



Seven
Part 6 – Walk in Truth About Others
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Whose ready for spring? In the Ozarks, our favorite season is whatever is coming next. In the summer, we ready to be done with the heat and into the cooler fall months. And then in the fall, we're ready for some snow, right? And then in the winter, we're anxious for the spring. So, we're pretty high maintenance; kind of hard to please.

Today we are continuing our series called *Seven*, which comes out of Proverbs 6: ***16 There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him...*** Again, it doesn't mean that one is better or worse than the others. It's just a poetical rhythm that the writer uses. ***17 ...haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies...*** That's where we are today. ***...and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.***

This language is interesting to me in scripture because it's pretty strong language that we're hearing, that the Lord hates something. When I was growing up, Mom encouraged us to not use the word *hate* because it is such a strong word. She'd say, "Let's not say *hate*; maybe something like 'I don't care for,' that's not quite so strong."

There are some things that I don't necessarily hate, I just don't care for and that language would be appropriate for say black licorice. I don't hate black licorice; I just don't care for it, so that's appropriate. Like roller coasters. I get motion sick and I have a fear of falling from tall heights. That doesn't go well with roller coasters. I don't care for roller coasters. I'm getting better; I don't hate them, but I really don't care for them. Autocorrect is another thing I don't care for. It's pretty entertaining reading some of these autocorrect fails, but I don't want to be one of them, so I've got autocorrect turned off on my phone.

Now, there are some things that I hate. Sorry, Mom, if you're watching, but there are some things that I hate. Horse flies. I hate horse flies. What good are they? They're annoying, and they bite you and it hurts really bad. I hate them. I hate walking barefoot in my living room and catching my pinky toe on the corner of the coffee table. I hate that. I hate things like this... [picture of a manhole cover with road stripes not placed correctly]. Does anybody else hate that? What kind of sinful heathen does it take... There are instructions right on the manhole cover about how you're supposed to put it back on. I hate that. I hate when my wife wakes up in the morning, upset at me for something that I did in her dream last night. I don't need help from the dream version of me doing boneheaded things that upset my wife. The real me is pretty capable of that. I hate that.

I hate paper cuts. Do you know what I hate worse than paper cuts? An hour later forgetting that I have a paper cut and then using hand sanitizer. I hate that.

So, there are some things where the word *hate* has to be used. What we're talking about are things that God hates. This is God's hate, this emotion from God... We talk a lot about God's love and how amazing and powerful and awesome it is and how in Ephesians 3 we read about how we can't even understand it. That's how awesome it is. So, God's hate must be far beyond that of ours to the point to where when we talk about things that we hate, our hate must be pretty wimpy, just like our love is pretty wimpy compared to God's love. Our hate must be pretty wimpy compared to God's hate. Such that even the things that we say we hate, compared to God's hate, it's almost like we like them.

This made me think about some commercials that have been on television lately and here's one of them. [Direct TV commercial plays] Those are the things that I hate, compared to God's hate because his hate has to be so much stronger than ours.

Today, we are talking about this next thing in this series: ***19 ...a false witness who pours out lies...*** It's the next thing we're talking about that God hates, that he finds detestable. I want to point out something interesting in this passage. It's kind of a pivot point because we've been talking about these things that God hates about specific sins. The writer, in fact, uses parts of our body to describe different sins that we commit that God hates. Hands that shed innocent blood, a lying tongue, feet that are quick to rush into evil. What's happening now, is that scripture is shifting our focus from God saying, "Look at these things that you're doing," to saying, "Look what this is doing to those around you." Our perspective is shifting as we go onto this next one because it sounds a lot like a lying tongue, but the emphasis here in this passage is a specific type of lying tongue and what it does to those around you.

The key application is in the subtitle – *Walk in Truth About Others* – as we seek to avoid being a false witness who pours out lies. So, it's important for us to define what a witness is. A witness is one who gives a testimony or an account. Specifically, in this passage, we're talking about one who gives a testimony or account about another person.

We're all narrators, really, of the people of whom we speak. I think of a documentary... I like documentaries; they can be very interesting. There is generally a subject matter. And in this documentary, you'll see some images, some pictures and videos and different things about this subject, some different scenarios, landscapes, scenery, whatever it is, and then you'll have the narrator. The pictures and the videos and all of the images help, but it's the narrator that decides and causes what you believe, think, and feel about the subject.

That's the way it is with us as we speak about others, as we witness about others. We are narrators of the lives of those around us. So, the question then is what type of a narrator are you? What do you cause people to believe, think about, and feel about those of whom you speak?

As we seek to walk in truth about others, it's important also to consider what is true about others because there are a lot of things that are true about each and every one of us. If we go back to our beginning as a baby... There is not a whole lot that is true about a baby. That's why everybody loves a

baby because there's not much that is offensive about a baby. We have a baby in our household right now and everybody wants to hold the baby, everybody wants to see the baby. Babies are fun, they're cute, they're cuddly. All that's really true about them is where they are born, when they are born, who their parents are, what they're name is, eye color, hair color, just the basics. And as that baby gets older, more and more layers of truth begin to be added because they become a toddler and a two-year-old, three-year-old. They tend to cause problems. They tend to talk back with that word that we've used on them so many times: No.

As they get older into the teen years and on into the older young adult years and beyond... All of these layers of truth begin to be added because they are things that they have done, things that they have said, things that people have experienced, both good and bad. But, all these layers of truth begin to be added.

So, what's true about others? Let's go back, as we peel off these layers, and talk about the one thing that is true about every single human being because there is one thing that is the truth about every single human being. We're going to talk about this corporately and also individually. I'm going to start with corporately.

We are going to look at what it says in Genesis 1. And this is in the beginning when mankind was created. ***26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."***

27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

What we're reading here is that we were created in God's image and that puts value on human beings. That puts a special value, a special relationship between us and our creator that no other part of creation has because we bear his image. In other words, there's a little bit of him in us. It's like a reflection of him.

Individually, let's look at Psalm 139: ***13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*** This is individual. I love this picture of the creation of a single human being and the attention that God gives.

Let's talk about DNA for minute. DNA is deoxyribonucleic acid. It is the material that is in our cells that codes for us as individuals. It carries all the information that makes us individual from one another. It's contained in large units called chromosomes. We have 23 pairs of chromosomes that make up our genetic material and that's in every single cell of our body. It codes for all the individual things about us like our hair color, eye color, height, even to things like our personality, our tendencies for certain fears and our talents, everything that makes us individual and that's in every single cell of our body.

Now, if we zoom in and we look at an even more microscopic level, our DNA consists of a strand of... the small units are called nucleotides. The nucleotides add up to make a strand in a special sequence. There

are four nucleotides in DNA: adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine. It's the unique sequence of those four options that makes you unique from anyone else in the world. It exists in a double strand. As you can see in the picture, there is an equal and opposite strand to that code and it's reversible because an adenine nucleotide is always going to pair to a thymine nucleotide like quinine to a cytosine and so on and so forth. So, these base pairs add up to make up all of your DNA and that chromosome and a total of 23 pairs of chromosomes.

This is amazing. Our DNA, that single strand, if you take it from a single chromosome and stretch it all out... because the way it exists in the chromosome is wound up over and over. If you stretch it all out and you put every single strand of DNA from every single cell in our body... By the way, our bodies have trillions of cells. All of our DNA material, lined up end to end, would stretch from here to the moon and back 1,500 times just from your individual DNA. How remarkable is that? Isn't that amazing?

So, when God makes a new human being, we have a unique half set of DNA from the father and a unique half set of DNA from the mother and God brings them together in a single cell to make one complete, unique set of DNA. And that is when we believe that life begins. We talked about "hands that shed innocent blood" a few weeks ago on Pro-Life Sunday. We believe this is when life begins. This is when God creates a soul that will exist into eternity, either in heaven in the presence of God or in hell in the absence of God.

So, he has created a human being, a single cell with a single complete set of DNA inside that cell. Again, we're trillions of cells, so, as he's going to develop that baby into a completely developed person, he has to divide that cell from one cell into two and then two cells into four and then four into eight and so on. The trick is that in that single cell, there's a single copy of the DNA and you need two copies of the DNA, one for each of those cells. So, here's what happens. God takes the DNA from that single complete set and he unzips it. He unpeels the DNA so that he has the two sides of it and he takes this single strand with the bare nucleotides and he takes an adenine nucleotide and he takes a free-floating thymine nucleotide and he attaches it. Then he goes to the next one. He takes a guanine (if it's a guanine) and he takes a free-floating cytosine nucleotide and he attaches it.

He does that nucleotide by nucleotide, knitting you together in your mother's womb three billion times, just on this side. Then he goes over here, and he does it again, knitting you together until he gets one duplicate, so it can split into two cells. And then he does it all over again twice and then four times, over and over and over, knitting you together in your mother's womb. Isn't it fascinating that David wrote those words thousands of years before the discovery of DNA. It just blows my mind.

By the way, the second law of thermodynamics is the law called entropy. Entropy is a condition of disorderliness. The second law states that entropy is always increasing. In other words, the whole world is coming apart. And we feel like that some days more than others. But, science has shown that everything in the universe is increasing in its disorderliness, it's getting less organized. One scientist put it this way: It's like if you have your house completely picked up, exactly how you want it, everything in place... like that has ever happened. If everything is exactly like you want it, not a speck of dust, not a speck of dirt, exactly perfect, there's only one way that house can go. Those with small children

especially know that, right? That's our universe. Scientific observation and evidence and research and experimentation has shown that that is the direction that our universe is moving.

Now, you can't possibly understand the complexity of DNA and understand the physical laws that govern our natural universe and believe that we evolved from lifeless matter through a purposeless process. You can't reconcile that; it's doesn't add up. God created us in his image, in his likeness, and he knitted each one of us together in our mother's womb, every single person. And in that, he assigns enormous value, far above any other part of his creation. And he created some pretty incredible things besides us. Awesome plants and animals and other living and non-living things. But, the fact is that none of them contain the same value that we do.

I want to show you a painting. This painting is arguable the most popular painting by anyone ever in the history of mankind. [painting of a landscape] You've seen it hundreds of times. You might have even seen it thousands of times. You don't recognize it? Let me help you. [the Mona Lisa is placed in the forefront of the landscape] You see? It's the Mona Lisa by Da Vinci. Without her, all that is back ground. The value of this masterpiece lies in the Mona Lisa in the forefront of this picture, not in the background; it's just another background. We are the Mona Lisa in God's masterpiece. We are the ones that contain the value. Everything else is in the background.

Again, God has created incredible things. We were in Colorado last year and I took this picture from atop of a hike overlooking Rocky Mountain National Park. Wow. Awesome is God's creation. And some incredible plants as well. The Venus Fly Trap. It's a plant that catches bugs and it's pretty impressive, pretty awesome. There are also animals that we place high value on as humans because they are close to extinct, they're endangered, they are at risk of being wiped off the face of the earth, so we protect them and we place high value on them. But, it's important for us to understand that all of the rest of God's creation... All of the scenery, the plants, the animals, endangered or not, even the sun, the moon, the stars, everything else in the rest of God's creation added together, the sum of it does not hold the value as one single human being.

The sum of the rest of God's creation does not hold the same value as the woman so caught up in a drug addiction that she prostitutes herself to be able to afford her drugs. The sum of the rest of God's creation does not hold the same value as the devious Politian you can't stand the sight of regardless of which side of the aisle they are on. You can see this starts to get a little hard to swallow. The sum of the rest of God's creation does not hold the same value as your ex-spouse. Again, getting hard to swallow here, but it's a truth we have to understand because as we talked about all those truths, all these things that are true about people that they've done to you or said to you or whatever has happened in the past... all of these truths don't add up to the one thing that is truest about every single person and that is this:

Every person is a human being with eternal value created in the image of God. Every person, regardless of the other truths, is a human being with eternal value created in the image of God. Knowing that, it's important for us to understand, as we seek to walk in truth about others and avoid what God hates, which is being a false witness who pours out lies... As we do that, and we understand

this, we know that **anything that devalues a person is a false witness**. Any of our words that devalue a person is in fact a false witness.

We bear false witness in two ways, I believe. The first one is *to* others and the second is *about* others. We're going to talk about both of those, but first I want to lay the ground work with a couple of scriptures.

Ephesians 4: ***29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*** We're hearing Paul here encouraging the Church at Ephesus. Speak words of encouragement, building one another up.

1 Thessalonians 5: ***11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*** So, we're hearing Paul, to two different churches, being redundant so it must be important in scripture. One of the ways that the emphasis is made is getting redundant in scripture. Build one another up according to their needs that it may benefit those who listen.

Now, one of the ways we bear false witness by devaluing is *to* others; kind of the second person, as I speak to other people. Generally, that's done with harsh words. Harsh words are the things that we say that devalue other people to their face.

Let's look at Proverbs 15. ***1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*** Remember I said earlier that in Proverbs we're shifting from this perspective of the things that I'm doing to what it's doing to those around me? Proverbs 15: 1 says that we're stirring up anger. Our harsh words bearing false witness by devaluing someone, to them, stirs up anger, so we start to see the effect of our sins on those around us.

Look next at James 3. We're going to spend a little time in James 3. ***3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 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. 5 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. 6 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.***

The picture that we're getting here is that these great forests... So, a great forest is set on fire by one small spark. I think of the wild fires in California and Colorado and the thousands and thousands of acres that get destroyed and the millions and millions of dollars of property that get destroyed. Every single one of those fires starts with a single flame like from a single match. A single flame can destroy thousands and thousands of wildlife, plants, other parts of God's creation and property and cause mass destruction. This right here; that's the power that it has.

The word that we are given here in James is that that's our tongue. Our tongue, in the harsh words that we speak, stirs up anger and it can cause massive destruction, far reaching beyond what we'll ever even see. That's the picture that we get from this that our harsh words can be a fire.

Have you ever had a song that gets caught in your head? My daughter and I were supposed to have a father/daughter dance at the RecPlex. It got cancelled because of weather, so we went to see The Greatest Showman. It's a good movie. Since we left that theater, I can't get that song, *This is the Greatest Show*, out of my head. It's just over and over. In the same way, we get people's words stuck in our head. Almost like someone has created an audio file and put in there and pushed repeat and played it over and over. In general, it tends to be the words that are really uplifting or the words that are really discouraging and harsh. So, we get these audio loops that play over and over in our heads.

The question is, what kind of audio loop do you create in people's head? What kind of an audio loop are you causing to be played over and over in people's head that you've spoke to them?

You may have been a part of something where friends gather and speak words of encouragement, words of honor to someone, either at a birthday or a retirement. Or when people are moving out of town, you speak words of honor into those people and build them up. Ephesians 4: 29. I was a part of this recently on the receiving end and it reminded me of Ephesians 4: 29, the value of building up and how important it is.

We tend to focus on our assumed assignment to keep people in check, to make sure people know about their sins, to make sure and remind them of who they are and to speak harsh words to them if necessary to keep their ego in check. *To* others is one way that we bear false witness by devaluing.

About others is another way. This is where we get the idea especially of a narrator, one who tells people what to believe, think, and feel about others.

Now, let's go back to James 3. ***7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.***

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

The idea here is that blessing and cursing should not come from the same mouth; you can't get both. I believe that social media has magnified this, that when we're not in the presence of others, we tend to be more willing to say things that we might be ashamed to say in the presence of others. That's because when we are in the presence of others, there are consequences for it. The proverbial foot in the mouth.

We do have backpedals when we do that though, when we are around other people. They're kind of "Can I take that back" words, and this is my favorite one: "**I'm just saying...**" We use that, right? If we're in a group of people and someone says something about a public official like "That is the biggest idiot I've ever known!" And someone else in the group says, "That's my uncle." There's this awkward silence. The first thing that person then says is, "I'm just saying that I disagree with a lot of his policies."

Generally speaking, after the “I’m just saying” are words that may have been more appropriate to begin with, so you rewind and listen to the words before it and after it and they tend to be gentler after the “I’m just saying.”

We also tend to call our words something different than what they are to make it okay. If your child asks you if they can have birthday cake for breakfast, you’d say, “No, you can’t have birthday cake for breakfast, but you can have pancakes with maple syrup.” There are eggs, milk, flour, and a couple of other ingredients. Then you cook it and then put some sugar over the top of it. The ingredients are the same.

How about “Can I have a chocolate milkshake for breakfast?” “No, you can’t have a chocolate milkshake for breakfast, but you can have a mocha Frappuccino because it’s coffee flavored and it’s normal to drink coffee in the morning.” There’s milk and sugar and chocolate, but with coffee flavor, right? The ingredients are the same. We do the same thing with our words. What’s the point? The point is we should be allowed to eat birthday cake for breakfast. I’m just saying, right?

It’s the same thing with our words. The ingredients being our intentions and the consequences of the things that we say are the same. Like we say, “I’m just making sure everyone knows the truth.” “I’m making sure that all of those people that work with her or him know what’s been going on because they deserve to know the truth about her or him.” “I’m protecting them from this person.” “I’m just informing everyone.” When really, we call it that, but the ingredients are the same and it’s really slander and gossip, words that devalue no matter what we call it. So, we must consider our motive and our consequences of the information that we share, how we share it, and when we share it.

Then we know **we can be right in what we say, but unrighteous in saying it.** If I’m at an intersection and there is a green light, giving me the right of way to go, then I am right by going. If I can see that there is, in the cross traffic, a vehicle coming very fast and clearly doesn’t see that they have a red light, I still have the right of way and would be technically right to pull out into that intersection, but I would be highly unrighteous in doing that because you see I would be intentionally causing an accident, a huge disaster from which nobody benefits.

We do the same thing with our words. We can have the right to some things, but we can be unrighteous in saying them because saying them... We know the consequences. We can create a massive disaster from which nobody benefits.

If I throw an object and it falls to the ground, you know why it falls to the ground. We all do. It’s gravity. Most of us know who discovered gravity; it was Isaac Newton. Isaac Newton was a great philosopher and thinker and physicist. He obviously studied the works of those before him. Aristotle was one of them who studied hundreds of years before Isaac Newton. As Isaac Newton discovers gravity and understands why an object falls to the ground when it’s thrown, he had studied previous thinkers, Aristotle being one of them.

Aristotle thought, in his time, that when an object was thrown, it fell to the ground because when I threw it, I imparted by will on that object. And as that object left my hand, the farther away it got from

my hand, the less and less it had my will to keep moving in that direction and it fell to the ground. So, Aristotle, one of the greatest thinkers of all time, thought that an object took my will upon itself.

Isaac Newton discovered why these objects would fall to the ground and he could have very easily said harsh things about those who preceded him, including Aristotle, and the crazy things they thought about reality, but he didn't. As a matter of fact, he included Aristotle when he said these words:

"If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Isaac Newton said that, and he said that about people, including Aristotle, who thought things fell to the ground because they had a will that a person had imparted upon them.

What if our leaders and our thinkers spoke of others this way, their predecessors this way? What if we spoke of others this way with words that build up and show gratitude for those that have come before us and not pointing out the things that are true about them that devalue them, but rather words that build up according to their needs.

You see, we love to tear people down in the name of building up our own reputation. Isaac Newton could have taken on an attitude of "I'm so much smarter than Aristotle was," but he didn't do that. Instead, he said Aristotle was a mental giant upon whose shoulders he stood.

We like to beat people down in the name of building up our own reputation. Have you ever noticed... Andy Andrews points out in his book, *The Noticer*: *"Have you ever noticed that we tend to judge ourselves based on our intentions, while judge others based on their actions."*

It's like the honey do list or chores. "Honey, did you change the oil in the car?" "Oh, I had it on my list. I thought about it. I drove past the Jiffy Lube and I thought I needed to stop there to get the oil changed. I thought about it; I'm sorry I didn't get it done." In my mind, I've got to get a little credit, right? My intentions were to get it done, but what we do is we judge others in that you didn't get the oil changed, period. Those are your actions that you did or didn't do.

We have our saintly daydreams, I think, about our intentions, about the things that we've done in the past that we build ourselves up about, the good things that we've done or the good things that we'll do. "Someday when I have more money, more time, the things that I'm going to do..." And we daydream about how it's going to be great when we can serve these people in this way or do that for that person, and we build up ourselves with our intention, and then we judge one another based on their actions and their words.

Let's look at James 4. ***11 Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?***

I have a paraphrase for this passage that is mostly directed at myself and it's this: **There's only one seat at the righthand of God and it is taken.** You know how your kid can try to wiggle in between you and

your spouse on the couch? No, this is not your seat. We do that between God the Father and Jesus. I do that where I try to wiggle my way down between the Father and Jesus and say, "Alright, guys, we've got some judging to do. I see some manhole covers that need to be straightened up." That's figuratively speaking of course, but we do that, and we judge one another and there's only one seat at the righthand of God and it's not yours; it's taken.

The world is full of narrators that love to focus on the layers and layers of things that are true about people, devaluing them and tearing them down and judging them while neglecting to remember the truest thing about them, and that is that all people are human beings with eternal value created in the image of God.

I've got a story I want to show you guys. You may have heard the story that took place in our community about a year and a half ago, but the story that we're going to show you is some information that you probably didn't know, kind of a backstory. I think it's a wonderful example of what we're talking about in placing value on people. It involves a couple of law enforcement officers from our area, Kyle and Darren, and they were graceful enough to share with us and to let me get this information from them. Corey did a great job of putting this together, so let's hear the story.

[video plays]

Darren: We'd been given some information about a vehicle to be on the look out for in kind of a felony situation. And I'm leaving an area and I look and I see it coming at me. Kyle comes into play and kind of tells me a road I should check. For about ten minutes, it was very defensive or hateful and "we're not coming out" and some other words and name calling and stuff. Just before that, two male voices were speaking about an armed robbery, so that heightens you and you start thinking about, you know, this is not just your typical, you know, small crime. They've either committed an armed robbery already or they're planning one, so there'd be a likelihood of weapons in this residence or on these people. So, you know, as a law enforcement officer, that this could happen any time. You train for it, you plan for it, but it could be odds that you're going to be faced with the barrel of a gun, I guess. Nah, it's not going to happen to me.

Shots were fired in what would be an intense exchange between officers and the suspects.

Darren: I wouldn't say immediately I knew I was shot because I'm like, *what is that?* You know, your brain's trying to figure out, *what is that feeling? This is new to me. I've never felt this before.* Then there's this realization that, *yeah, I've been shot and am I going to die,* you know. It was scary. I was concerned for myself. I was concerned for everybody else there on scene. I just started praying, thinking this may be it.

Kyle: He kept saying, "Kyle, am I going to make it? Am I going to live?" And I really didn't know. All I could do was sit there and say, "Darren, you're going to be fine. We're going to get through this. Keep talking to me." I don't know what's going on in the inside and we all know Darren's faith and that's... If you talk to anybody in our department... Darren just kind of grabs my hand and he said, "Kyle, let's

pray. I know where I'm going." He said, "If it's my time, I know where I'm going." And he said, "Let's pray for them."

And I don't even really remember what I said, but I was just like, "Darren, they just tried to kill us." So, right there in the middle of this battlefield that we just went through, we sit there and pray.

I do remember Darren saying, "God, forgive them. God, you know my heart." He said it two or three times. He kept saying, "God, just forgive them."

It's so easy for us to point our finger at people. It's so easy for us to do that. He literally went beyond himself and prayed for the enemy.

Darren: I know that Jesus died on a cross for my sins and that I was going to heaven no matter what. That's such a good feeling to have, man. When you're going through the stuff and you don't know what's going happen, to know that any minute your going to be with Jesus... let's go. You know what I mean? We're all sinners. We all make mistakes, but God still loves them no matter what, so we should love them just like Christ does, even though it's hard some days.

[video ends]

What a wonderful picture of someone who understands the value of human beings who have eternal value created in the image of God. If there was anyone in any situation that had the right, that had a green light to speak words devaluing, to tear down someone in that moment, it was Darren. Darren says to his buddy, Kyle, who was hold his bleeding wound, "Kyle, let's pray for them." How outrageous is that? But, he understands the value of human beings.

So, as we close today, I want to leave you with a challenge question. What type of narrative will you create about the people to whom and of whom you speak? What audio loops will you create in people's heads? Will they be words that build up – Ephesians 4: 29? Will they be harsh words? What will you cause your hearers to believe, to think about, and to feel about those of whom you speak. As we do that, may we remember that every person is a human being with eternal value created in the image of God.

Father God, we love you and we're grateful that you imparted your image upon us, that you have esteemed such value on us, that you knitted every single one of us together in our mother's womb, and that you gave us such incredible value that any single one of us, regardless of past sin, present sin, future sin, Lord, that each and every one of us has more value than the sum of the rest of your creation.

Father, may we be concerned for our own sins and how they affect those around us. May you guide us and guide our words. Guide our hearts, the wellspring of our lives, where our words come from, Lord, that they may build up according to what others need that it may benefit those who listen.

Father, I pray for everyone here for safety in travel and I pray for those at home, Lord, that we would offer our lives to you as narrators of people around us and narrators that build up and show the value that you have created in each and every one of us.

We love you and we praise you and we thank you for your grace and your mercy to us through your Son Jesus Christ. And it's in his name that we pray, and everyone agreed and said... Amen.