



Week Two

Opening Prayers

God, thank you for creating this space for us to connect with each other and with you. Help us to use this time to grow our faith and to grow in friendship. Amen.

New Groups Only Leader Notes

Since your group is meeting for the first time, here are some introduction questions to cover. If you feel these questions naturally came out already, feel free to skip some of the questions or this entire section:

- When did you first come to EastLake Church and why did you decide to keep coming back?
- Have you ever been a part of an EastLake Growth Group before? Why did you decide to join a group this season?

Talk It Over

This series we are looking at the power of our words. More specifically, we are looking at the reality that our words have the power to bring life or damage. The power of our words remains true whether we are talking about words that have been spoken to us, words that we say to ourselves, or words that we speak to others.

- If you could spend your time talking about anything, what topic would you want to talk about?
- Do you know someone who has a natural gift in speaking life-giving words to others? Tell us about that person's gift and the impact you see it make.

Read James 3:5-6 (The Message) and James 3:9-12 (VOICE)

James is making the point here that our words have weight. There is significance to our speech. Our words have the power of life, and they also have the power of death. They can build up or tear down, heal or hurt, bring clarity or bring confusion.

- Tell us about a kind thing someone has said to you that brought life. Why did those words matter to you? The point of this question is for us to look at the ways words can bring us life.
- How difficult or easy is it for you to say life-giving, kind words to someone? There is no doubt that this is easier for some people than it is for others. Tell us about your natural bent in this area and why you think that is the case.

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- Have you ever known someone or had to work with someone who was reckless and foolish with their words? Without sharing names, what sorts of troubles, hurts, damage, drama came from their words.

Read Luke 6:44-45 (The Voice) and Read Proverbs 4:23-24 (The Voice)

The Bible tells us that our words are a powerful indicator of what is happening in our heart. The heart in this context is referring to the core of us — the spiritual hub inside of us where all the other spokes of life connect to. In this sense, the heart is the source of so much of our life. Furthermore, the Bible teaches us, that everything we see, hear, and experience influences our heart. This means our hurts, our thoughts, the dreams we think about, the things we watch, the books we read, the things we listen to, the conversations with engage with, the people we hang out with, all have an impact on us.

- Tell us about your thoughts on this topic of our hearts having so much power and influence in our words. In what ways do these ideas resonate with you?
- What are some of the good things that have your attention? This might be a person, a habit, or a goal.
- Have you ever said something hurtful and felt surprised by what you said? Tell us about that experience and where you think those hurtful words came from.
- Are there things in your life right now that have your attention that aren't bringing you life? If you are willing, share about that thing. It may be something as simple as the music you listen to or the shows you watch; this also may be something more serious. If you aren't comfortable talking about this thing, don't feel pressure to share. But take note of your honest thought regarding the choices you are making.

Read John 7:37-38 (The Voice)

The bottomline of our talk this week is that Jesus invites each of us into a heart renovation. Jesus isn't merely looking for us to change our behavior. Behavior modification is not a bad thing, of course, but Jesus looks to offer us something much deeper. He looks to bring our hearts life and healing.

- In what ways do you regularly find life in Jesus?
- Have you experienced some level of healing in your heart? Tell us about that process.

This week we looked at a checklist that helps us to see what is in our hearts. As we go through the list slowly, take note of what words and ideas jump out at you the most:

- *A heart filled with guilt speaks angry words.*
A heart filled with forgiveness speaks gracious words.
- *A heart filled with entitlement speaks complaining words.*
A heart filled with gratitude speaks uplifting words.
- *A heart filled with bitterness speaks harsh words.*
A heart filled with peace speaks tender words.
- *A heart filled with rejection speaks resentful words.*
A heart filled with acceptance speaks kind words.
- *A heart filled with condemnation speaks judgmental words.*
A heart filled with love speaks compassionate words.

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- *A heart filled with jealousy speaks words of gossip.*
A heart filled with contentment speaks words of blessing.

Closing Questions and Questions to Consider This Week

- What words or ideas jumped out at you the most? What was it about those ideas and words that got your attention?
- Based on the week's talk and today's discussion, what do you think Jesus is inviting you into next? What is your next right step?

Closing Prayer

God, help us to apply what we talked about today to our lives. Help us to say 'yes' to whatever you might be inviting us into. Amen.

New Groups Only Leader Notes: Before you end your group, be sure to cover any logistical details or reminders. For example, are there any childcare details to cover? Have you asked if someone wants to own bringing snack? Where there any questions that needed attention?