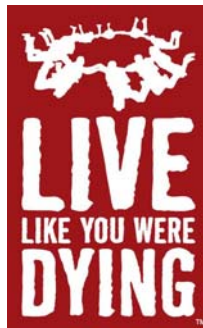
God illustrated words by world into exis- Holy Bible is “God's Word.” might be telling words to en- one. Don't wait. Were Dying!



the power of “speaking” the tence. The also called, That same God you to use your courage some- Live Like You

Say It!

One time my wife and I were at a fast food restaurant in Ventura, California, while on vacation. As we walked into the restaurant an older gentlemen shouted out from behind the counter, “Hey, I am glad you’re here. Are you ready for the best hot dog in California?” “Are you here on vacation?”



Most of the time workers will say things like that because they are instructed to by their bosses in order to drum up more business. But this guy was authentic. He had a real smile. He literally ran to prepare our meal. He handed it to us and said, “Have fun on your vacation!” When we left he shouted out thanks for coming in and waved goodbye. I still remember this man 4 years later!

We all have the power to affect someone’s life. This man had a genuine beauty in his heart. He was a real pleasure to be around.

1 Samuel 16:7

“Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (NIV)

We can find beauty in every person we meet whether or not we know them. Saying something kind to someone goes directly to their heart and touches the place that brings out the best in them. The man at the fast food chain puts a

What we’re talking about doing during these thirty days is changing the lens through which we see people. Don’t wait until you are on your deathbed to speak words of blessing.

Here are some ways you might do this. If it’s a spouse, recall why you loved them when you first realized it. Reattach yourself to that love. If it’s a child or sibling, remember their best qualities. See them as you would see them from your deathbed and bless them for who they are. If it’s a parent, regardless of how they may have failed you, remember the gift of life they gave you. Remember they have had their own struggles in life, some of which you may never understand, because they lived in a different time and place.

Don’t be shy. Speak what’s in your heart; this may be your last chance to let someone know. Don’t be embarrassed to tell someone how they have impacted your life.

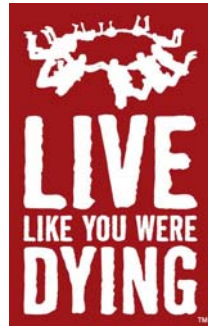


When it comes to speaking your heart, there is no better time than the present. And if you can’t express what you really want to say, try living like you were dying. Tear the barriers down.

Ephesians 5:19 “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.”

On-the-spot Praying

One of the most powerful ways we can “**speak sweeter**” is praying not only for people but with them. There is nothing quite like the gentle strength of a person praying for you.



Have you ever had someone stop everything and pray for you? You were talking with them on the phone or standing in the parking lot having a conversation and that person sensed something in your voice that you said. The next thing you know they put their hand on your shoulder and said, “*Would you mind if I prayed for you right now?*” Suddenly you felt the tension go out of your body, you were flooded with warmth, and the words from that person’s mouth flowed like cool water over your thirsty soul. “*May I pray for you?*” may be some of the sweetest words to come out of someone’s mouth. It reveals that this person noticed a need in your life and wants to do something about it.

James 5:17

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (NIV)

We all could be quicker on the draw when it comes to praying for each other. We need to get more in the habit of praying on the spot for people instead of saying that we will keep them in prayer and then forgetting to pray. We may have the best of intentions but the pressures of our own life cause us to forget.

We have heard the term, “prayer warrior” and are reminded

that praying for someone is a battle against our business. We have to fight against that which keeps us from praying. For some that might be time. For others that might be embarrassment. Just as we would pray earnestly if we were on our deathbed we need to pray for others, now.

1 Peter 4:7

“The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.”

For Peter, prayer was at the top of his list of things to do. He had an attitude of the end quickly coming. His mind was clear and ready to jump into prayer. When we have this attitude that the end could be today, it leads to the important things in life.

When you decide to pray like Jesus, God will put someone right in front of you for “**On-the-Spot-Praying.**” Why should we be embarrassed to pray for someone at the grocery store or on a walk around the Fountain Park? Jesus prayed “on-the-spot.”

You will soon discover that everyone needs someone to pray for them.

May the Lord bless you as you bless others through prayer!

