



Table Group Discussion Guide

Series: The Spacious Life | Title: “What Do We Do With Our Words?” | October 18, 2026

*Please respect each other by keeping confidential what someone else has shared during the group time. This helps to keep the environment a safe place to show our wounds and find healing.

Looking Back (5-10 minutes)

Last week we asked: What practical steps can you take this week to quiet yourself enough to hear the Holy Spirit?

- What did you hear? Did you try anything new?

Getting Started (15 minutes)

Kids are literalists. You say maybe this weekend, and by Saturday it has become a binding contract. So they learn to lock it down — is that a promise? Pinky swear? They’re asking because they’ve learned that a plain yes doesn’t always hold.

1. What’s the phrase you use when you want someone to believe you? I swear. Honestly. No, really. Trust me. Everybody’s got one. What’s yours — and what does it say that you need it?

Four reasons we end up untrustworthy with our words: **we’re immersed in a culture of superficiality, we’re moving too fast, we don’t want to disappoint people, and we want to impress people.**

2. Quick round, no explanation needed. Which one is yours? Just the one that trips you up most.

Getting Into the Word (25 minutes)

Scripture: **Matthew 5:33-37, Exodus 20:7**

Read **Matthew 5:33–37**. There are three layers here. The surface one is **don't break your commitments**. Underneath that is **don't make yourself look more trustworthy than you are**. And at the bottom: **don't use God's name to get people to trust you**. They couldn't swear by God directly, so they swore by things next to him — heaven, the temple, Jerusalem. Borrowed credibility.

3. Where have you borrowed credibility that wasn't yours — a name, a connection, a title, a church? Not necessarily lying. Just leaning on something to make yourself look more solid than you felt.

Read **Exodus 20:7**. We usually hear this as a rule about swearing. Carmen Imes argues the Hebrew runs deeper than speech — the command is do not bear the name of the Lord your God in an empty manner. You carry his name. The question is whether you carry it empty.

4. If somebody who knows you found out you were a Christian, would it raise what they think of Christians or lower it? Be honest. And what specifically would make the difference?

Going Deeper with Each Other (25 minutes) *If your group has more than eight people, split into circles of three or four for these questions and come back together to pray.

There's a difference between persuasion and manipulation. Persuasion says: if you knew what I know, you might choose this — but the choice is yours. Manipulation tries to override the choice, or trick someone into a choice they don't actually want. And the religious version is the worst one, because when you attach God's name to your preference, disagreeing with you means disagreeing with God.

5. Has somebody done that to you — used God's name, or Scripture, or I've been praying about this, to get something from you? What did it cost you? And — harder question — have you ever done it to somebody else?

Integrity doesn't usually collapse. It erodes. A little shading here, a little padding there, one more yes you knew you couldn't keep. Nobody notices any single one — and then you look up and wonder where your character went.

6. Where is yours eroding right now? Name the small one, not the dramatic one. The traffic excuse. The yeah, I read it. The yes you gave to avoid a hard conversation.

Pray for Each Other (10 minutes) *Before you start: some of us have been following Jesus for a long time, some are newer at it, and some are still figuring out what they believe. All of that is welcome at this table. Nobody has to pray out loud, and nobody has to agree with something they haven't decided on yet.

Come back together as a whole group. Some of us are carrying wounds from other people's unreliable words — somebody who said they'd be there and wasn't. If that's you, you don't have to name the person. Just say, somebody's words hurt me, and I'm still carrying it.

Then open your hands and pray this together:

“God, you keep your word. I don't always keep mine. Make me somebody people can count on — and heal what somebody else's words did to me. I can't do either one on my own.”

Sit in the quiet for a minute. Then close by praying for whatever came up tonight.

One Thing to Carry into the Week

This week we're practicing **faithfulness**. (Galatians 5:22)

Somebody is going to ask you for something this week. Can you help with this? Can you cover that? Hey, we should get lunch sometime. And you're going to feel that pull — just say yes, be nice, figure it out later.

Try this instead: *let me pray about it, and I'll get back to you*. Then actually pray about it. And then actually get back to them — either way. Yes, I'm in. Or I prayed about it and I can't right now. But you go back. Because *let me pray about it* is a promise too.

And remember what this is and isn't. You're not trying to white-knuckle your way into being reliable. Paul calls faithfulness fruit — it's grown, not manufactured. The pause is just where you make room for the Spirit to do it. Come back and tell someone what happened.