



spiritual adult

# DISCIPLE ME

**TRACK 3: DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS**

**ENCOURAGING WORDS**

## **ICEBREAKER: STICKY WORDS**

Take a moment to think of something someone has said to you that you still remember and had a profound impact on you, *for better or for worse*.

- What was said?
- What effect did those words have over time?

## **STUDY: WORDS THAT MATTER**

Most of us underestimate the power of our words - not because we doubt that words matter, but because we forget how frequently we use them. Every conversation leaves something behind. Every interaction shapes someone, nudging them either toward life or away from it. As we grow, the question begins to shift.

Spiritual children tend to ask, *"How do people's words affect me?"* Spiritual adults start asking, *"How are my words affecting others?"* Encouragement, then, isn't about having the right personality or being naturally upbeat - it's about influence, and choosing to use our words to build others up.

## **READ EPHESIANS 4:29**

- What stands out to you most from this verse, and why?
- What do you notice about what Paul says *not* to say versus what we *should* say?
- What usually drives your words in the moment - emotion, habit, truth, or love?
- What do you think it means to speak "according to their needs" rather than your own?
- How does this verse challenge the idea of "just being honest" with your words?
- Think about a recent conversation - how might it have changed if Ephesians 4:29 guided your words?

## ACTIVITY: THE TONE TEST

Using **Ephesians 4:29** as your guide, think about which words tend to tear down and which words help build others up. Use the activity below to drive home this idea. Take each kind of speech and connect it by drawing lines to one of the two categories. Then circle any kinds of speech that are a struggle for you right now.

	Defensive	Negative	
	Blunt	Condescending	
<b>TEARS DOWN</b>	Grateful	Gentle	<b>TEARS DOWN</b>
	Encouraging	Supportive	
	Critical	Accusatory	
	Sarcastic	Patient	
<b>BUILDS UP</b>	Hopeful	Dismissive	<b>BUILDS UP</b>
	Thoughtful	Complaining	
	Withholding	Honest	
	Respectful	Affirming	

## STUDY: THE POWER OF OUR WORDS

Paul doesn't just tell us to stop saying harmful things - he gives us a filter for what *should* come out of our mouths. In the second half of Ephesians 4:29, he shifts the focus from restraint to intention, reminding us that our words carry power.

They are meant to pass through a lens: *Will this build someone up? Does it meet a real need? Will it leave the listener better than I found them?* This is where our speech moves from reaction to influence, from simply expressing ourselves to using our words as tools God can use to bring life.

## READ: PROVERBS 12:18

- When have you seen words act like a weapon rather than a tool for good?
- In which relationships do your words currently have the greatest power to build or tear down?
- Where do you have an opportunity this week to bring healing through your words?

## CHALLENGE: THE OTHER SIDE OF ME

This week, ask five trusted people what it's like to be on the other side of you when your words aren't helpful - when they've felt hurt, discouraged, or shut down by something you've said. Ask the question simply, listen without defending or explaining, and thank them for their honesty. Write down what you notice, looking for patterns or gaps between your intent and your impact. This challenge isn't about shame; it's about humility. Growth happens when we're willing to listen first and let God reshape our words, so they bring life.