

SPEAKING FOR THE LORD

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[Hope Bible Church of Tampa](http://HopeBibleChurchofTampa.org)

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God has given us the ability to form letters with our mouths, and the ability to say words from those letters, and the ability to put words together in an intelligent and meaningful way, and therefore, the ability to communicate with other people. To be able to communicate is a wonderful gift that God has given to human beings. And yes, animals can communicate, but not intelligently and clearly like humans.

Now a person who's saved, who's born again, becomes a new creature in Christ. That means being a new creature in his thoughts, words, and actions. And today we're talking about our speech, and God wants us to speak in a godly way, in a loving, truthful, and encouraging way. Eph. 4:25, 29

Now the key to having godly speech is having godly thoughts. Lk. 6:45 – *“for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”* And so what you say comes from your heart, from your thoughts. If you have bad speech, it's because you have bad thoughts. And if you have good speech, it's because you have good thoughts. Prov. 23:7. *“As a man thinks within himself, so he is.”* And so as you think, so you will speak. And good thoughts, godly thoughts, lead to good speech, godly speech.

Now Psalm 19 is about how God speaks to us. And God speaks to us through creation, and through His word, through the Bible, what we call the word of God. - Psalm 19:14. This verse talks about both your words and your thoughts and is showing this connection between your words and thoughts. And God is saying that godly thoughts and godly speech must be based on God's word, on God's truth. And there's that word meditation, which means your thinking. And God wants you to be meditating on, to be thinking about His Word. And when you are thinking about God's word, then you will have godly thoughts and godly speech.

In life you may hear someone who is an eloquent speaker, or a powerful speaker, an intelligent speaker, a persuasive speaker, or a funny speaker, a comedian. - When I was in college, I had a speech class, and it was to help you learn how to be a more effective speaker. And there's no doubt that being an effective speaker is one of the keys to being a successful person in a worldly sense and in a spiritual sense.

But our focus today is not how to be a good speaker in a worldly sense, but how to be a godly speaker, one who's speaking for God, and wants to glorify God by his speech. And to do this, you need the truth of God in your heart, you need godly thoughts. Psalm 1:2-3. A spiritually prosperous person delights in God's word and meditates on it, and therefore has godly thoughts and godly speech, and he's successful.

1 Cor. 2:1-5. We may think of Paul being this great speaker. But from a worldly perspective, he was not a superior, persuasive, or wise speaker. Acts 17:18. Paul spoke by the Spirit of God and by the power of God, and that's what made his speech effective. Eph. 5:18-19 – and so to be speaking for God you must be filled with God's word and be filled with God's Spirit. Col. 3:16

Now no matter where you're at in life as a Christian, God wants you to keep growing in this area of speech. And so keep thinking about God's word, about His truth, His promises, and His commands. And be filled with the Spirit, trust the Spirit to help you speak. And learn from godly Christians too - listen to them as they talk. 1 Tim. 4:12

Now speech is a huge subject, and today I want to look at some specific areas:

1. Speak the truth. Eph. 4:25 - *"Laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor."* As Christians, we're to speak the truth, we're to tell the truth.
- We're to be honest with people, whether it's in a relationship or at work.
We're not to lie, we're not to even tell little lies. We're to always tell the truth.
- And we're not to exaggerate, we're not to share a little truth mixed with a little lie. Our speech is to have integrity, it is to be correct, precise, and accurate.
- And we're not to flatter people. Now in the dictionary, flattery is defined this way - *"to praise excessively, especially from motives of self-interest."* We're not to say something *"nice"*, something flattering to someone to get them to like you.

Now we are to tell the truth in all areas of life. And as Christians, it's not just a matter of being truthful in our speech, of having integrity in our speech, but we're to also share spiritual truth, truths from God's word, truths about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, and our hope. Eph. 4:4-6
- Col. 4:2-4. You are to look for opportunities to share the gospel, and when you do share the gospel, you're to make it clear, crystal clear, understandable. Paul

2. Speak the truth in love. Eph. 4:15. You want to share the truth in a loving way. You don't want to share it in a strong, harsh, and unloving way, or in a way that's loud, forceful, or cruel, or where it's obvious that you're trying to impress someone.
- 1 Cor. 13:1-2. And a person who shares the truth in an unloving way is nothing but a noisy gong, a clanging symbol. And so you want to share the truth in a patient, gentle, and kind way.

3. Speak lovingly. 1 Cor. 13:4-7 gives specific ways to love. You can think of being loving with your actions, but you also need to think of being loving in your speech. You're to be patient in your speech, not speak in a way where it shows you're in a hurry or where it shows you're irritated with a person because of what they said or did.

You are to have kind speech, sweet speech, gentle speech.

- You are to have forgiving speech, not speech where you're expressing your anger because of how a person offended you by something they said or did.
 - You are to have humble speech, not speech where you boast about yourself, or talk about yourself, or try to make a person think you're better than them.
- You're to speak in such a way where you're showing interest in the other person.

4. Speak encouragingly. Heb. 3:13. This is in the context of faith, of how God wants us to have believing hearts, of how He wants us to be trusting Him. People will be discouraged if they don't have faith, if they're not trusting God. Our objective with people who are discouraged is to help them get their eyes off themselves, to help them look to God, to give them vss. and promises from God, to help them see that God loves them, to help them trust God and have faith in Him.

Eph. 4:29. When you're with people, you want to meet their need, you want to address any problem they may have, and you do that by giving them specific truth that relates to their need, and helps them to personalize and believe that truth or promise, instead of trusting in themselves or others. A person may feel unloved, or lonely, or hopeless, or like he has no purpose, And there are vss. that relate to each one of these areas. 1 Cor. 14:3, Heb. 10:25

5. Speak wisely. Proverbs. Speaking wisely means you're speaking with wisdom. It means you know the right thing, the godly thing to say, and then you say it in a loving way, and in a timely way. There may be a particular problem, a question, a conflict, and God wants you to know what His word says, and therefore have wisdom, and then share it in a wise way - you know what and how and when to share with the person who's in need. James 3:13-18

- Jesus was like this all the time. He always spoke wisely. Luke 2:45-47
- Wisdom also comes with experience. You have learned things through the years, and you have more wisdom. And so you speak wisely, you speak from experience.

6. Do not speak unrighteously. Now here are some areas of bad speech:

- There's gossip, saying something that is true about someone else, but it makes them look bad. It may be some area of sin, something they said or did wrong.
- There's slander, saying something bad about someone that's not true, and it shouldn't be said. That is, it's a lie and it's defamatory.
- There's complaining. A person doesn't like his present situation, and he complains. He's whining, grumbling, fussing, griping, moaning, bellyaching. A person like this isn't trusting God, he isn't thankful, and he's complaining against God. Ex. 16
- There's anger, a person is upset, is irritated, is mad at God or at some person.
- There's coarse speech, vulgar speech, obscene talk, silly talk, speech that's not holy and righteous, but is worldly, fleshly, and isn't proper for a Christian to say. Tit. 2:8

There's malicious speech, mean speech, cruel speech, hateful speech.

- There's speech conveying unbelief. A person says something that shows he's doubting God, that he's not trusting God, that he is fearful or worried.

- There's taking God's name in vain. And there's blasphemy, denouncing God, opposing God, openly and strongly speaking against God.

7. There's fruitful speech. We know what it means to work with our hands, where we can see that we accomplished something, made something, or fixed something. It can be making a meal, repairing something, or cleaning something. But fruitful speech means we're saying something truthful, loving, and wise, and it affects the other person in a good way, a godly way, an encouraging way. That is, there is fruit, a positive outcome, good results from our speech. Proverbs

Proverbs 10:6, 10:8, 10:10, 10:11, 10:13, 10:14, 10:18, 10:21, 10:31, 11:11, 11:12, 11:13, 11:30, 12:6, 12:13, 12:14, 12:17, 12:18, 12:19, 12:22, 13:1, 13:2, 13:3, 13:14, 14:3, 14:5, 14:23, 14:25, 15:1, 15:2, 15:4, 15:7, 15:18, 15:23, 15:26, 15:28, 16:13, 16:21, 16:23, 16:24, 16:27, 16:28, 17:4, 17:7, 17:14, 17:20, 17:28, 18:12, 18:4, 18:6, 18:7, 18:8, 18:20, 18:21, 18:23, 19:1, 19:5, 19:9, 19:11, 19:25, 19:28, 20:3, 20:5, 20:18, 20:19, 20:20, 21:6, 21:9, 21:11, 21:23, 22:11, 22:17, 22:18, 22:24, 23:7, 23:9, 23:16, 24:2, 24:7, 24:25, 24:26, 24:28, 25:9, 25:12, 25:13, 25:14, 25:18, 26:5, 26:8, 26:9, 26:19, 26:22, 26:23, 26:24, 26:25, 26:28, 27:2, 27:5, 27:6, 27:14, 28:4, 28:9, 28:23, 29:5, 29:8, 29:9, 29:11, 29:15, 29:17, 29:20, 29:22, 30:10, 30:14, 30:17, 30:32, 31:26

As you can see, there are a lot of verses on speech, and we've only looked at some of them today. And there are a lot of verses because it's such an important subject. The direction, success, & blessing of God on this church relates to our speech, from us as leaders to you, from one to another, and from us to others outside the church

And so think about your speech, and ask God to help you be a good communicator, to be encouraging, comforting, wise, and loving in your speech. You see, God can use you to have a powerful affect on the life of another person by something you say to them. It may be just one thing, but it may be that which affects the other person in a positive way for the rest of their life. RW - fulfill min.

- So be thinking about your speech, be filled with God's word and God's Spirit, and be thinking before you speak, and then speak the truth in love. Prov. 18:21, John 12:48-50