



**April 12, 2025**

## GETTING STARTED

Coach Sleepy Thompson was one of those coaches that everyone wanted to play for. He not only knew how to win football games, but he also knew how to develop young men. As a high school football coach, he was an encourager; a coach who instilled life into his players. Players walked a little taller as a result of him living-out one of his favorite sayings, "Accentuate the positive."

A day would not go by without Coach Thompson reminding his players of that principle. It was short and sweet and yielded powerful results. He stressed accentuating the positive at every practice and made it an essential characteristic of his teams. He focused on the good in players instead of the bad, the future instead of the past. His words gave young men purpose and meaning. He understood that the most powerful two ounces of body weight that he possessed were found in his tongue.

As Christians, we struggle with our mouths. Our tongues slip because they live in a wet place. The book of James compares the tongue to fire because of the potential damage it can inflict. It's interesting how the tongue is compared to fire and not water. A small glass of water wouldn't likely start a flood, but one small, careless spark can destroy thousands of acres. The tongue has the same potential, and James warns us that the tongue has the ability to pollute our whole body.

In our lesson today, we are going to talk about relationships and how we can grow them rather than destroy them. We are going to learn how we can bring healing rather than hurt, blessings rather than burdens and truth rather than torture.

## Warm-Up Questions

1. Who is a person that is a constant encouragement in your life? Why?

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2. Why is that encouragement so powerful.

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## BIBLE STUDY

The book of Ephesians has basically two sections. The first three chapters are more theological and the last three chapters are more practical in nature. In chapter four, Paul provides some very practical principles for building strong and healthy relationships. Spend time studying Ephesians 4:25-32 and have a few men take turns reading this section of scripture.

# Do Not Grieve the Spirit

<sup>25</sup> Therefore, putting away lying, “*Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,*” for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup> “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, <sup>27</sup> nor give <sup>[a]</sup>place to the devil. <sup>28</sup> Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. <sup>29</sup> Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary <sup>[b]</sup>edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. <sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, <sup>[c]</sup>clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. <sup>32</sup> And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

## *Footnotes*

- a. Ephesians 4:27 *an opportunity*
- b. Ephesians 4:29 *building up*
- c. Ephesians 4:31 *loud quarreling*

# Discussion Questions

3. After looking over the passage, what are some general observations about what Paul is talking about?

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4. Make a list of the key relationship building principles from this passage.

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5. So many of these principles have to do with the words that we speak to one another. Discuss how we can learn to control our tongues and use them for good, not harm.

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6. In verse 32, we are told to treat each other with kindness, tenderness and to forgive one another. What does that practically look like in our relationships?

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7. Share one application for them from this study.

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## **WATCH THE VIDEO - Please, Sorry and Thank You by Mark Batterson**

Mark Batterson serves as Lead Pastor of National Community Church in Washington, DC, one church with multiple locations. Mark also serves as Lead Visionary for The Dream Collective, which equips and supports dreamers who long for revival in the church, reformation in the kingdom, and renaissance in culture.

Mark holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from Regent University and is the author of 24 books including New York Times bestselling The Circle Maker.



# Discussion Questions

8. Mark informs us that it says in scripture (Proverbs 18:21 ) that the power of life and death is in the tongue. Words have the power to hurt or to heal. Each of us has memories of words we experienced from someone’s tongue that literally changed our personal world. Share one example of these two experiences.

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9. Mark wants us to appreciate that just as God’s word makes worlds, so also God has given us the capacity to do the same with our words. Where do you used words to build up and bless others?

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10. What has happened to another person's world having experienced the unjustified bite of your tongue?

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11. Describe how you would have liked to have handled that situation differently?

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## Recommended Reading:

Book of Proverbs

Receive: The way of Jesus for Men

## Scriptures:

[Proverbs 18:24](#), [17:17](#), [27:17](#)

## Quotes Scriptures:

*Four of the Ten Commandments deal with our relationship to God while the other six deal with our relationships with people. But all ten are about relationships. -Rick Warren*

*When life on earth is ending, people don't surround themselves with objects. What we want around us is people - people we love and have relationships with. -Rick Warren*

*Nothing breaks down barriers and preconceived ideas about 'Christians and Christianity' more than when we treat people the way Jesus treated His enemies. -Chip Ingram*

*I cannot even imagine where I would be today were it not for that handful of friends who have given me a heart full of joy. Let's face it, friends make life a lot more fun. -Chuck Swindoll*