

May 31 – Introduction: The 40-Day Word Fast

June 7 Preparation

- The 40-Day Word Fast, Chapter 1: *The Power of Words*
- Genesis Chapter 1

Opening Prayer

Ask God to reveal the power of our words and prepare our hearts for transformation during the next 40 days.

Icebreaker (5-10 Minutes)

Question:

If you had to give up one word or phrase that you say too often, what would it be and why?

Introduction to the 40-Day Word Fast

What is a Word Fast?

A traditional fast involves giving up food or something physical for a period of time to draw closer to God. A Word Fast focuses on eliminating harmful, toxic, and destructive speech while intentionally replacing it with words that honor God and build others up.

Key Thought:

The goal is not simply to talk less, but to speak more like Christ.

Scripture Focus

Matthew 12:36

"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak."

Discussion:

- What stands out to you about this verse?
- Why do you think Jesus places such importance on our words?
- How does this verse challenge the way we communicate daily?

James 1:26

"If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless."

Discussion:

- What does it mean to "bridle" your tongue?
 - Why do you think James connects spiritual maturity with speech?
 - How can our words reveal what is happening in our hearts?
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Four Types of Words

1. Power Words

Words that inspire, encourage, motivate, and bring life.

Examples:

- "You can do this."
- "I believe in you."
- "God has a purpose for your life."

2. Truth Words

Words that are honest, authentic, and aligned with God's truth.

Examples:

- Speaking truth in love
- Confessing mistakes
- Sharing biblical truth

3. Compassion Words

Words that show empathy, kindness, and understanding.

Examples:

- "I'm sorry you're going through that."
- "How can I help?"
- "I'm praying for you."

4. Destructive Words

Words that tear down, gossip, criticize, shame, complain, or wound others.

Examples:

- Gossip
- Sarcasm used to hurt
- Name-calling
- Constant negativity
- Complaining

Discussion:

- Which category do your words most often fall into?
 - Which category do you struggle with the most?
 - How can we intentionally increase Power, Truth, and Compassion words?
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Reflection Questions

Choose several based on time:

1. What kinds of words do you have a hard time removing from your vocabulary?
 2. Why do you think you have trouble eliminating harmful words?
 3. What do the words you use say about you?
 4. What words would you like to stop using and why?
 5. How have your words hurt people in the past?
 6. How have your words lifted people up in the past?
 7. Describe a negative word spoken over you and how it impacted you.
 8. When has someone encouraged you with their words? How did it affect you?
 9. How do you feel after saying something hurtful that you did not mean to say?
 10. How do you typically do "damage control" after speaking hurtfully?
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Challenge for the Week

Throughout this week:

- Pay attention to the words you speak.
- Notice recurring negative speech patterns.
- Ask God to reveal areas where your words need transformation.
- Before speaking, ask:
 - Is it true?
 - Is it necessary?
 - Is it loving?
 - Does it honor God?

Personal Reflection

Write down one type of destructive speech you want God to help you eliminate during the next 40 days.

Closing Prayer

Pray for:

- Awareness of the power of words
- Wisdom before speaking
- Healing from hurtful words spoken over us
- Strength to use words that bring life, truth, and compassion
- God's guidance throughout the 40-Day Word Fast