



Overflow, Part 1

Discussion Guide

Into the Word:

This week, Jeremy challenged us about the words that flow out of our heart. We many times do not give words the respect they deserve. Few things can keep us up at night like words that should—or should not—have been said. God gave us the power of speech for good reasons, and He also gave us detailed guidance in how to use it. God has given us guidance that one way we are to use our words is to speak truth. However, according to Mark Twain, “Lying is universal—we all do it; we all must do it.”

The 1997 Jim Carrey movie *Liar, Liar!* drives home the point. Due to his son’s birthday wish, Carrey, a habitual liar, must tell only the truth for an entire day. This “curse” sinks Carrey as a trial lawyer and renders him unable to talk his way out of a traffic ticket, but it also complicates relations with his family and earns him dirty looks from the coworkers he usually compliments. Unable to handle the consequences of not being able to lie, he quickly decides that the safest course is to say nothing at all.

Would your life be different if you could not tell any lies for a day?

Have you been hurt more often by lies or by truths spoken out of turn? Describe a hurtful episode of one kind or the other.

Like our other God-given abilities, the power of speech comes with responsibilities. Sometimes we may need to say things that make us uncomfortable.

Read 2 Samuel 12:1–10.

Nathan rebuked David for his affair with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of her husband, Uriah the Hittite. As a prophet, Nathan had special knowledge of God’s judgment and David’s future. *How can those of us who are not prophets discern when and how to rebuke others?*

Read Esther 4:9–14.

In Esther 4:14, Mordecai told Esther that she might have gained a royal position so that she could tell the king about Haman’s plot. *What is one way you are uniquely positioned—in your family, your neighborhood, your church, or your workplace—to share truth with someone?*

Read Romans 10:14–15.

We have a duty to proclaim the good news about Jesus. Specifically, this passage exhorts preachers to preach and other believers to support the preachers. *How can the words of others (preachers, Christian writers, Christian musicians, etc.) help you to do the challenging work of evangelism?*

Read Exodus 4:10–12.

When Moses made excuses for why he could not serve as God’s spokesman to Pharaoh and to the Israelites, God responded with a mixture of reassurance and rebuke. *What excuses have you made,*

verbally or silently, for not sharing a hard truth? Can you think of a time when God helped you speak or taught you what to say in a tough situation?

Apply the Word

The truth is that sometimes friends need to be confronted, but other times, such as when they wear tacky sweaters, mum is the appropriate word. In either situation, the guiding principle is love. Perfection in speech is as unattainable as perfection in loving each other, but progress in one area will naturally foster growth in the other. The key is to make sure truth and love operate together, the way God intended.

Read Colossians 4:6.

What does it mean for speech to be “full of grace, seasoned with salt”?

Read Ephesians 4:29.

What kinds of speech might contain “unwholesome talk”? By contrast, what kinds of speech build others up?

Read Philemon 1:4–21.

How does Paul soften his request to Philemon? What elements of this letter might be useful in other types of confrontations—with angry spouses, wayward children, unforgiving colleagues, estranged relatives?

Time for Action

Think of one recurring situation in which you are tempted to lie or muffle the truth. How can you be more forthright in the future?

Could well-chosen words help you build or mend a relationship? What are those words, and how will you share them?