



ANTHOLOGY

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me & My **BIG MOUTH**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
BEGIN ON THE NEXT PAGE



PART I VIDEO NOTES

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

James 1:19-21

Everything everyone **does** makes sense to them.
Everything everyone **says** makes sense to them.
Everything everyone **believes** makes sense to them.

SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD.

-Stephen Covey

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

MY RIGHTNESS

I know I'm right.
I want you to know I'm right.
I want everybody to know I'm right.

**IF THE TWO OF YOU AREN'T RIGHT, IT DOESN'T MATTER
WHO'S RIGHT.**

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. James tells us to be quick to listen and slow to speak. When we're in conflict, most of us are quick to do something, but it's usually not to listen. How would you fill in these blanks?

In conflict, I'm often quick to _____
and slow to _____.

2. Where or when is it hardest for you to be quick to listen and slow to speak? Why?

- At work
- At home
- Online/on social media
- With my (circle one) parents, children, friends, siblings, co-workers
- Other: _____

3. Can you remember a time when someone was quick to listen to you—your opinion or point of view? How did it change the course of your conversation?

4. “If the two of you aren't right, it doesn't matter who's right.”

How does this statement change the way you might interact in the future with someone who believes differently than you?

(For example: an in-law with opposing political views or a colleague of a different faith.)

5. Can you think of anyone you've been trying to be right at instead of right with? What step can you take this week to put your relationship before your righteousness (or “rightness”)?

THIS WEEK . . .

Don't settle for being right. Make things right. That's what your heavenly Father did for you through Jesus. People who were nothing like him liked him. Why? Not because he demanded to be right all the time (even though he could have). People liked Jesus because they felt he understood them.

Who are you trying to be right at instead of right with? What can you do to try to understand their point of view?

PRAYER

God, help me be curious about what others do, say, and believe. I want to begin asking questions before drawing conclusions. Help me make things right instead of trying to be right.

**DON'T SETTLE FOR BEING
RIGHT: MAKE THINGS
RIGHT**



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
BEGIN ON THE NEXT PAGE

PART 2 VIDEO NOTES

We **all** stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they **say** is **perfect**, able to keep their whole body in **check**. When we put **bits** into the **mouths** of horses to make them **obey** us, we can turn the **whole animal**. Or take **ships** as an example. Although they are so **large** and are driven by **strong winds**, they are steered by a **very small rudder** wherever the pilot wants to go.

SMALL PART/BIG INFLUENCE

Likewise, the **tongue** is a **small** part of the body, but it makes **great** boasts. 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. It corrupts the **whole** body, sets the **whole** course of one's **life** on fire ...

IF YOU START A FIRE **ACCIDENTALLY**, YOU ARE STILL **RESPONSIBLE** FOR THE FIRE YOU STARTED.

... and is itself set on fire by **hell**. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being **tamed** and have been **tamed** by mankind, but no human being **can** tame the tongue. It is a **restless** evil, full of deadly **poison**. With the tongue we **praise** our Lord and Father, and with it we **curse** human beings, who have been **made in God's likeness**. Out of the same mouth come **praise** and **cursing**. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both **fresh** water and **salt** water flow from the **same** spring? My brothers and sisters, can a **fig** tree bear **olives**, or a **grapevine** bear **figs**? Neither can a **salt** spring produce **fresh** water.

- James 3:2-12

What do we do?

Remember / Surrender / Confess

HEAVENLY FATHER, REMIND ME TO BE QUICK TO LISTEN AND SLOW TO SPEAK.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. James used the metaphor of a small spark starting a great forest fire to illustrate the power of our tongues. Share some examples of people who have started “forest fires” with their words. What kind of damage did they do?
2. Who has significantly impacted your life with their words? Were the words that shaped you positive or negative?
3. In which relationship do you most often find yourself losing control of your mouth? Have you faced any relational consequences as a result?
4. Take a few minutes to answer these questions on your own.

In the message, Andy said that with your tongue, “There is constant potential for great good and constant potential for great evil.”

- Read through the list of positive statements below and **circle** the three that would most lift you up if someone said them to you.

You're fun to be around.

I'm lucky to know you.

You make me laugh.

I'm glad you're in my life.

I was thinking about you earlier.

I missed you.

You're a great leader.

You're so talented.

You're smart.

I appreciate how supportive you are.

You mean the world to me.

I'm impressed by your hard work.

You look great.

I wish I were as empathetic as you.

You always put others first.

I respect you.

You brighten my day.

You're so creative.

You're a great listener.

I know you can do it.

I trust you.

I'm proud of you.

Your opinion is valuable.

You're the most generous person I know.

- Now underline any of the statements you've said to someone recently.
 - Who might need to hear one (or more) of these encouraging statements from you?
 - If you feel comfortable, share one of your takeaways from this session with the group.
5. Can you think of anyone you've been trying to be right at instead of right with? What step can you take this week to put your relationship before your righteousness (or "rightness")?

THIS WEEK . . .

We are powerful because our words are powerful. Our mouths have more destructive power than any other part of the body. The good news is that we also have the power to avoid the consequences of an untamed tongue if we choose to take James's wisdom to heart and surrender this powerful tool to God. Take time this week to pray:

"Heavenly Father, remind me to be quick to listen and slow to speak."

PRAYER

God, I know what it's like to be lifted up by other people's positive words. And I know what it's like to be hurt by other people's negative words. Help me be quick to listen and slow to speak so I can build others up instead of tearing them down.

**IF YOU ACCIDENTALLY START A FIRE
WITH YOUR WORDS, YOU ARE STILL
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FIRE YOU
ACCIDENTALLY STARTED.**



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BEGIN ON THE NEXT PAGE



PART 3 VIDEO NOTES

¹⁷So I tell you this, and **insist** on it in the Lord, that you must no longer **live** as the **Gentiles** do, in the **futility** of their **thinking**. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God **because** of the **ignorance** that is in them due to the **hardening** of their hearts. ¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity, they have **given themselves over** to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of **impurity**, and they are full of **greed**.

²⁰That, however, is not the **way of life** you **learned** ²¹when you heard about **Christ** and were **taught** in him in accordance with the **truth** that is in Jesus. ²²You were taught, with regard to your **former** way of life, to put off your **old self**, which is being corrupted by its **deceitful desires**; ²³to be made new in the **attitude** of your **minds**; ²⁴and to put on the **new self**, created to **be like God** in true **righteousness** and **holiness**.

²⁹Do not let any **unwholesome** talk come out of your mouths, but only **what is helpful** for **building** others up according to **their needs**, **that** it may **benefit** those who listen. ³⁰And do not **grieve** the Holy Spirit of God. ³¹**Get rid** of all **bitterness**, **rage** and anger, **brawling** and **slander**, along with every form of **malice**. ³²Be **kind** and **compassionate** to one another, **forgiving** each other **just as** in Christ **God** forgave **you**.

- Ephesians 4:17-24, 29-32

BITTERNESS REQUIRES FORGIVENESS—GIVING SOMEONE FROM THE PAST WHAT THEY DON'T DESERVE SO WE CAN GIVE THOSE AROUND US WHAT THEY DO DESERVE.

Do **for others** what God in Christ has done **for you**.

Speak unto **others** as God in Christ has **spoken** over **you**.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Who has been a “builder” with their words in your life? How did they influence you?
2. Ephesians 4:29 tells us to say “only what is helpful for building others up.” Andy commented that “the apostle Paul’s point is not be nice. It’s be helpful.”
 - When has someone said something to you that was helpful, even if it didn’t feel good to hear it?
 - Was there something about the way they said it that made it easy (or hard) to hear?
3. Using words to build others up doesn’t always come naturally. If you sometimes struggle with this, what are some of the reasons?

- Pride
- Jealously
- Self-righteousness
- Past hurt
- Not knowing how to do it
- Weariness
- Anger or bitterness
- Apathy
- Fear
- Not wanting to share/lose the attention
- Other: _____

4. Take a few minutes to answer these questions on your own. Then continue group your conversation using the question at the bottom of the exercise.

In the message, Andy said, “You can’t be a builder if you’re bitter.”

- What words spoken to you, about you, or over you have left you with a dose of bitterness it may be time to get rid of?

Write specific names on the blank lines in this definition of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is giving someone from the past, _____,
what they don’t deserve (for example: my dad)

so I can give those around me, _____, what they do deserve.
(for example: my children)

If you feel comfortable, share some of your notes with the group. What can we do to support you in this step of forgiveness?

THIS WEEK . . .

Guard your mouth. Don't destroy others with your words. Build them up. If you find that difficult to do, maybe there's someone from your past you need to forgive.

Consider spending some time this week memorizing part of Ephesians 4:29:

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up.

PRAYER

God, thank you for the way you love me. I want to reflect that love to the people around me, but my emotions get in the way. Help me forgive the people that have hurt me in the past so I can build up the people in my life right now.

**DON'T LET ANY
UNWHOLESOME TALK
COME OUT OF YOUR
MOUTHS BUT ONLY WHAT
IS HELPFUL FOR BUILDING
OTHERS UP.**



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BEGIN ON THE NEXT PAGE



PART 4 VIDEO NOTES

Joseph's Story

- Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob (*Genesis 37:3*).
- Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave to a band of Ishmaelites (*Genesis 37:25-27*).
- Joseph was placed in charge of Potiphar's household and had success (*Genesis 39:1-6*).
- Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph, and he was thrown in prison (*Genesis 39:7-20*).

BAD THINGS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING TO GOOD PEOPLE FOR A LONG TIME.

- While he was in prison, Joseph interpreted the dreams of a cupbearer and baker (*Genesis 40: 5-23*).
- Joseph was called from prison to interpret Pharaoh's dreams (*Genesis 41:1-36*).
- Joseph was placed in charge of Pharaoh's palace and grain storage (*Genesis 41:37-43*).
- Joseph's brothers traveled to Egypt for grain during a famine (*Genesis 42:1-5*).
- While Joseph's brothers were in Egypt for grain during a famine, Joseph recognized them but kept his identity hidden (*Genesis 42:6-8*).

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU'VE GOT THE POWER AND YOUR WORDS DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF YOUR ENEMY?

- After some time, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers (*Genesis 45:1-7*).
- Joseph offered them food and shelter in Egypt (*Genesis 45:9-11*).
- Joseph's brothers were nervous after the death of their father (*Genesis 50:18-21*).

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. When you think about your ancestry, who in your family tree made a decision (for better or for worse) that has affected you?
2. What's the difference between justice and revenge? What makes revenge so appealing?
3. Have you or someone you know ever had a season of life when it felt like God had gone silent? With the perspective of time, can you see how God was working all along?
4. What are some practical things you can do to live like God is with you during seasons when it feels like he's not?
5. Have you ever ended up with power over someone who previously mistreated you? How did you respond? Do you wish you had responded differently?
6. When you have the power to determine the destiny of someone who has wronged you, your words will be stones you throw or stones you use to pave the way forward.
 - Talk about the legacy you want to leave if you ever find yourself with that kind of power.
 - What can you do now that will help you respond with words that pave the way forward?

THIS WEEK . . .

Bad things have been happening to good people for a long time. And God has been with those good people in those bad times. You will never experience the good that comes from the bad unless you recognize that God was with you during the bad and then refuse to play God when things are good.

PRAYER

God, in times of trouble, help me trust that you are with me. I want that kind of trust to grow into a strong foundation for our relationship. And I pray that it will make me kinder and more loving to other people . . . even those who wrong me.

**YOU WILL NEVER
EXPERIENCE THE
GOOD THAT COMES
FROM THE BAD
UNLESS
YOU RECOGNIZE THAT
GOD WAS WITH
YOU IN THE BAD.**