

House On The Rock Life Group Study outline 2024

March: Transformation

Outlines for the month

Week 1: Transformed in Speech ✓

Week 2: Transformed in Character

Week 3: Transformed at the Cross

Introduction

A catering manager was discussing a baby-christening party with a young couple. She told the mother of the baby, “You look like you’ve lost most of your pregnancy weight.” “Thanks,” came the clenched-teeth reply. “We adopted.”

File that away in your memory as what never to say!

Try as we may, we all have erred with our tongues. James 3:2 says, “If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.” While we may never achieve perfect control over our tongues, I’m convinced that if husbands and wives would consistently apply Ephesians 4:29, we would rarely see divorce. If parents practiced this verse toward their children, we would see few children from Christian homes rebel against their parents. If we applied it towards one another in the church, we would see few churches split over personality conflicts or minor doctrinal issues. In short, Ephesians 4:29 is a verse that would bring radical change in all of our relationships if we would apply it conscientiously: “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”

Transformed speech is implicit in truthful talk, in righteous anger, and in not stealing, since stealing usually involves lying. Therefore our speech is a major area where the gospel will make a huge difference. Just as you can often tell where someone is from by her accent, so people should be able to tell that you’re a Christian by your transformed speech.

Intro credit: bible.org

Pilot text

[Eph 4:25-29 \[NET\]](#) 25 Therefore, having laid aside falsehood, each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour, because we are members of one another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on the cause of your anger. 27 Do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 The one who steals must steal no longer; instead he must labour, doing good with his own hands, so that he will have something to share with the one who has need. 29 You must let no unwholesome word come out of your

mouth, but only what is beneficial for the building up of the one in need, that it would give grace to those who hear.

In the preceding portion of Ephesians 4:22-24, Paul teaches that believers will put off the old way of life, be renewed in their minds, and put on the new way of life, which is consistent with being a new creature in Christ. In our pilot text, he goes from preaching to meddling by getting very specific: Put off falsehood and speak truth (4:25). Put on righteous anger, being careful not to let it spill over into sinful anger, which would give Satan a foothold in your life (4:26-27). Stop stealing and instead, work hard and give to those in need (4:28). Then, in 4:29 he says that Christians must transform their speech. How can we achieve this transformation?

1. **Identify the problem (v25-26).** Only those who are sick need a physician. If you are unwilling to admit you have a problem with the way you speak to others, then you cannot be helped. We all have areas of unwholesome speech that we need to deal with, but in order to start making a change, you need to be specific. Is it that you say vicious, hurtful things when angry? Or you use your words to manipulate others to get your way? Whatever it is, you need to stand up, look in the mirror and call it by its name.
2. **Judge your own thoughts (v27).** We give the devil an opportunity if we don't immediately shut down unwholesome thoughts. This is not a mystery – if you have an argument in the morning and spend all day brooding on it while also inviting others to help you amplify your negative emotions; it's only a matter of time before you explode with pent-up anger. God help the person you unload all of that upon!
3. **Update (and change if needed) your vocabulary (v29).** Words have both meaning and power. Sometimes we say words that we don't mean, but that doesn't change the negative impact they have on those around us. We need a full revamp of our vocabulary, to ensure that we are truthful, while also using words that are encouraging, patient, gracious, kind and gentle. And sometimes, it is best to say nothing.
4. **Understand the need (vs 29).** In order to build up a person in need as in v29, you need to pay attention so that you can figure out what the need is. You do this by listening, asking questions in order to understand (not to deride or dismiss), and picking up non-verbal cues.

For more information on this topic read bible.org.

- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
 1. How would you counsel a professing Christian who admitted that his speech was often unwholesome, but who wanted to change? Where would you start?
 2. To which form of unwholesome speech are you most inclined? How do you plan to change?
 3. How can you think wholesome thoughts about a person who is acting in ungodly ways? Is it wrong to tell this person how he makes you feel? How do you confront in love?

4. Won't giving grace to a person just encourage him to sin more?