



My Big Fat Mouth

Bitter or Better

#npmybigfatmouth

Week 4
4 of 4

January 27, 2019

Bottom Line: The choice is yours—how will you use your words?

Icebreaker: Share a story of a time encouraging words made a difference in your life. OR, go around the circle and give an encouraging compliment to the person next to you. OR, divide into teams of two and make lists of an encouraging word for each letter of the alphabet—the more creative the better. First team done wins!

Key Verse: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you . . . For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? . . . Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”* Matthew 5:43-48 NKJV

Study any great relationships---a marriage, a friendship, siblings—and you will find a common denominator. Great relationships are made of great forgivers. You can’t have a relationship without missteps and mistakes, so you cannot maintain it without forgiveness. The reason great and lasting relationships are in such short supply is that forgiveness is not an easy or popular response. It takes courage to do what Jesus said. Anyone can fight back. Anyone can hold a grudge. Anyone can retaliate. Anyone can respond in kind.

But followers of Jesus aren’t just anyone. We are empowered by the One who created us to forgive, and who has given us the example of forgiveness. Jesus Christ came to earth to walk in our shoes, suffer all the indignities and hurts and undeserved pain we could imagine, and then even suffered undeserved death on the cross, willingly, for us, before we ever loved or believed in Him.

Bad things happen to good people. But a great and good God is with good people during those bad times. The Genesis story of Joseph (Gen. 37-41) tells us in bold action and words how a person can be filled with God’s love and through the power of their forgiving words deliver the most effective witness the world will ever see.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

“What goes around comes around.” How have you seen that to be true in your life for the good? For pain and hardship?

What current opportunity in life do you have to choose words of response to injustice and pain with kindness in the way Jesus did, or to default to vengeful words? How will you get the power to make the choice?

“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.” Who does that? Not many people. It’s what sets Christians apart because it’s not a natural response. Discuss.

“Loving your enemies, doing good to those who hate you, praying for those who hurt you—it’s the most powerful witness the world will ever see.” So why don’t we win the world? Why do we reject this and make excuses?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

Joseph illustrates that we must realize God is with us. If God was with him, how did he get sold into slavery? Joseph **decided** to believe it. How can you make that choice? How would your outlook on life change if you really believed God was with you no matter what?

Joseph also illustrates the necessity of remembering who God is. God was GOD, and Joseph used Potiphar’s house and the prison to develop and build himself. What you do in the hard things determines your future. Discuss.

“What you do when you have the power to determine the destiny of your enemy depends on what you have done with your bitterness and anger.” Discuss.

Joseph refused to play God. He didn’t downplay what they had done—he called it evil—but he let God handle it and just did good. How can you do that?

NEXT STEPS

This week consider taking some next steps together as a group:

- 1) Whom do you need to forgive?
- 2) What legacy do you want to leave with the people you care about?

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: The choice is yours—how will you use your words?

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Galatians 6:7

Tuesday: Ephesians 5:1

Wednesday: Matthew 5: 43-48

Thursday: Genesis 39:20-21

Friday: Genesis 50:19-20

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)