



## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Message Series: Life Hacks  
Message Title: "The Tongue"  
Speaker: Jason Berry  
Date: November 1-2, 2014

### Icebreaker:

- 1) Quiz the Group: How many muscles do you have in your body?
- 2) There is Power in Your Words: Name a time someone in your life said powerful words to you. Describe how it made you feel.

### Message Overview:

In week 4 of the series Life Hacks, Pastor Jason speaks about what great power lies in our words. Think about it. In fact, the influence of words has greatly affected our history. In the opening video, several speeches are played with emphasis on words that have shaped our culture and motivated people to accomplish the "impossible." Have you ever thought about the power of the words you speak? The words you hear? Jason goes on to say the children's rhyme, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" is actually false. It is false emotionally and psychologically. We all know based on past experiences that words can hurt. We have "major good word moments" and "major bad word moments." Scripture warns of the great influence in our words, and it was God's words that brought us into existence. Our words may appear as simple as a match but have the capability of burning down an entire forest.

Jason points out that our words can do two things:

- 1) Words Change the World
- 2) Our Words Create Worlds

The sermon focuses on James 3:3-6 where we discover there are warnings about our tongue. Our tongue is the steering wheel of our life and, without proper control, can drive us into trouble. Our tongue is also like a spark that can quickly blow up. With that said, Pastor Jason concludes that though James does not give us five easy steps on how to resolve our tongue issues, there are three life hacks that are essential for us to learn:



1. Shut up (When you are angry)
2. Speak up (While you have the time)
3. Clean up (What you burn down)

Discussion:

(Leaders: The questions that follow are designed to stir reflection and discussion on this week's primary Message points. Please read through them prior to your meeting so you can be prepared to prayerfully pace your group well. Remember, as leader, your goal is to promote increased biblical awareness, as well as individual self awareness – a combination that with the help of the Holy Spirit results in revelation and...transformation!)

- Out of the 20-40,000 words you use each day, how many do you think are positive? Do you need to focus more on positive words? Are there words that were said to or about you that you need to let go?
- Do you believe you have the power of life and death through your words? If so, what are things you can start saying and what can you stop saying? Proverbs 18:21 says, "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."
- Jason said, "Once you strike the match, you are no longer in control of the flames." Ever watch someone say something with a spark and suddenly their whole life (figuratively) blows up in smoke? PK recently reminded us that sometimes what blows up in our lives has our name written all over it.
- In the sermon, we heard about the Xbox story. A boss decided one day that he was going to give one word of professional praise and one word of personal praise. It made all the difference and saved someone's life. Do you need to start praying the Spirit will speak through you to use your words more peacefully and purposefully?
- Where do you need to place certain boundaries in your life to steer the direction of your tongue? What practices can you do in order to help with controlling your tongue? Very rarely is someone capable of controlling one's tongue on his or her own. Discuss ideas as a group that can help control the tongue. This may include reaching out to another group member to start an accountability partnership. Remember: don't try to extinguish all the fires at one time.
- Is there a rough relationship in your life right now? With your kids? Your spouse? Your neighbor? Think about some of the words you have said in the past that you regret because of the consequences. Now, lay those thoughts down and think about the



power you have to change the “worlds” you live in with controlling and containing your tongue.

Wrap-Up/Close:

Reread James 3:3-6 as a group and spend a few moments thinking about:

Where do you need to “shut up”? In other words, what do you need to stop saying?

Where do you need to “speak up?” In other words, where do you need to speak powerful words?

Where do you need to “clean up?” In other words, where do you need to fix the sparks and flames of your tongue? Where do you need to own your side of the fire?

If our words can become uncontrollable and uncontainable, the best way to prevent it from escalating is to allow the Holy Spirit to help you with your tongue. Pray for the control and containment of your tongue, not by your own strength but by His strength.

If time allows, conclude with reading Genesis 1. As a group, count how many times it says, “God said” in the first chapter. God will help you control your tongue. God understands because as we see in Genesis 1, he knows the power of spoken words.

Throughout the Week: (Optional)

(Leaders: Share these optional exercises for further study and growth with your group.)

Over the next couple of weeks, keep a list of all of the positive words people say about you, write to you, or say to you. Read over and reflect on them throughout the next couple of weeks. Think about buying a journal that holds all the positive thoughts, hand written notes, printed e-mail, and other words of influence as a reminder of how powerful the tongue can be!