

## WISDOM FOR EVERYDAY LIFE | Session 2: Using Words Wisely

### **SESSION GOALS**

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

**MAIN IDEA:** Our words have the power to transform people's lives.

**Head Change:** To know that we need the Holy Spirit's help to speak the right word to the right person at the right time in the right way.

**Heart Change:** To feel grateful that we can grow in wisdom and discernment regarding when and how to speak.

**Life Change:** To refuse to gossip and to exercise the superpower of gentleness.

### **OPEN**

**Have the words of a character in a book, in a film, or on a stage, ever reduced you to tears? If so, why were you so moved by what they said? Have your words ever made someone else cry (in a good way)?**

Our words have the power to charm, and disarm, and bring about wondrous change. Of course, as we've already seen, our words also have the power to devastate. In this session, Stephen explores more of the wisdom Proverbs offers us for using our words well.

### **VIEW**

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

**Why might we feel flattered if someone gossips to us?**

**How does Stephen define gossip?**

**When it comes to words, Stephen says less is more. Why?**

**What does Stephen mean when he says we should 'play the long game' when it comes to using words wisely in relationships?**

Show SESSION #2: *Using Words Wisely* (9 minutes)

### **REVIEW**

Stephen opens the session with the adage, 'Nothing is often a good thing to do, and always a wise thing to say'. **Have you ever wished you'd taken this advice? Do you agree that the right words spoken at the right time to the right person in the right way are powerful enough to transform someone's life? Why, or why not?**

Proverbs 26:20 says, 'Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.' **Have you ever set a relationship on fire through gossip? If so, how did you put the fire out?**

Stephen says, 'Gossip is addictive. It's so tempting to listen to people speaking negatively about someone who isn't present! We can feel flattered when people are gossiping to us about another person because it implies that we're trusted, we're special, and we're in the inner circle!' **Can you relate? Share (without gossiping!) how someone else gossiping to you makes you feel. Do you agree that how someone talks to you about others is how they talk to others about you? How might remembering this change your interactions with certain people at work, at church, or in your social spaces?**

Stephen explains that gossip is when you're discussing someone and you're not part of the problem or the solution. Gossip can make us feel a sense of superiority in being able to identify other people's failings so clearly or a sense of camaraderie in winning other people to our cause. **Does gossip ever make you feel better about yourself? If so, does that feeling last long? Do you agree that how you speak about people who are not present will either build or erode trust with those who are present? Why, or why not? If you're comfortable to do so, share about a time when your side of the story definitely didn't represent the whole truth. Would you have told the story differently if the person you were talking about had been present?**

Stephen's amusing story about his friend unwittingly voice-noting him is actually very sobering... **How would your conversations change this week if, every time you spoke about someone who wasn't present, your phone recorded your words and sent that person a voice note of what you said?**

Gossip is fuel for the fire of quarrels. Without it, relationships have space to recover and be restored. **Which of your relationships need recovery and restoration? Has gossip played a role in causing the damage? What's your next step?**

Proverbs 10:19 says, 'Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues,' and Proverbs 15:28 says, 'The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.' When it comes to words, less is more. **Do you agree? Why, or why not? Why is it so easy for us, in this cultural moment, to use too many words in any given situation on any given day?**

Stephen says, 'We have more things to speak about, and more ways of speaking... Wisdom reminds us that it's very easy to speak the wrong word to the right person; very easy to speak the right word to the wrong person; very easy to speak the right word to the right person at the wrong time; very easy to speak the right word to the right person at the right time in the wrong way; but it is very hard to speak the right word to the right person at the right time in the right way. To do that we will need the help of the Holy Spirit.' **In which situations do you tend to lose your temper – and your word filter? Have you ever invited the Holy Spirit to be part of a conversation? If so, what difference did He make? What does Stephen mean when he says, 'It's very easy to win the argument and lose the person'? Who is the most self-controlled person you know? What have you learned from watching them in conversation?**

Proverbs 25:15 says, 'Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.' **Can you think of any world leaders who have shaped their nations, for better or worse, with their words? What do you think Stephen means when he says that gentleness is a superpower? Where would those who know you best place your speech, on a scale of harsh to gentle?**

Stephen encourages us to exercise patience and play the long game when it comes to persuading those in our circles of influence. **Has impatience ever worked out well for you? When you've been persuaded to see a particular situation from someone else's point of view, how did they win you over to their perspective?**

Stephen points out, 'We can think that persuasion comes by superior arguments, or imposing manner, or by sheer power. But actually... we know that it's often the gentle word which helps us to see a situation differently, realise where we have been in the wrong, been unfair, acted hastily or harshly. In a world of aggression and corrosive speech, gentleness is a superpower.' **Who needs your superpower today?**

### **BIBLE EXPLORATION**

The following verses also deal with the destructiveness of gossip, slander, and lies: Proverbs 6:16–19, 10:18, 11:13, 16:28, 18:8, 20:19. **How would you explain to a five-year-old the power of their words and how important it is to use their words wisely?**

Read Psalm 34. **What kinds of words come out of the mouths of the godly? Explain the life hack offered by the psalmist in verses 12–13.**

Paul reminds Titus to remind his fellow believers: 'They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarrelling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone.' (Titus 3:2) **Talk about a time when you were undone by someone's humility and gentleness of speech. How did the experience change you?**

### **LAST WORD**

Before moving on to the next session, repent, if God has convicted you of gossip or harsh speech. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you gentle words of great power and see what He will do. Your words can change the world!

### **DEEPER WALK**

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

**Read:** Read James 1:26 – slowly, aloud – from a different Bible translation from the one you normally use. What is God saying to you about bridling your tongue? What's your next step?

**Write:** Think about the situations that typically infuriate you and tempt you to spew words you end up regretting. Write yourself a script of calm, gentle responses you could rehearse to use in those moments.

**Pray:** Set a phone reminder to go off during your lunch break every day this week. Use the prompt to repent of any gossip you've indulged in, and pray for wisdom, strength, and gentleness as you choose your words for the rest of the day.