

4) Why does Jesus connect fruit to the nature of the tree rather than focusing on behavior alone?

5) How do words function as a “tell” according to Jesus’ teaching?

6) What does it mean that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”?

7) How does the ROOT and FRUIT illustration help us assess our actions more honestly?

8) What happens when the “fountain” of the heart becomes contaminated?

9) What kinds of things are commonly deposited into the treasury of our hearts today?

10) In your own life, how have you seen words act as a “tell” about what was really going on in your heart?

11) What are some things we can do this week to deposit more Jesus into our heart and less junk?

## CHAIR TIME TOOLS

Reflection Questions for Chair Time: think about the following questions and pray through them with Jesus.

- 1) Ask God to reveal anything in your heart that may be producing unhealthy words or actions.
- 2) What is one step you can take this week to make healthier, God-honoring deposits into your heart?
- 3) What do you need to stop doing, start doing, or trust God for this week?

## Matter of the Heart

Pastor Tim Layfield | January 11, 2026

*“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”* **Matthew 12:33-37 ESV**

**Thread:** What we treasure is revealed in our works and words.

*“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit.”* **Matthew 12:33 ESV**

Our heart is the **ROOT** and the works are the **FRUIT**.

*“You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”*  
**Matthew 12:34 ESV**

Our heart is a **FOUNTAIN** and our words are its **STREAM**.

*“The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.”* **Matthew 12:35 ESV**

Our heart is a **TREASURY** and our words and works are its **TREASURE**.

*“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”* **Matthew 12:36-37 ESV**

### Challenge:

- Make time this week to have an honest assessment of your heart.
- What steps can you take to either continue or begin to make healthy, God honoring deposits, into the treasury of your heart?

- Three things to consider this week as you assess your heart.
  - What do I need to stop doing?
  - What do I need to start doing?
  - What do I need to have faith for?

*For practical, cross-cultural Bible studies related to sermon topics, visit [Dougbrittonbooks.com/resource](http://Dougbrittonbooks.com/resource).*

# Homework

## Words Matter

**Winter 2026 | Week 1**

Message Date 1/11/2026

### MY STORY

- 1) Growing up, what is a phrase or saying you used often?
- 2) If you had to give up texting or talking on the phone for a week, which would you choose—and why?

### QUICK REVIEW

- 3) What caught your attention from Sunday's message?

### DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME

**Matthew 12:33–37 (CSB)**

<sup>33</sup> *“Either make the tree good and its fruit will be good, or make the tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is known by its fruit.”* <sup>34</sup> *“Brood of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil? For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.”* <sup>35</sup> *“A good person produces good things from his storeroom of good, and an evil person produces evil things from his storeroom of evil.”* <sup>36</sup> *“I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak.”* <sup>37</sup> *“For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”*