

# Simplicity 03

Simplicity of Speech



Weston Brooks



## OVERVIEW

*All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No' anything beyond this comes from the evil one.*

*- Jesus (Matthew 5:37)*

I suspect we are all familiar with the experience of regretting something that we said. And you likely have also had the experience of wishing you had said something when instead you remained silent. Sometimes we say too much; dominating conversations, exaggerating, gossiping, making excuses, complaining or talking negatively. Other times we remain silent when we should speak up – fearful of saying something that will offend, hurt or elicit anger in others..

There are many reasons we might do these things. Maybe we want to make ourselves look better. Maybe we are insecure. Maybe we have an overactive need to be heard,. Or maybe we are afraid of damaging a relationship.

What if we could stop overthinking and be more honest with ourselves and with others in our speech. Wouldn't it be great to be free of the fear and anxiety that makes us say too much in some situations or hold back in other situations. What if we were full of love so that our words always come from a desire for truthfulness and a genuine care for others. I think it would transform the conversations we have.

The goal of this week's practice – **Simplicity of Speech** – is to become more aware of the internal emotions, thoughts and motivations behind the words you speak or don't speak. Why do we use too many words, dominate conversations, embellish, exaggerate, gossip, lie? Why do we keep silent when we should speak up? Why do we not say how we honestly feel or avoid difficult conversations? In other words, what is going on in your heart that makes you say too much or not say enough?

## PRACTICE SIMPLICITY OF SPEECH

First answer the following question:

*What will be more difficult for you: Speaking less, or using your words for good (truth, clearly stating what you want, building people up, blessing)?*

Based on your answer, pick one of the following practices. Of course, if you are up for it, try both practices this week!

### Speak Less

- Set a goal to catch yourself 1-3 times per day before you speak and choose to be silent instead.
- This could be a moment when you would interject your opinion, share how you feel about someone, provide advice, or just fill the space. Instead, choose not to say anything.
- Then, take some time to reflect on how choosing silence over words made you feel.
- The goal here is not for you to feel hesitant or self-conscious in every conversation in the week ahead, but to notice what happens when we choose not to speak.

### Speak Up

- Set a goal to speak up 1-3 times per day when you would normally stay silent
- It might be standing up for someone who is being unfairly criticized or neglected.
- It might be proactively praying for someone and then calling or texting them an encouraging word
- It might be being honest about your feelings in a conversation when you would normally say nothing or having a conversation that you have been trying to avoid
- Take some time to reflect on how speaking up made you feel
- The goal is not for you to feel pressure to have to say more in every conversation this week, but to notice what happens when you choose to speak up instead of remain silent.

## Reflection

How did it go? In which situations did you find it most challenging not to speak? Or in which situations did you find it most challenging to speak up? Did you discover anything about when and why you most want to speak? Or, when and why you most want to keep silent?

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## RESOURCES

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[www.crosswindscollab.com](http://www.crosswindscollab.com)

*Abundant Simplicity*

by Jan Johnson

*The Freedom of Simplicity*

by Richard Foster

## River of Life Church

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