

# Real Talk About Talk

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala emphasizes the profound impact of our words and the necessity for Christians to speak with integrity and grace.*

**Duration:** 37:21

**Topics:** "Sincerity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of using words of encouragement and grace in our conversations. He highlights how our words can have a significant impact on others, especially when they are going through difficult times. The speaker also discusses the power of the tongue and how it can either bring life or stir up negative emotions. He reminds the audience that we will be held accountable for every word we speak and encourages them to choose their words wisely. The sermon is based on the biblical teachings of James and Colossians.

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## Transcript

I have a 14-year-old friend in the church. She one time used the phrase in my office, and she said, no, it's a symbol of Real Talk. I learned that Real Talk means that this is real, and what I'm telling you is important.

So now, I speak in different parts of the country, in the world, and sometimes it slips out of me, and I go, no, no, listen, Real Talk. All right, and the people are going, Real Talk, what is that? The name of this message, which we all need to hear, starting with the speaker, is called Real Talk About Talk. James says, we all stumble in many ways, and James was the half-brother of our Lord.

We make mistakes, we grieve the Holy Spirit, we fail Jesus. How many, since you become a Christian, you're conscious that you need Him every day, otherwise you mess up in some way. But no matter how we all mess up, and there's different weaknesses in different people, and the sins that we gravitate back to many times have been formed as habits in our lives before we met Christ.

So the alcoholic is tempted to go back to alcohol. The drug addict sometimes is tempted to go back. Person given to anger is tempted to go back and be explosive again.

But all of us share one common frailty. And unfortunately, it's a frailty that's with us every minute of every day, because it's about the most common thing we do, which is talk. No matter where you live, whatever

you do, all of us talk every day.

Words come out of our mouth. We rarely talk about talk. We rarely focus and discuss and analyze what is this thing called talk, where the mind, many times getting thoughts from the heart, the mind circulates, and just working faster than any computer, sends messages to the rest of us so that we act out or we speak what's on our mind or heart.

Now with texting and cell phones, we're talking more than ever before. But what about talk? What about these things that we call words? I'm saying them right now. This is the way we communicate.

This is the way we let people know what's on our mind. So all of us every day, we're spouting out words. But we don't analyze these words that much.

And first of all, we don't realize that words, speech, talk, is not only something that is awesome according to God in terms of the judgment of it and the review of it, but it's actually the sign of who the best Christian is in the church. There is a best Christian. There is a most Christ-like person in this building.

Could be not up on the platform, but somewhere in this building, there's the person who's most mature and most like Christ. But do you know how you find out all those things? By the way they talk. For the Bible says this.

Jesus says in Matthew 12, "But I tell you that men will have to give an account "on the day of judgment for every careless word "they have spoken. "For by your words you will be acquitted "and by your words you will be condemned." Just think about that. Everybody will have to give an account to God.

Oh, you hid those words from other people. You whispered them on a phone. You talked about someone when their back was turned.

You will give an account. No matter how you seemed in church, no matter how you sang in the choir, you won't give an account so much of just your words singing in the songs because that restricted you. You had to sing the words Carol taught you.

But all of us behind me, in front of me, you and I are gonna give an account of every single word we spoke. It's enough to make you wanna cut out your tongue. I didn't say this.

I'm not being melodramatic. I'm telling you what Jesus said. "That by your words you will be justified "and by your words you'll be condemned." If God doesn't change our speech patterns, then we don't know God.

If salvation through Jesus Christ doesn't mean we talk different, then we've never been born again because faith without works is dead. You'll know a tree by its fruit, and the first fruit you know everybody by is the way they talk. But more than that, even among us as Christians, James tells us this.

You know this passage. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself or herself, and his or her religion is worthless. Think what James is saying.

You can come to church, study the Bible, join in with the music of the choir, and be totally deceived. Think that you're really close to God and you know what this whole thing is about, but if you don't keep a tight rein on your tongue, and if your mouth is running all over the earth during the week and during our days here that we communicate with others, then your religion is in vain. It's a hoax.

It's a joke. It's a mirage. But I know the Bible, and I love Jesus.

I lifted my hands when the choir was singing, but if there's not a rein on your mouth and if your talking hasn't changed, James, who grew up with Jesus in the same house, he says your religion is in vain. The reason there's so much emphasis on this is because there's tremendous power in talk. Words have a power that very few of us could recognize.

We don't analyze it. We suffer hurt and we're helped, and we don't realize how much of this is related to words. Reckless words, Proverbs 12, 18.

Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Notice, reckless words pierce like a sword.

I've been in all kinds of fights in my life growing up, in the playgrounds of New York playing basketball, going to a prep school, going to the Naval Academy. I've been involved, unfortunately, in fisticuffs. One time at the University of Rhode Island, a fight broke out between me and a point guard from the University of Connecticut, UConn, and a riot ensued and the state troopers had to come on the court and it was a mess.

So I've been hit, I've hit people and all of that. I don't remember that, but I can remember words. Can you not remember words that have hurt you? Reckless words pierce like a sword.

You want to really hurt someone? Don't hit them, just talk nasty because those words pierce like a sword. But notice, contrary wise, the tongue of the wise brings healing. Godly words, kind words, thoughtful words, words seasoned with grace, words full of love, they actually penetrate and bring healing to people.

You don't have to lay hands on them, talk to them. There's a time to lay hands on a person, but then there's a time to be able to say words with such wisdom, given by God, so that it brings healing to people. Words that are so sweet, they're like the words from a honeycomb.

They bring healing to the bones. That means they penetrate. So the thing about words that is so tremendous is they're penetrating power.

Words have power. I just finished reading recently *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, I think for the second time in my life. I think I read that decades ago.

But it tells about the rise of Hitler. And Hitler, although the most evil geniuses that ever lived, genius in certain ways, but certainly the most demonic, evil person that caused the death of multiplied millions of people, he rose to power essentially by words. How he gained his following was he could stand up in those beer halls in Munich and other places, and he would speak, and people said there was something that came over them by the power of his words.

People still study the films of him making his speeches in Germany in front of humongous crowds after he came to power. And they said that in small and large gatherings, women would faint, people would actually have manifestations that would be linked to the Bible. They would speak in other languages.

They would just lose power of their body and slump to the floor by his words. He came to power by his words. When the Bible warns about false prophets and even the Antichrist, it speaks about the power that they'll have in their words.

Speech that seduces, speech that blinds, smooth words, clever words, like politicians. They get to power through their words. What their heart is like is disguised many times because of words, words.

The Bible tells us that this penetrating power of words has a tremendous effect on everything we do, both what we do to others and what others do to us. There is a social aspect to words. Look at these verses about what words can bring about.

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word, what does it do? Stirs up anger. He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. Look at that, a gentle answer, the right words can turn away wrath.

Someone's angry, they're upset, but if you answer them properly, you can turn their wrath away. You can calm things down by the right words, but a harsh word, using words without thinking, using words without God's help, it stirs up anger. What kind of fights and divisions have we seen in our own families and among our acquaintances and with people that once were like this, but words, foolish words, unthinking words, hasty words said, and now there's a disruption of all friendship.

People are alienated from one another, and when you analyze what caused this? Words, listen, husbands and wives, what do you think divorce starts with? Words, words, harsh words, unkind words, judgmental words, and then you start something, you don't know where it's gonna end. You don't know where it's gonna end. That harsh word that starts up anger gets back another word, then you react to that harsh word with another word, and the next thing you know, there's war.

And what did it start with? A word, well, what's in a word? A lot's in a word. People say words, we don't think where these words will end, and once that thing starts cooking, it's hard to turn the flame down, isn't it? So there's a social aspect to words. Words, husband, wife, friendships ruined by words, or you can bring healing through words.

You can bring encouragement through words. How many children are walking around, or now adults, and they're stigmatized and they have complexes because of words? Their parents said, you're stupid, you'll never amount to anything. What are those? Those are words.

But said enough, and they become reality to children. If we're not careful how we talk around children, oh my goodness. I taught my children growing up, never say shut up.

Shut up is not a word to say. Those are not kind words. I taught them when they were little.

My middle daughter Susie was about five years old, tormenting me out of my mind one day. She would slide down the steps of our house. She would slide down head first.

She would never walk. You would hear her, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. She would come, and she would do all kinds of things.

So one day she just was tormenting me beyond what I could take. God knows what I could take. And I said, stop it, and she answered me back, and I said, shut up.

And she went, oh, I thought you were a pastor. Little thing convicted me right on the spot. So how many people are hurt and wounded, including us, by things that were said? And once the word goes in, it's not like, I bumped into something the other day, and you see that black and blue mark there? You see it? See,

it'll go away.

I don't even know what hit me, but I bumped into something, and I have a black and blue mark. It'll go away, but words, they don't go away. And Satan uses words, and he has a system of replaying them in our minds.

Do you know that I counsel people, they're thinking words that were said to them 25 years ago? Oh, come on, we know that's true. Come on, somebody say amen. 25 years ago, some word was said by a husband or a wife.

And see, when you say those words, the enemy comes and tells that person, even if they say, I'm sorry, I didn't mean that, the enemy comes and says, how could they have said that if they love you? And now all kinds of hell is gonna break loose. And what did it start with? A word. Just a word.

But then there's the spiritual effect of words. Remember last Sunday we were talking about abiding in the vine, abiding in Christ, living with the flow of his grace in our lives? Well, that can be disrupted. Fellowship can be disrupted.

Otherwise, why would the Lord say, abide in me and I will abide in you? If everyone automatically was abiding, he wouldn't give a command to abide. So it's possible to grieve the Holy Spirit. It's possible to do things or say things that then grieve the Holy Spirit, break fellowship with the Lord, and now prayer seems very cumbersome.

The word of God loses its attraction. Why? Because we're moving in the flesh now and what stirred us up and got this whole mess going usually is words. Like lying words.

We deceive people through words. You can do it through actions too. But lying words.

You wanna grieve the Holy Spirit and you wanna be left on your own without his help and grace? Just lie to someone. Just tell a lie or in sincere speech. The Bible tells us and warns us against insincere speech.

One of the, Paul tells us and other apostles says that one of the tricks of false preachers is, and false teachers, false prophets, is that they use insincere speech. They say things they don't mean. They're actors, they're actresses.

Insincere speech. Telling people what they wanna hear to gain favor but you don't mean it. You know, I remember growing up as a kid, I would hear sometimes relatives of my mother, my relatives or people in the church say when a woman would come who was newer in the church, she would come, they'd say, you look so nice today.

It's so nice to see you. Where'd you buy that dress? Oh, Macy's, that's very nice and all that. Then she would leave and they'd say, what a rag, where'd she get that from? No, no, you're laughing.

You think God's laughing when he hears that? You think the angels are laughing? How do you think the Holy Spirit reacts to that when he's the spirit of truth? So anything that's not true hurts him because he came to reveal truth. So insincere speech. If you don't have something good to say about a situation, it's better just to be quiet.

Don't say anything. But insincere speech, it's a horrible thing. Proud, boastful talk.

Proud, boastful talk with words. We act like we're somebody. We're little ants.

Our life is in God's hand. Our life is but a vapor, but we with our mouth. This is many times the fool in Proverbs is identified with boastful words, who we are, where we came from, our country, our island, our race, our whiteness, our blackness.

We're talking just nonsense. Just absolute nonsense. Now, we can surround yourself with people who like that because they talk the same way.

But God, the effect on our spiritual life, oh my goodness. Come on, haven't you ever said something and you've been convicted at it quietly inside even though nobody else picked up on it? How many have ever had that happen? Oh yeah. Not only that, but there is then gossip and slander, malicious speech.

Look at what the Bible says. Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good. That's to a minister like me.

His name was Titus. To slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate and to show true humility toward all men. To slander no one.

Come on. Do any of you like somebody to talk about you behind your back in a negative way? Anybody here like that? Just lift your hand so we can know who you are. Anybody here like when somebody talks about you behind your back and you learn of it? Anybody happy with that? When someone destroys your character, your reputation, maybe even tells lies or even tells the truth about you, but it's not a good truth about you.

That's what slander is and gossip. And Christians participated in it so casually that if you mention it, they don't even know what you're talking about. Many times church dinners, there's the old joke about after Sunday's service, what did that family have for dinner? Instead of chicken, they had the preacher.

Just ate them to little pieces with gossip and talk. And then many times children are listening and now it's gonna be generational. They're gonna follow the way you talk and you backbite and you gossip and you have your little snide remark and the children are learning just like ABC.

And that grieves the Holy Spirit. Christians are never supposed to be involved with gossip and slander. Christians who claim they're Christians and who live like that, you're supposed to warn them and after that, have nothing to do with them.

That's what the Bible says you're supposed to do in the church. Somebody who gossips and slanders and divides people and hurts other people's reputation, not to the person's face. No, very few people have the courage to go up to a person and say, you know, this offended me about you.

Could you explain that? That's the way we're supposed to settle it. No, they go behind her back, his back and they're talking trash about them and all of that and then to their face. I mean, is there anything worse than that? To smile at someone who you just trashed.

And may I just say something? Whenever somebody talks gossip to you, trust me, they will gossip about you. You could take that, listen, to the bank. The next time you hear anybody talking about a third person who's not there to defame them, look in that person's eyes because they're gonna do it to you.

When they get out of your presence, they're gonna bury you. Why do you know that? Well, they just buried somebody else. Why are you special? So know that about someone.

Gossipers don't stop with you. They include you and then along with gossip, there's filthy language. There are people who even once they get saved get this deception that our speech is not supposed to change and they use curse words.

They use profanity. They use filthy language. There is language that's clean.

There's language that's dirty. As Christians, Christ saved us so we wouldn't talk dirty. You're not supposed to use profanity.

The Lord's name in vain and other curse words. You're supposed to have clean speech. Look what the Bible says.

But now you must rid yourselves, Colossians 3a, of all such things as these, anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. So when we do that, we grieve the Holy Spirit, we hurt the heart of God, and now the grace that God wanted to give us is like shut down because we're walking in disobedience. Do you wanna know how discouraged Pastor Burgos and myself and Pastor Delina and all the other pastors, you know how discouraged we feel, Pastor Johnson, when we counsel somebody and we find out the husband and wife, they got in an argument and they're cursing at each other and they're Christians for 10 years.

Do you know what that means to me? Do you know how I lay awake at night saying, I must be the worst pastor in America. How in the world could you sit and lift your hands and hear the choir sing and sing the songs that we're worshiping God with and then go with the same mouth that was praising God, you're gonna call someone a four-letter word? How could that be? That should not be named among us. Come on, do I get a witness here? It should not be named.

Oh, but Pastor, everyone does that. You're wrong. Jesus does not do that.

The Apostle Paul did not do that. All kinds of people around the country who have gotten saved become sensitive of their language and no, no, I've put filthy speech behind me. I'm not using filthy speech.

How many right now from this moment on, by the grace of God, no filthy word will ever come out of your mouth as long as you live. Come on, lift up your hand. By the grace of God, we're not gonna talk like that.

Then what's the sense of telling anyone we're Christian? Some of you need to hear that now. No filthy speech and don't justify, don't live with this entitlement mentality you don't know the pressure I'm under and all of that. Listen, whatever pressure you're under, God will give you grace.

But you don't answer anybody with filthy speech. Come on, let's all put our hands together and say amen to that. Why all that is so important is because words also have an effect not just socially on other people, it's gonna get totally out of control.

Number two, it cuts us off from the grace of God. We sever our abiding through words often. But thirdly, when words are spoken, they have an effect on the rest of your body.

Look what James says. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, look at this next phrase, sets the whole course of his life on fire and is itself the tongue

set on fire by hell.

There's such a thing as hell talk. And when you talk, now look, and we all know how this works. You can all look sanctimonious on Sunday starting with the speaker.

The test of my life is not how I talk in front of you. You think I would curse in front of you? You think I would say nasty things on purpose in front of you? Of course not. I'm socially aware just like you are.

The test is on Wednesday. The test is on Friday night. The test is when no one's watching.

They asked E.L. Moody, what's character mean? He says character is what a person is in the dark. When no one's listening, no one else is watching, how do we talk and act? So James says that the tongue, when you let it go, it has the ability to set the whole person. It stirs up other lusts.

It stirs up all kinds of stuff. And itself, the tongue can be set on fire by God, the Holy Spirit, or by hell. You can have heavenly words that are sweet, or you can have hellish words.

And you and I are gonna give an account for every word I say today. I will give an account. Oh, Pastor, you don't believe that.

No, I do believe that Jesus said it. I'm not, it puts a holy fear in me, but you will give an account. That's why all people, you know what they're saying? They get away with that, they get away with this and that.

Nobody's getting away with any, what are you kidding? Everyone's gonna give an account of every word, and not to you and I, but to Almighty God. One last thought, okay? Listen, one of the secrets of spiritual living is to know when to be quiet. There are times in life when the best thing you can do is not say a word.

As a pastor, I many times have found that. I have found that when people are in grief and some terrible tragedy has happened. This woman was here Tuesday, we prayed for her.

Her boy was shot to death last week, 20 years old. Dante, it was in the newspapers. The bullet went in his stomach.

It was in a gang. She told me which one on Tuesday. She was, she almost dropped to the floor.

I was holding her here. Someone was praying beautifully over her. The whole church was praying for God to comfort her, and she started to sag and go to the floor.

I was holding her up, and she started to talk while she was there to her son, who's dead. She's talking to God, but then she got delirious. When you face people like that, and you're called to that, you have to ask God for wisdom, but there's sometimes you have to be like Job's friends.

For the first few days, they said nothing, because you don't know what to say. I can say some trite ministerial thing, but that might make it worse. Doesn't Ecclesiastes tell us that? Look, there's a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven, a time to be born, and a time to what? Die.

Time to plant, time to uproot, a time to tear, time to mend, a time to be, and a time to speak. One of the secrets of life is to know when talking is inappropriate. Just shh.

There's an old saying, people who talk very little are thought to be usually brilliant and very wise, because just by being silent, people will say, she must be smart, she doesn't say a word. And yet, if you talk

enough, and in the multitude of words, there lacketh not sin. You talk long enough, you will sin.

That's why when the Methodist movement began, John Wesley would go to a house, or they would have conversations and meetings together, and Wesley taught his followers. They would stay for a certain amount of time, and then they'd say, I have to leave now. You've only been here 15 minutes, yeah, but we've been talking and talking about the things of God.

There's a good chance if we just keep talking long enough, we're gonna sin, so I'm leaving now. So he put a limit to meetings because he found the longer they went, the tongue gets us in trouble. Is that not true? Come on, is that not true? Do not some of our conversations in my life, your life, start on a very good note, but if you just keep yapping, words are penetrating.

But today, we can have our words used to benefit the person who listens to us. Look at my last verse, Colossians 4, 6, let your conversation be always full of grace. What's that mean? Let your words always be full of love, encouragement, wisdom, mercy, just all that's included in grace.

Let your words be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Do you realize what a word of encouragement can mean to somebody? Do you realize how tired? Look at these people that came up. I was looking at them.

Would you have known when you walked in the building that they were ready to run away or tempted under such pressure? You don't. It's hard. Life is hard.

Come on, do I get a witness? How many have found in moments in your life, even if you have the greatest job, you're an executive, it's still hard. The devil is not sleeping. Or whether you're just struggling bi-economically, it doesn't matter.

How many have found it's a battle? Come on, lift both your hands. It's a battle. So now, if we're all in a battle and if we're all being attacked, don't you think a little word of encouragement will help somebody? Why would you want to say something negative? I just wince.

We become so desensitized to words. There's no longer music with words about love. We've hit an all-time low now in music.

For 150 years, all music, whatever style it was, there were ballads that said, I love you, I need you, I love you, you broke up with me, you broke my heart. There's always been words like that. Not today.

No, no, no, no, no, today. Not today. In the kind of rap culture we live now, no man is gonna say, I love you, I need you, and all of that.

That's a sign of weakness. I'm not saying those words. And women have become desensitized.

I was walking behind someone on Hoyt Street and two girls, one looked like about 16, smaller, the other one maybe 18, pretty attractive. I'm walking behind them and a car stops at the light or the stop sign, Pastor Johnson, and the guy, the windows roll down, and the guy just looks at the older one and he just says the most vulgar, filthy thing that you could imagine. It just stunned me, and it stunned the younger girl that was walking there.

I just couldn't believe somebody would just ride by, stop, and say that with their words, right? But you know how desensitized she's become? When it drove off, she turned to him, to the younger one and said,

he was cute, right? He was cute. He was cute, right? He had just said the most filthy thing, but it didn't mean anything because that's all she's heard. No, no, we Christians, we're gonna have our talk.

I'm gonna bless somebody today with my mouth. Oh yes, I will. You can't stop me, the devil can't stop me.

You can bless someone. You can bring healing to somebody's bones. You can help somebody along the way.

Better than a \$20 bill, you could say something that could be a life changer for them. You know what I sense the Holy Spirit saying to me as I'm preaching this? First of all, we all need it. All in favor of that, say aye.

We all need it, starting with us all up here. But I believe that while all these points are true from the Bible, pure speech and doing away with nasty, negative, filthy talk is something that God is convicting some people about here. You maybe have grown up with this idea that you go to church on Sunday, and you curse like a sailor on Monday.

Well, wake up. Wake up, don't be deceived. Your religion is in vain.

If any man doesn't bridle his tongue, and he seems to be religious, he's deceived himself. You're deceived, I'm deceived. If God doesn't change the way I talk, what's the sense of being a Christian? That's the main thing all of us do.

We have more talk than we have actions. Our talk, in fact, are the strongest actions we have. So come on, let's join hands with one another.

Close your eyes with me. I'm not gonna invite anybody up here because I don't wanna highlight anything, and because we're all such needy people when it comes to talk, words, insincere speech, lying, proud speech, vicious speech, malicious gossip, slander. Be assured that you will give an account for every idle word, Jesus said, for by your words, you'll be justified, and by your own words, you'll be condemned.

You'll prove who you are and who you were by your own words. God won't have to bring in witnesses. He'll just play your words.

Oh, Lord, thank you for your mercy that we can ask you for forgiveness, Lord, for bad words, wrong words, and insincere words, words that stir up other people, words that hurt on purpose. Some of us, Lord, we're afraid of being arrested, and we're afraid of what people would think if we try to hit someone or rob them because we know about the laws. So God, what some of us have used is words.

That's how we get back at people. But you said the body belongs to the Lord, and the tongue is part of our body, Lord. So we want speech now, starting today, that will be holy and pure, and that will be full of grace, that we will think, what do people need to hear? Not, what do I want to say? What do people need to hear? When we're supposed to be quiet, show us how to be quiet.

When we're supposed to say something, help us to not be shy and not be afraid, but speak that word that we're to say, that word of encouragement, that word even sometimes of correction, said in love. People have a cancer growing on them, and they're ready to get in trouble. Help us to use words to help bring healing to them, Lord.

Words penetrate, we've studied that today. For good or for bad, they penetrate. They go deep inside someone.

Rash words, sharper than a sword, but the words of the wise bring healing to the bones. Cleanse our mouths and use it for your glory. Lord, remind us the power there is in speaking your word to one another, speaking your word out loud, praising you out loud, for those words of praise, those words of truth, have a power on the rest of our being, on the rest of our bodies, to deaden the influences of the lower nature, and to strengthen ourselves in the faith.

Today, we ask you to use, right now, Lord, today. We don't know about tomorrow. Today, use our words to bring healing and encouragement to someone, and just let every conversation be seasoned with grace, full of nice things, good things.

We pray this in Jesus' name, and everyone said. Amen. Okay, listen, think of your favorite verse, even if you don't know it perfect, doesn't matter.

I got one for those of you who don't know Bible. God is love. There's one for you.

Stand up. Everybody turn around, greet some people, and say something good. Somebody come and say something good to me.

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