

Connection

Tell about a recent time you regretted something you said.

Content

Conflict is the reality of life. How we deal with it determines the quality of our life.

Our words cause conflict

Read James 4:1. The book of James in the Bible asks what causes fights and quarrels even among brothers and sisters in Jesus. The answer is selfishness and pride. James gets to the core of what causes conflict – the unfiltered words we say to and about each other. James tells us how to avoid and resolve conflict by taking our conflicts to Christ, by hearing what the other person is saying, and by controlling our tongues.

Read James 4:11. Don't speak evil against each other. Slander is hurtful and usually untrue talk about someone.

1. How have you reacted at a time when someone spoke ill of you?
2. Have you slandered someone? Why did you do it?

Controlling our words controls our conflict

Read James 3:1-8. We all make mistakes, and many of them, James says in verse 3. If we really knew what others were dealing with in their lives, we'd be far less likely to jump into conflict with them.

3. How might it help just to remember that you're not aware of everything that's going on in the other person's life?

4. Read James 3:9-12. Our tongues can bless and curse. What is an example of that? How might our words come across to others if we are using our tongues to both bless and curse?

5. Read Matthew 7:12. This is the “golden rule” to do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. How does it relate to our discussion about controlling our tongues?

God gives the desire to do the right thing

Read Ephesians 4:32. It is the power of Christ in us that allows us to forgive one another. When we recognize that His power is in us, and we desire to change, we can offer others a more gracious response like, “Help me to understand.”

6. Who do you need to forgive?

Commitment

Take to heart the message of James, that God gave you a tongue, a voice to bless other people. To do otherwise, as James says, is “not right.”

Challenge Assignment:

This week, pray and meditate on Psalm 141:3. “Take control of what I say, O Lord, and guard my lips.” Identify that person in your life who most needs to hear words of blessing or forgiveness, and speak them.