

## Introduction

I am excited to be at this Vineyard Men's Conference. I want to thank Larry Toledo for hosting the conference. I want to thank Perry, Jack and Larry for participating. This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to sow into the men in our churches. Finally, I want to thank all of you who have sacrificed your time to come to this conference.

I had a birthday last week. I do not get too excited about birthdays. I recognize that we have a limited time here on earth and we need to make the most of it. Moses recognized this. In Psalms 90:12, he prayed, "So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom." I want to present to God a heart of wisdom. I want to bear much fruit, and glorify God.

On my birthday, I read from Psalms 112 in my devotions. It reads, "praise the Lord! How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments...." As I read that passage, the Spirit spoke to me about this coming year. He said, "if you want to be truly blessed this coming year, fear Me and greatly delight in My commandments." My family and friends sent birthday wishes and blessings. I receive and appreciate all of those. But the Lord wants to go beyond those birthday blessings. He wants to bless all of us. Even though He spoke to my heart last week about this, He is speaking this to all of us this week.

(Psalm 112:1-3) "Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments. {2} His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed. {3} Wealth and riches are in his house, And his righteousness endures forever."

I greatly appreciate the foundation that has been laid so far by Jack and Larry. We have a great appreciation for the many benefits of fearing the Lord. In this Psalm, we see a great heritage, wealth and riches, and a righteous posterity. We also have come to understand the meaning of the fear of the Lord.

The last two sessions of this conference have to do with application. I will be sharing on Psalms 34:11-12 and Perry will be wrapping things up by sharing out of Proverbs 2. Both of them pertain to how we learn or gain the fear of the Lord.

In Psalms 34:11-14, David exhorts us to listen to him and he will teach us the fear of the Lord. David begins by wetting our appetite for the fear of the Lord. He asks a question. "Who is the man who desires life, and loves length of days that he may see good?" All of us desire life. We all want a good and long life. These are just benefits from learning the fear of the Lord. They are intended to make us more attentive.

(Psalms 34:11-12) "Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. {12} Who is the man who desires life, And loves length of days that he may see good?"

David tells us to do three things. First, he says that we need to guard our tongues. Next, he tells us to live a repentant life. Third, he tells us to be peacemakers. That is what I will be sharing about in this session.

## 1. **Guard our tongues.**

The first thing that David tells us to do if we want to learn to fear the Lord is to guard our tongues. He says to keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.

(Psalms 34:13) "Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit."

James tells us that we all stumble in many ways. If a man does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, and able to bridle his entire body. If we are able to keep our tongue from evil, we are also able to keep every other member of our body from evil. Our tongue can be looked at in two ways. It is representative of all our members. If we can learn to keep our tongues from evil, we can learn to bridle the rest of our members. **Our tongues are representative of all our members.**

(James 3:2) "For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well."

Our tongues are not just representative, **our tongues are directive**. James goes on to say why he mentions the tongue. He gives a few different analogies. First, he says our tongue is like the bit of a horse's mouth. When we tug on the reins of a horse and move his head, we move his whole body. It is interesting that my daughter, Kathleen, who probably weighs 115 pounds, can make her 1,500 pound horse obey her. She tells the horse where to go. He goes where she directs him to go. How does she do it. She does it with the reins, which are attached to the bit. When she pulls on one side, he goes there. Our words are like the bits in the horse's mouth. When we speak something, it steers our life and the lives of others with those words. Our words are directive, and we must be very careful about where we are directing our lives and the lives of others.

(James 3:3-5) "Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. {4} Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. {5} So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!"

The second analogy that James uses is the rudder of a ship. He says that even though the rudder of the ship is very small, it directs where the huge ship is going. James speaks of sail ships. We still have sail ships, but most are now powered with powerful diesel generators. We now have thrusters that can direct the flow from the propellers. These thrusters serve as the rudders of the ships today.

Our tongue is not a big member of our body, but it is directive. It steers the ship of our life. It steers the lives of all the passengers on our ship – that is our wife, our children, our employees, our friends and neighbors, our brothers and sisters at church, all the passengers in our sphere of influence. We have to be careful about where we are thrusting the power of our words.

The third analogy is that of a small fire. He says that a forest is set aflame by a small fire. In James' day they probably did not have match sticks like we have. When I think of a small fire, I think of a match stick. It is very small compared to these great big trees in the forest. Many of these trees are well over a hundred feet tall and some have a diameter of three to five feet. The Sequoias are big enough to drive your car through. But, a little match stick that has a diameter of ½ centimeter can

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set on fire a whole forest of these giant trees. That match stick has great influence and power. That match stick has the ability to bring destruction to a whole forest of trees. That match stick must be used properly.

James goes on to say that taming the tongue is not such an easy thing to do. He says that “every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race, but no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.”

(James 3:7-8) “For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. {8} But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.”

If the first step to learning to fear the Lord is to keep our tongues from evil and our lips from speaking deceit, we have a formidable task before us. According to James, we have an impossible task. No one can tame the tongue.

(Psalms 34:13) "Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit."

Why is it impossible? Because the words of our mouth come from our hearts. In Matthew, Jesus tells us that **the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart**, and those defile the man. If we are going to tame our tongues, we must tame our hearts.

(Matt 15:18) "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man."

God is in the heart changing business. God is the one that can forgive us and cleanse our hearts. God is the one that can take a hard heart and make it a soft heart. With God all things are possible. With God's help, the tongues can be tamed. With God's help, our tongues can give proper direction. With God's help, our tongues can build rather than destroy.

What is our heart? In this session we do not have time to talk about all the things that our hearts are, but the heart speaks primarily of our soul. Our soul is comprised of our mind, emotions, and will. It is very important to change the way that we think if we are going to change the words of our mouth. If we are going to keep our tongues from evil and our lips from speaking deceit, we have to cleanse our hearts of evil and deceit. Perry is going to be addressing some of this in Proverbs 2.

There is another way that we keep our tongues under control. In Ephesians 4:29, Paul tells us not to allow any unwholesome word to proceed from our mouth. In other words, we are sentry guards at the gate of our mouths. We must not allow anyone without a proper pass to get out of the gate. Who gets out of the gate? What does that pass look like? Paul goes on to tell us who gets out and who cannot pass by the gate.

(Eph 4:29) “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”

### **Gate Pass # 1: Wholesome words**

The first gate pass is wholesome words. Any word that is not wholesome cannot pass the gate. The word unwholesome in Greek is sapos, which means rotten or worthless. Our conversation needs to be whole, healthy, alive, fresh, and worthwhile. Words that are rotten and worthless must be stopped at the gate, and taken captive.

(Eph 4:29) “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth...”

### **Gate Pass # 2: Edifying Words**

The second gate pass is given to words that edify or build up others. The Greek word is oikodome, which literally means to put a roof over the house. Oikos means house or household, and dome means roof. The Astrodome was the first covered stadium. Now many of the stadiums have domes on them. Oikodome is translated as build up or edify. Our words must be a covering for people. They should not expose people, but cover them. Our words need to build up people, not tear them down. Words that tear down, expose, or destroy others need to be taken captive at the gate. Words that build up, affirm, encourage, edify, and cover people receive a gate pass and can go through.

(Eph 4:29) “...but only such a word as is good for edification...”

### **Gate Pass # 3: Timely Words**

The third gate pass is given to words that are timely. Paul uses the term, according to the need of the moment. These are words that need to be spoken right now. They are timely words. Solomon tells us that a timely word is delightful. He also says that a timely word is like apples of gold in settings of silver.

(Eph 4:29) “... according to the need of the moment...”

(Pro 15:23) A man has joy in an apt answer, And how delightful is a timely word!

(Pro 25:11) Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances.

Sometimes, a timely word is a difficult word. As men, we must speak difficult things at times. Paul said to the Ephesian elders that he did not shrink back from declaring anything that was profitable. A few verses later he says he did not shrink back from declaring to them the whole purpose of god. At times a timely word is difficult, but must be shared.

Acts 20:20,27 “I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house... {27} For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”

A couple of weeks ago a lady released a word to our congregation during a prayer meeting. As a pastor, we have a responsibility to watch over and guard the flock and to oversee prophetic ministry. We have a responsibility to give timely words. The word the lady gave did not bear witness with me. In fact, I thought it was 100% off. However, I decided that if I said something at that time, it would

cause more disruption to the prayer meeting. I felt it was better for me to deal with the lady in private, which is the way that I handled it. In this case, it was not the need of the moment. There are times however, where a word can cause damage to the congregation, and must be judged on the spot. That would be the need of the moment. We need discernment and wisdom in what words are the need of the moment.

#### **Gate Pass # 4: Gracious Words**

The fourth gate pass is gracious words. Paul said that only words that give grace to those who hear should proceed from our mouths. The Greek word for grace is charis, which means grace or kindness. Some scholars have defined grace as the unmerited favor of God. Our words need to move people towards the unmerited favor of God. They need to point people to Christ. Other people have defined grace as God's riches at Christ's expense. Again, our words need to point people to the cross.

Other scholars have defined grace as the desire and ability to accomplish God's will. When Paul shares that God's grace was sufficient for him, or that he was given grace to do the work of an apostle, he is talking about the ability and desire to accomplish God's will. Our words need to move people and motivate people to accomplish God's work in their lives. Words of condemnation usually make people less enthusiastic about doing something. Encouraging words usually motivate people much more. Listen to what Solomon said. "Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness." He goes on to say that the heart of the wise instructs his mouth and adds persuasiveness to his lips. Men, we need to instruct our mouths to only allow words with the right gate passes to get through. Every word that does not have one of these gate passes must be stopped, apprehended, taken captive, and not allowed through.

(Pro 16:21-23) "The wise in heart will be called understanding, And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness....{23} The heart of the wise instructs his mouth And adds persuasiveness to his lips."

(Eph 4:29) "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear."

One final thought about guarding our tongues. In Matthew, Jesus said that we **will render account in the day of judgment for every careless word that we speak**. God knows and hears everything we say. He will hold us accountable for every careless word in the day of judgment. Our salvation was secured at the cross. We have passed out of judgment. However, we are still going to have to give account for our lives. Pastors are going to have to give account for their flocks. We all must give account, and I believe that our words are one of those areas that we will give account. We should have a reverence for the Lord that causes us to bridle and watch over our tongues.

(Matthew 12:36) ""And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment."

Men, as we learn to renew our minds so that what comes out of our hearts is pure, and as we learn to be gatekeepers of our mouths, we will learn the fear of the Lord. That is the first way that David shares with us to learn the fear of the Lord.

## 2. Live a repentant life.

The second key that David shares with us about learning to fear the Lord is to live a repentant life. He says to depart from evil and do good. The word repent means to do an about face. It is coming to a realization that what we are doing is not good, stopping what we are doing, and then doing the right thing. This is what David is describing when he says to depart from evil and do good.

(Psalms 34:14) "Depart from evil, and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it."

Repentance is not just a one-time event. The Scriptures tell us that all of us sin. If we say that we have no sin, we lie and the truth is not in us. John writes that we are deceiving ourselves if we say that we have no sin. John encourages us to acknowledge and confess our sins. **Part of repentance is recognizing and confessing our sins to the Lord.**

(1 John 1:8-10) "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. {9} If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. {10} If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

Solomon wrote essentially the same thing. He said that there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins. **All of us sin. Therefore, all of us need to repent of our sins.**

(Ecclesiastes 7:20) "Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins."

I spent several years as a prison chaplain at a maximum security facility in Atlanta. I enjoyed my time at the prison, and saw lots of good fruit. One of the questions that I always asked the inmates that had requested to see a chaplain was why they were there. I had access to records. I could see what the inmate was incarcerated for. I also knew how the men were separated in the pods. They put all the sex offenders in one pod. They put violent criminals in another pod, and they also had to wear orange outfits. Why did I ask? I asked because I wanted to get a quick glimpse of how much progress could be made with this inmate. The first step of repentance is acknowledging your sin. It is agreeing with God that you messed. If an inmate said that he was not guilty, and was framed, or was in the wrong place at the wrong time, I knew there was very little that I could do with the man. If however, the man was honest, and straight forward with me about his crime, the door was open for much more ministry. If a man told me that he had done this or that, but he wanted to make a fresh start in life, I knew this man was on the road to repentance.

In order for inmates to start a new life, they needed to be born again. They had to turn away from their way of life and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. They had to submit their lives to the Lord. Then, it was a matter of refusing to be conformed to the world, renewing their minds and being transformed so that they could prove the will of God in their lives. The real test for these men was when they were released. Some men would toss their Bibles in the trash can when they were released. Other men would get plugged into a church and keep following hard after God. Repentance is not just acknowledging our sin, but it is departing from evil and doing good. It is doing the right things when we have the opportunity.

**Part of repentance is learning to hate evil.** Solomon says the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. When we hate evil, we are less apt to do evil. How do we learn to hate evil? I believe we have to learn to love what God loves and hate what God hates. We need to come into agreement with God's thoughts and His ways. We must align ourselves with the word of God. We also need to ask God for help in this area.

(Pro 8:13) "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate.

One of the themes of the book of Romans is repentance. Three times in the book of Romans Paul tells the church to be wise in what is good and innocent of what is evil. In Romans 12:9, he says to "abhor what is evil and cling to what is good." Abhor means to hate or detest. We like our sins. We enjoy our sins. Therefore, we do not forsake what is evil. We cling to what is evil because we think it is fun. God wants us to hate or abhor what is evil. If we hate the sin, we will forsake it. When we abhor what is evil and cling to what is good, we will be victorious. We will cling to the things that we love, so we must love what is good.

(Romans 12:9) "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good."

In Romans 12:21, he says, "do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

(Romans 12:21) "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Finally, in his closing remarks, he says, "but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil. And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." When we learn to hate evil and cling to what is good, we not only learn to fear the Lord, but we also will experience victory over Satan. Doing what is good and upright is protection to us. The breastplate of righteousness is part of our armor and protection.

(Romans 16:19-20) "For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil. {20} And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, the Lord gives us a promise. He says that if we will humble ourselves and pray, and seek his face, and turn from our wicked ways, then He will hear from heaven, will forgive our sins, and heal our land. Again, this is repentance. God wants us to humble ourselves before Him and acknowledge our sins. He wants us to do more than confess our sins; He wants us to turn away from our wicked ways. This is repentance. This is also the second key to learning to have a fear of the Lord. We must depart from evil and do good.

(2 Chronicles 7:14) "and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

### 3. Be peacemakers.

The third and final point that David shares with us about learning to fear the Lord is to be peacemakers. He says for us to seek peace, and to pursue it. **God wants us to be pursuers of peace, not just seekers.**

(Psalms 34:14) "Depart from evil, and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it."

In some ways to seek and to pursue something or someone are quite similar. There is a desire to acquire or find something. There are initial steps taken to pursue that thing or person. A person seeking to learn to play the guitar and a person pursuing playing the guitar can look very similar at the initial stages. Both people may buy a guitar. Both people may sign up for some guitar lessons. Both people may learn to play some chords and songs. However, a person that pursues learning guitar then deviates from the person seeking to learn to play the guitar. A person who pursues it goes an extra step. He learns the theory behind the chord structures. He plays the scales. He learns the rhythms and to play with the correct timing.

I was a seeker, not a pursuer of music. I learned to play guitar at a certain level, but did not pursue guitar. In the realm of golf, I was not a seeker, I was a pursuer. I pursued learning everything that I could about golf. I made golf my profession and I needed to learn everything I could. I learned how to hit all kinds of shots, so that under any situation, I would know what to do.

Pursuit takes time. Pursuit takes much effort. Pursuit overcomes obstacles and roadblocks. Pursuit overcomes adversity. Pursuit takes learning to a higher level. Pursuit continues to go after when the seeker has given up. A good example of an animal that pursues its prey is a wolf. A wolf will follow, chase, and pursue an animal for days and weeks, until he has finally overtaken it. If the initial chase is not successful, the wolf persistently continues to follow and chase it. It does not give up.

A man that seeks peace has an initial desire for peace, which is great. When the other person does not respond to the initial efforts of making peace and reconciling, it would be easy to let it go. However, David tells us to not only seek peace, but to pursue peace. We need to continue to look for ways to win that person. We need to pray and ask God for wisdom in how to win this person. We need to pursue peace with the person. In Hebrews, God reiterates what David has written, and exhorts us to pursue peace with all men. God wants us to be pursuers of peace, not just seekers.

(Hebrews 12:14) "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

In Romans 12:18, we find the balance to this principle. Paul writes that so far as it depends on us, we are to be at peace with all men. However, he adds an important phrase, if possible, at the beginning of the verse. If possible recognizes that not all men are willing to reconcile and be at peace. God does not want His people being under guilt, condemnation, or unreasonable pressures. If we have pursued peace and done everything that we can do to be at peace, then we can have peace in our hearts about the matter, and move on. **If possible, we are to be at peace with all men.**

(Romans 12:18) "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."



## Gaining The Fear of the Lord – Psalms 34:11-12

These are the three things that David writes to help us learn to have a fear of the Lord. We are to guard our tongues, live a lifestyle of repentance, and learn to be peacemakers. If we do this, we will reap the rewards of having the fear of the Lord.

**Vineyard Men's Conference**  
**Session 3: Learning to Fear the Lord (Psalms 34:11-14)**

**Introduction** (Psa 112:1-3, 34:11-12)

1. **Guard our** \_\_\_\_\_. (Psa 34:13, James 3:1-8)
  - Our tongues are \_\_\_\_\_ of all our members. (James 3:2)
  - Our tongues are \_\_\_\_\_. (James 3:3-5)
  - The things that proceed out of the mouth come from the \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt 15:18)

**Guarding our Mouthgates (Eph 4:29)**

- Gate Pass # 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Words.
- Gate Pass # 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Words.
- Gate Pass # 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Words. (Pro 15:23, 25:11, Acts 20:20,27)
- Gate Pass # 4: \_\_\_\_\_ Words. (Pro 16:21-23)
- We will render \_\_\_\_\_ for every careless word. (Matt 12:36)

2. **Live a** \_\_\_\_\_ **life.** (Ps 34:14, 2 Chron 7:14)
  - Part of repentance is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ our sins to the Lord. (1 John 1:8-10)
  - All of us \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore, all of us need to \_\_\_\_\_ of our sins. (Ecc 7:20)
  - Part of repentance is learning to \_\_\_\_\_ evil. (Pro 8:13, Rom 12:9, 12:21, 16:19-20)

3. **Be** \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps 34:14)
  - God wants us to be \_\_\_\_\_ of peace, not just seekers. (Heb 12:14)
  - If \_\_\_\_\_ we are to be at peace with all men. (Rom 12:18)

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