



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Uphill Habits – Word Perfect

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January 28, 2018

Main Idea – What we say, and how we say it, is important. Words have power; they can be used for good or bad. As we grow toward perfection, we should control what we say so that everything we speak is for good.

We can't control what others do, but we can control what we do

- Auto-correct features on our smart phones and computers can both help and hurt effective communication.
- The specific words we communicate are important to the messages that are being received. We are to work toward communicating things in the spirit of what God wants communicated. **Matthew 5:48 – Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**
- Until we reach perfection, we are not qualified to correct others on every little thing that may seem to go wrong. When man tries to balance judgment and mercy, he stumbles. **1 Chronicles 13: 9-10 – And when they came to Chidon's threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God.**
- Rather than judging things as we go through life, we should seek discernment to understand what is happening.

The ability to discern - rather than judge - comes through an ongoing process

- **Philippians 3: 12-14 – Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**
- Sanctification is the *ongoing process* of being set apart, through holiness, to be used by God. We are a work of God that is in the process of being perfected. **Hebrews 10:14 – For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**
- **James 1:4 – But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

Being able to control our tongues is a big part of the sanctification process

- **James 3: 1-12 – My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.**

If you're not listening, you're not learning

- **James 3:4** uses the analogy of a ship's rudder that controls the direction of the boat. This rudder is able to direct the boat against the natural flow of the water.
- Likewise, our tongues – properly used – will direct us against the natural flow of what we might feel like saying.
- When speaking, we should resist what feels natural. **Proverbs 18: 21 – Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat of its fruit.**

The tongue is a fire; used for both good and evil

- **James 3:6-10** tell us it is not right that we sometimes use our tongue for bad purposes while sometimes using it for good. We should not use our tongue both ways.

Are we deceived?

- Are there things (ideas, dispositions, etc.) we have allowed into ourselves that have deceived our thinking?
- **James 1: 26 – If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.**
- When we speak negative things by the flesh, we are putting ourselves on the enemy's radar.
- When we speak positive things, we are speaking a language Satan doesn't understand.

What are we full of?

- **1 Corinthians 15: 33 – Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."**
- Our mouths will speak what we have previously put into our hearts.
Luke 6: 43-45 – "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

Become a peace maker

- Jealousy is the enemy to promotion.
- Speak life into those around you.
- Work to walk in the same mercy and peace God has given to you.
James 1: 19-20 – So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Reflective Questions for Uphill Habits: Word Perfect

1. We have all experienced regret from the effects of having spoken careless words. Why, then, do we continue to speak without thinking?
2. Knowing that our road to perfection is a process, why is it especially important to carefully consider our words before saying something?
3. Is it possible careless words have happened because you allowed yourself to be deceived by a wrong idea of some kind? If so, from where did that idea originate?

4. Is it possible careless words have happened because you have allowed your heart to be exposed to harmful information or material?
5. What are practical things we can do to put good things into our hearts, so we can stay in a mindset that speaks forth the blessings of God?

