

Overview

- In our first session, we looked at our words in relation to God—the amazing gift of language and the privilege of talking to God.
- In our second session, we looked at words in relation to ourselves and how the words we tell ourselves can go astray if left unchecked.
- In our third session, we looked at the 3 levels of communication and the pitfalls of our words as we interact with others.
- And today, we'll look at gratitude, the guardrail that keeps us on the road to spiritual flourishing.

What is an interesting fact about you?

- In our first session, we looked at our words in relation to God—the amazing gift of language and the privilege of talking to God.



James 8

- ⁸ The tongue is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.
- ⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness.
- ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

Proverbs 18:21

- Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
And those who love it will eat its fruit. (NASB)

Words are a gauge



The condition of our words
has a direct correlation
to the condition of our heart



Watch over your heart with all diligence,
for from it flow the springs of life.

Proverbs 4:23

- In our second session, we looked at words in relation to ourselves and how the words we tell ourselves can go astray if left unchecked.



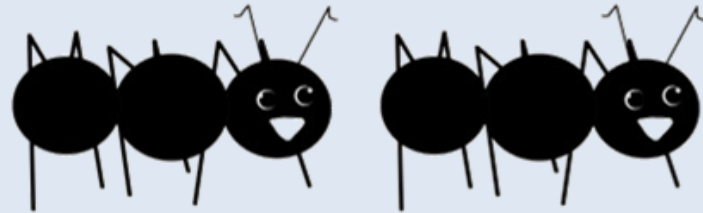
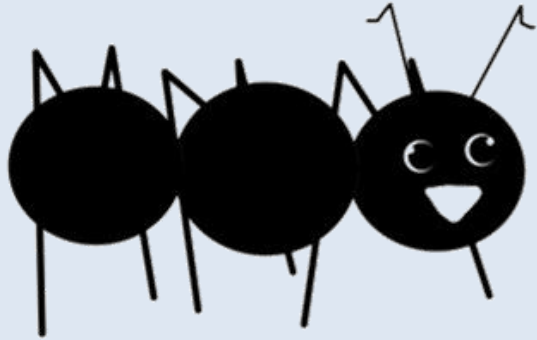
How do you know which pieces of furniture need to stay or go?

- **RECOGNIZE**—whether the thought is good for edification, reproof (correction), or if it is false
 - *But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:5*
- **REFUSE**—thoughts that are not accurate or edifying (building you up, in Christ), whether they're your words or someone else's
 - *Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:23*

How do you know which pieces of furniture need to stay or go?

- **REPLACE**—the thoughts you need to refuse with what is true
 - *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*
Philippians 4:8
- **REPEAT**—the process for as long as it takes to bring your thoughts under control
 - *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.* 2 Corinthians 10:5

A.N.T.S-Automatic Negative Thoughts



How to kill the ANTs

A.N.T. (write out the automatic negative thoughts)	SPECIES (identify the type of irrational thought)	KILL THE A.N.T. (talk back to the irrational thoughts)
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

ANT	Species of ANT	Kill the ANT
You never listen to me.	Always/Never Thinking	I get frustrated when you don't listen to me, but I know you have listened to me and will again.
The boss doesn't like me.	Mind Reading	I don't know that. Maybe she's just having a bad day. Bosses are people, too.
The whole class will laugh at me.	Predicting the Future	I don't know that. Maybe they'll really like my speech.
I'm stupid.	Labeling	Sometimes I do things that aren't too smart, but I'm not stupid.
It's your fault we have these marital problems.	Blame	I need to look at my part of the problems and look for ways I can make the situation better.

What is true?

- Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, ²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

Ephesians 21-24

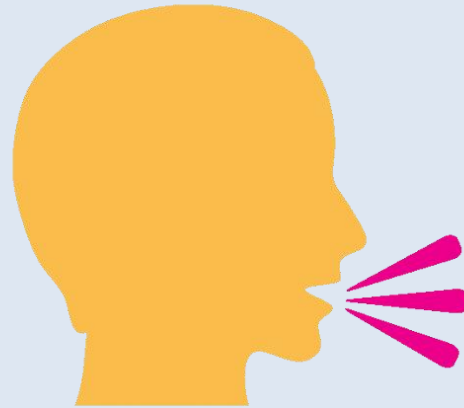
- In our third session, we looked at the 3 levels of communication and the pitfalls of our words as we interact with others.

There are 3 basic levels of communication:

1. Communicate
2. Communicate clearly
3. Communicate clearly, in love

1. Communicate

- share or exchange or impart or transmit information, news, or ideas verbally or non-verbally



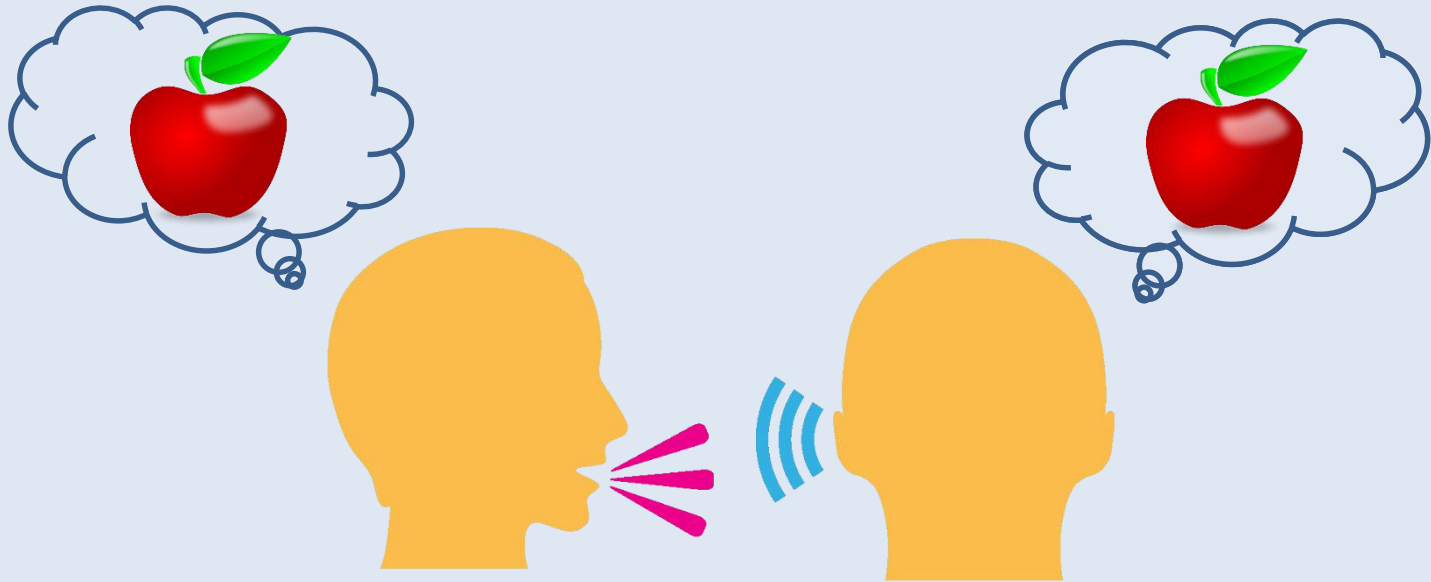
“ I know you think you understand what you thought I said but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.”

~Alan Greenspan, an American economist

1. Communicate

2. Communicate clearly

– succeed in conveying one's ideas or in evoking understanding in others.



1. Communicate
2. Communicate clearly
3. Communicate clearly in love



4 PITFALLS

#1:
DEMANDING PERFECTION





#2:

BEING JUDGMENTAL

#3:

EXPRESSING CONSTANT NEGATIVITY



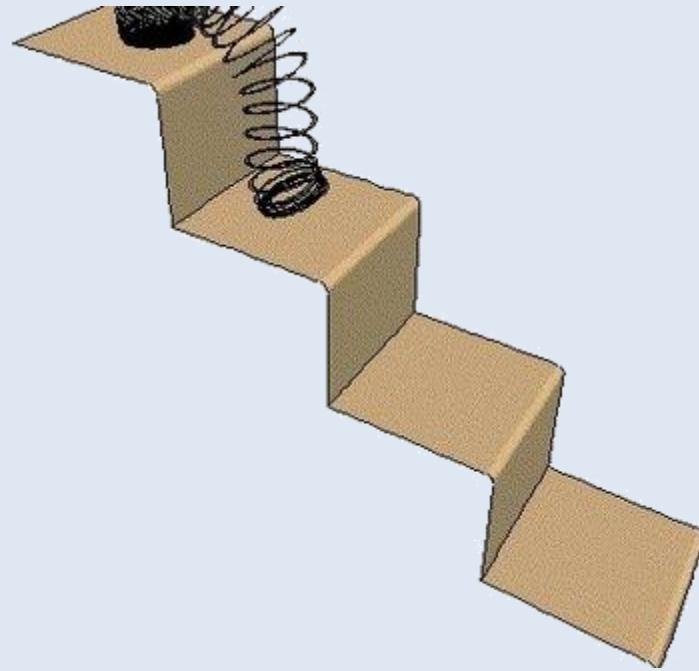
#4:

NEEDING TO CONTROL



Pitfalls:

1. Demanding Perfection
2. Being Judgmental
3. Expressing Constant Negativity
4. Needing to Control



Communicate Clearly in Love

Ephesians 4:29-30

- “Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouth.”
 - Consider the **prose**
 - What is my motive for speaking? How am I representing my ambassadorial role as a representative of Jesus Christ? (2 Cor. 5:1-21...We are therefore Christ’s Ambassadors)
- “but only what is helpful in building others up”
 - Consider the **person**
 - What do I know about this individual that would shape what I say? What is important to the Lord, and how can I speak in a way that promotes it?
- “according to their needs”
 - Consider the **problem** (according to their needs).
 - What is this person’s real need in this situation and how should it guide what I say?
- “that it may benefit those who listen”
 - Consider the **process**
 - How is my communication redemptive? How does it benefit the listener?
- “and do no grieve the Holy Spirit of God”
 - Consider the **power**
 - What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit? How do I walk in the Spirit?

Our words affect our health

- There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Proverbs 12:18

- Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

Proverbs 3:7

- A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Proverbs 17:22

- Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Proverbs 16:24

- My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body.

Proverbs 4:20-22

- And today, we'll look at gratitude, the guardrail that keeps us on the road to spiritual flourishing.



“Gratitude heals, energizes and transforms lives.”

Robert Emmons, Ph.D

- **Grateful people celebrate the present** by actively appreciating and magnifying the value of what they have making them active participants of thankfulness and appreciation instead of spectators
- **Grateful people experience fewer toxic emotions like** envy, depression, regret.
- **Grateful people are more stress resilient** in the face of stressful life situations. They recuperate more quickly from anxiety in the aftermath of difficult situations and are less bothered from continued negative symptoms.
- **Grateful people have greater social ties and self-worth.** They recognize how others from their past and present have helped them to get where they are. They appreciate the contributions they have made, intentionally or not, and it strengthens their ties with them and their self-worth.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

- Rejoice always,
- pray continually,
- give thanks in all circumstances;
- for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NASB)

- Always be joyful.
- Never stop praying.
- Be thankful in all circumstances,
- for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NLT)

How is “rejoice” and “give thanks”
the same?

How are they different?

What does it mean to give thanks?

- **To thank:** to express **gratitude** to
- **Gratitude:** the state of being **grateful**; a feeling of appreciation or thanks
- **Grateful:** The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

What does it mean to rejoice or to be joyful?

- **Rejoice**--to feel or show that you are very happy about something
- **Be joyful**—having or causing great happiness

**Jesus Cleanses
Ten Lepers
Luke 17:11-19**

**Parable of Two
Debtors
Luke 7:40-50**



- What do these two stories have in common?
- What do they teach us about gratefulness?

Gratitude Equation

$$\frac{\text{What you receive}}{\text{What you believe you deserve}}$$

Your degree of gratitude

When you believe you deserved more than you received, what emotions do you manifest?

For what can we be immeasurably thankful?

- Read **Romans 4:7-8**
 - For those who trust Jesus, our sins will never be counted against us!
- Read **Hebrews 12:28**
 - When we trust in Jesus, we enter God's everlasting, unshakable kingdom!
- Read **Acts 1:8**
 - God sends His Holy Spirit to live in us, and the Spirit gives us the power to live for God.

What are concrete ways to foster personal gratitude?

- Recognize God's many gifts and thank Him throughout the day—focus on those moments of appreciation by meditating on God's grace, generosity, and goodness.
- When you lack gratefulness, ask yourself if you feel entitled.
- Identify core ways in which you are undeniably blessed and express gratefulness to God and others.
- Journal daily about things for which you were grateful that day.
- Think of someone for whom you are grateful. Pray for them and thank them.
- Identify things during the day for which you are grateful and express it out loud.
- Appreciate people directly and audibly
- Write and send a letter/email to someone for whom you're grateful.
- At the end of the week, recount highlights of what you were grateful for each day.

be grateful



A reminder over the thermostat in our house

How can parents foster gratitude?

- **Create awareness.** "Look at what Aunt Janie gave you!"
- **Assign value to the act.** "Wasn't that kind of her. She didn't have to do that. Why do you think she'd go to that trouble? She must think you're special."
- **Encourage grateful behavior:** Help your child step into the giver's shoes. What do you think she had to do to get that for you? What do you think about that? How would you like to express thanks to her?

- Next month, March 18th, we look at the quintessential guardrail of prayer and its and mysterious work.