

## **Devoted**

**Acts 2:42** “They **devoted** themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

### **Vision statement:** (Common-unity)

Ground zero church is an Acts chapter two style of community of disciples who seek to reflect the character of Christ by cultivating friendships and embracing all believers as family.

### **Devoted to fellowship**

#### **(Vision statement)**

. . . seek to reflect the character of Christ by cultivating friendships and embracing all believers as family.

### **(Gznaz.org title page) YOUR FRIENDS GO HERE**

When asked, “Why do you go to Ground Zero Church?” We want people to say, “because my friends go here.” People are longing for meaningful and wholesome relationships. Covid isolation and an increased digital age have greatly increased this need. God has put us here for each other and for this community.

### **Psalms 68:5-6**

“A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,  
is God in his holy dwelling.  
God sets the lonely in families,  
He leads forth the prisoners with singing;

**But the rebellious will live in a sun scorched land”**

The early church had great unity and the Lord added to their number frequently. We need to be intentional about maintaining this same unity. People's lives depend on it.

### **Part 1. Taming the tongue**

**James 3:1-12** “Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and

sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.”

### **1. Words steer your life**

“When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts.”

**a. Negative words-** If you start your day with negative words, you are more likely to have a bad day. Just saying something seemingly innocent like “Ugh, it's Monday and I have to go to work again.” can lead to having a negative attitude and a bad day. Negativity is also infectious. Not only do you start your own day off wrong but your words can have a negative effect on other people as well.

**Proverbs 17:22** “A joyful heart is good medicine, but depression drains one’s strength.”

**b. Optimistic words-** Just changing our words can change the trajectory of your life. Studies have shown that people who are more optimistic tend to go farther and do greater things than those who are negative. Changing your wording from “I have to go to work today” to “I don't have to go to work but I

choose to go to work so that I can. .(fill in the blank).” can make a difference. According to James, this change of wording can even change the trajectory of your life.

That being said, sometimes the Monday blues are too strong. Staying positive and optimistic is not always possible or it at least feels that way at times. Times like these remind me of wise words from a cute little woodland critter.

(Thumper)



### c. Just smile

**Proverbs 15:30** “A cheerful look brings joy to the heart; good news makes for good health.”

You would be surprised how greatly a smile can impact someone and how great of an impact it will have on your own overall attitude.

## 2. Be careful! Words are powerful.

(Stick and stones may break my bones but words will never.  
. .) This is **NOT** true.

### **a. The tongue can destroy**

“Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.

**Gossip**- destroys relationships. We all know this but we still are tempted to gossip. Gossip can be exciting and it can feel good to be in the inner circle even at the expense of another person who has been created in the image of God. Through gossip, people become excluded and the community becomes divided. Cliques are formed and people are turned against each other.

The Devil loves to sow division and discord in communities and especially in the church. He hears everything that is said and he tempts people to say hurtful things. He is the real enemy, and he is pushing his agenda to divide and conquer. I promise you that he will do everything in his ability to make sure the juicy gossip gets back to the people it will hurt the most. If it doesn't, it is only by the grace of God.

**Be on guard!!** One practice that helps me is to pretend that the person being talked about is right there next to you. Expect what you say to get back to the people you said it about. This helps but it is still a struggle.

### **b. The tongue can build up**

When gossip presents itself, fight back with encouragement. Two good things could happen as a result

1. The gossip will stop
2. You will not be included in the gossip anymore

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

### **3. Words affect your witness-**

“ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.”

We are called unto holiness. This requires keeping a tight reign on the tongue. We can go to church and be very generous with our time and money but if we do not control our tongues, we will still have very little positive impact on the world.

**Taming the tongue is impossible for man according to James.**

“All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”

But what is impossible for man is possible with God.

**Matthew 19:26** “Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is

impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Just do the best that you can. Trust the Lord and rest in his grace.  
Your best is good enough for Jesus.