

Discipleship Groups — Level 6

WEEK 4

Heart Check: WORDS

Blessings to all.

We are in the fourth week of level 6 of the discipleship classes. The purpose of this level is to examine our hearts and understand how we are living our lives as disciples of Christ. This examination of our hearts should be done continuously to understand our convictions and motivations. As a church, we want to offer you discipleship that will be of great value to your life and help you in your transformation process as a disciple of Christ.

For me, there are four elements that produce transformation:

The first is the **Holy Spirit**: The Holy Spirit convicts us of the things that are wrong, leading us to repentance.

The second thing that produces transformation is **spiritual disciplines**; Praying, reading and studying the Bible, fasting, and listening to God's voice daily transforms us.

The third thing that produces this transformation is knowing the Bible: Biblical knowledge reveals what is inside.

And the fourth thing that produces transformation is **small groups**: The time you spend together in a group each week brings about transformation in your life.

To date, we have taught about examining our faith, our character, our habits, and our decisions. In 2 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 5, the apostle Paul writes:

“Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves.”

The apostle Paul encourages us to examine our hearts. He encourages us to determine how we are living our lives as disciples of Christ. The result of this examination should tell us if Jesus Christ lives in us and if we are reflecting this to others.

Today I want to talk to you about examining our **Words**.

Words have great spiritual power. The book of Proverbs, chapter 18, verse 21 tells us:

“The tongue can bring life or death...”

This tells me that the words we speak can bless or they can also bind, hurt, or harm others. Every word you and I say has an effect.

Three points I want to develop:

1. My words build up or tear down.

Jesus teaches us about the spiritual weight of our words in Matthew 12:36-37:

“And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.”

This verse teaches us that the words we speak have spiritual weight and eternal consequences. Useless words are those empty, purposeless words we say every day. For example, constant complaining, criticism, sarcasm, gossip, rudeness, declarations of defeat or unbelief. As disciples of Christ, you and I must take responsibility for what we say.

Before speaking, ask yourself: "Will what I'm about to say build up or tear down?" You can apply this daily at home, at work, at church, etc.

2. My words reveal what's inside.

My words reveal my heart. Jesus told the Pharisees and religious leaders, "You speak out of the abundance of your heart."

Matthew 12:34b (NLT) *“...for whatever is in your heart determines what you say.”*

When we are in those difficult moments, what are our words? What we say reveals what is in our hearts. The point is not to change my vocabulary—the point is to examine and heal my heart.

Repeat this after me: *“Today I choose to fill my heart with the Word of God, so that my words reflect life, faith, and truth.”*

3. My words change the atmosphere.

What you and I say has the power to change the emotional, spiritual, and relational atmosphere around us or wherever we are. We are like a thermostat. The function of a thermostat is to regulate the temperature of a place. With this device, I can raise or lower the temperature to maintain a good environment—not too hot or too cold, an environment where we all feel comfortable. My words can do this. Like a thermostat, my words can change the emotional atmosphere of my family, home, work, church, etc.

My words can:

- Bring peace or conflict
- Bring encouragement or discouragement
- Bring courage or fear
- Bring unity or division

My words can also create a positive spiritual atmosphere. What you say can generate Faith, Hope, unity, love, gratitude, or joy.

It would be good to ask ourselves:

- Do my words encourage or discourage?
- Do my words build up or tear down?
- Do my words bring peace or create conflict?
- Do my words heal or wound?

Remember the image of a thermostat. The thermostat produces changes to create a positive atmosphere.

- If your words are wise, this will produce life, peace, and positive results.
- If your words are full of faith, this will produce encouragement and trust in God.
- If your words are peaceful, they will produce calm, reconciliation, security, and trust.
- If your words are honorable, they will produce mutual respect, dignity, and healthy, lasting relationships.

Remember, your words can open or close doors. I'll end with this phrase: "He who controls his mouth controls his environment."

Here are some suggested activities:

1. This week we will practice what we have learned:
"Each day I will speak words that create a good atmosphere. Examples:
"Please." "Thank you." "I'm sorry." "Forgive me." "I forgive you." "I'm with you."
"We'll get through this." "God is in control." "Good job." "Thank you for what you do."
2. Questions for reflection:
 - a. Like a thermostat, am I doing my job well in maintaining a good atmosphere in my home?
 - b. Does my home have a peaceful or tense atmosphere?
 - c. Am I using my mouth to raise or lower the temperature?
3. Memory Verse: Ephesians 4:29
"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them."

With this, we conclude our fourth week of discipleship. We hope that everything we have taught will be of great benefit and blessing to your life. See you in the next lesson.

Blessings.