

# WISDOM FOR EVERYDAY LIFE | Session 1: Your Words Have Power

## SESSION GOALS

*The point of every session is a main idea with the goal of informing our knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**MAIN IDEA:** God has given you a unique voice as part of His purpose for your life.

**Head Change:** To know that the legacy you'll leave is impacted by the words you speak.

**Heart Change:** To celebrate that lies are temporary, but truth is eternal.

**Life Change:** To intentionally choose words that help, heal, and never harm.

## **OPEN**

**What's the most embarrassing thing you've ever said?**

Our words can be hilarious. Our words can blow wind in someone's sails. Our words can cause untold damage. In the opening session of the series, Stephen Foster reminds us to take seriously the immense power of what comes out of our mouths.

## **VIEW**

As you watch, write down how Stephen answers these questions.

**In what ways did God the Father and Jesus display the power of words?**

**What's the difference between our tongues and the ox's tongue in Stephen mentioned in his illustration?**

**How might our words encourage, comfort, and heal?**

**According to Stephen, what's the truth about truth?**

Show SESSION #1: *Your Words Have Power* (11 minutes)

## **REVIEW**

Stephen opens the session by pointing out our desperate need for guidance and wisdom as we navigate the challenges of relationships, decisions, and life in general. **Are you currently facing any decisions for which there isn't an obvious right or wrong path to pick? What do you typically do in situations like this?**

Stephen says, 'People can be complex. How do we know who to trust, how to build friendships, how to lead well? It's so easy to misunderstand human interactions and to miss emotional dynamics at play. We can mess up relationships, sometimes without even trying!' **Can you relate? Share from your experiences, if you feel comfortable to do so.**

Thankfully, God didn't leave us without the tools to cope with the challenges and complexities of life. The book of Proverbs offers us priceless wisdom that we can apply to everyday life, shining a light on how to live life well and coaching us through common mistakes and challenging seasons. **Have you read Proverbs? If so, would you recommend it to a friend? Why, or why not?**

Stephen explains that the book of Proverbs also helps us to see Jesus – full of wisdom – more clearly. **Do you tend to think of Jesus as wise – or do you think of Him more as loving, or forgiving, or something else? Do you agree that it's impossible for us to live a wise life without the help of the Holy Spirit? Why, or why not?**

Our words have power, so we need to use them wisely. **What would change in your life, this week, if you were far more aware of the utter uniqueness of your voice: your vocal fingerprint given to you by God for a purpose? Would it change what you say, how you say it, and who you say it to? Why, or why not?**

Stephen says, 'The power of speech is an extraordinary gift from God laced with divine potential. God spoke a word and the universe was formed. Jesus spoke a word and people were healed, forgiven, transformed.' **Can you think of any famous speeches in more recent history that have literally changed the world? Whose words have hurt you most? Whose words have brought you hope and healing? Has God convicted you of ways your words have hurt others? Who may have been helped, encouraged, or inspired by your words?**

Speaking the right words at the right time with the right tone of voice requires wisdom and has the potential to bring tremendous blessing. **If you're ok to talk about it, share about a time when you had the right words to say, but you picked the wrong time or tone – or when the time was right to speak up but you didn't know what to say or how to say it. What did you learn? How would you do things differently if you could re-live those moments?**

Proverbs 12:18 says, 'The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.' Stephen illustrates this scripture by asking us to picture an actual ox's tongue. **Has an ox's tongue ever lied, sworn, bragged, gossiped, slandered, or spoken a cruel word? Has yours? Has an ox's tongue ever encouraged someone, or called out someone's passion or potential, or spoken kindly to someone going through a tough time? Has yours? Do you tend to underestimate the significance of the words you speak? Who is impacted daily by what you say (or don't say)?**

Stephen tells the amusing story of a time he thought no one was listening to his words – when in fact he was backstage in a recording studio, mic'd up and being broadcast for all to hear. 'If we don't realise that people are listening to our words,' Stephen says, 'we will be careless or reckless with the words we speak.' **Have you ever overheard something you wish you hadn't? How did you deal with the situation? Do you need to ask someone's forgiveness for something you've blurted out without thinking? Who do you need to forgive for damaging you with their words?**

You might be tempted to vow never to speak again, for fear of the mess your reckless words might make. **Why is this *not* a good idea? Can you think of a time when you were so grateful someone decided not to shut up? Who needs your words of comfort or encouragement today? Who needs you to say *sorry* or *I love you*?**

Proverbs 15:1 says, 'A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.' **In which situations do your words tend to stir up – or defuse – anger? Describe a time when you used a gentle answer to take the tension out of a volatile situation.**

Proverbs 12:19 tells us that, 'Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.' Stephen says, 'Lies are temporary, but truth is eternal. When people build their lives on lies, it's like building on sand. Things built on lies might look impressive – might appear powerful – but they will crumble and disappear.' **Considering the combined social media presence of your group, how quickly do you think you could spread a lie around the world?**

**In your experience, does truth really outlive lies? How would you explain to a friend who has bought into the thinking of our post-truth culture that truth is absolute? Do you value truth in your personal relationships? Why, or why not? Why do you think truthfulness is integral to the mark you'll leave on this world?**

### **BIBLE EXPLORATION**

Read Psalm 19:14. **If our thoughts affect our feelings, and our feelings affect our words and actions, why is it so important that the meditations of our hearts are pleasing to God?**

Proverbs 16:24 reads, 'Kind words are like honey – sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.' **Describe a time when someone's words of encouragement affected you both emotionally and physically.**

Read the words of Jesus in Matthew 12:36–37. **Do they freak you out? Why, or why not?**

Paul writes to the Ephesians, 'Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.' (Ephesians 4:29) He also writes to the Colossian believers, 'But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behaviour, slander, and dirty language.' (Colossians 3:8) **Think about the series you stream, the films you watch, the social media accounts you follow, and the people you hang out with. What's your next step towards eradicating dirty language from your life?**

### **LAST WORD**

May you be mindful that your words have power and that the legacy you'll leave is closely connected to your honesty and integrity. May you be unwavering in your commitment to speaking the truth in love, even when it's hard, and when it costs you. May you offer the world only words that build others up, and may you build all the most important things in your life on God's truth.

### **DEEPER WALK**

*Select at least one activity below to complete before watching the next session.*

**Read:** Meditate on Colossians 3:17. Run through your plans for the week ahead. What will it look like for you to say and do everything with gratitude to God and in the name of Jesus?

**Write:** If you've been lying to God or yourself, come clean. Of course, God knows already. Still, write out your honest confession, bringing what's hidden into the light of His truth and love.

**Pray:** Text a couple of friends and arrange a time and place to meet for prayer. Pray for one another, that God would give you a deepening awareness of the influence your words wield, and that He would give you words of extraordinary wisdom and kindness.