

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

Before you make copies and use the studies...

- **[COPYRIGHT]** – Each of the Bible studies that are a part of *Folks Like Us* is copyrighted. You have permission to make as many copies as you like/need for yourself and/or whatever ministry environment you intend to use them. You do *not* have permission to sell these studies. You may, however, request a small fee to cover the cost of copying, if necessary.
- **[PRINTING]** – The security setting for each PDF allows you to print the study, but not to edit it. When you print these studies, you may want to use the “Print Page Range” feature of your software, and start the printing with Page 3, and you won’t have to print the color cover or this Introduction page. *If you plan to have them printed professionally, you may want to include the cover.*
- **[DONATIONS]** – Although there is no charge for the studies, feel free to make a non-deductible donation to help offset the annual cost of web-hosting, etc. at: [paypal.me/handsofthur](https://www.paypal.me/handsofthur)
- **[QUESTIONS/COMMENTS]** – Email them to: information@fransciacca.com

Other great resources on fransciacca.com

Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- “***The Road to Shalom***” *podcast* – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
- “***What’s Wrong With the World?***” – A 14-part video series exploring the questions, “*What is the gospel, and does it really matter?*” and “*What is a disciple, and what does one look like?*” Each episode includes a small group handout as well as supplemental leader’s notes. You may take the series for a “test drive” and purchase the series.
- “***Knot or Noose? - Recovering the Mystery of Marriage***” – A 9-part video series for singles, engaged, or married couples exploring marriage from a radical perspective. Instead of trying to figure out how to get God into marriage, this series will guide you into how to place marriage into the center of the larger redemptive plan of God. This conference has been presented live throughout the U.S. in a multitude of different settings. Each episode includes everything needed for a small group. You may take the series for a “test drive” and order the series.

FOLKS Like Us

JOB

“A Transformed Mouth.”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,
for a journey with God in the modern era.

Fran Sciacca

“*Folks Like Us*” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,



Fran Sciacca
Birmingham, AL

JOB

“A Transformed Mouth.”

ABIDING PRINCIPLE – Our words are a clear reflection of who we are, but they also affect what we are becoming. As we seek to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, controlling our speech is essential.

“Why, indeed, do we converse and gossip among ourselves when we so seldom part without a troubled conscience?” — Thomas à Kempis

Scores of books, articles, and sermons have been written and preached about the suffering and patience of Job. But most of our insights about Job are essentially confined to the book that bears his name. In fact, he is mentioned by name only three other times in the entire Bible! About six centuries before Jesus, in a final statement through the prophet Ezekiel, God reaffirmed Job's character as one whose heart was right before Him.

The book of Job is basically a written record of conversations among Job, several men, Satan, and God. And while it is true that his patience and faith provide a great model for us to imitate, it is also true that the book and life of Job can teach us a great deal about God's desire to transform the speech of those who claim to know Him.

KEY SCRIPTURE: Job 29

STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. Job 29 provides an excellent portrayal of Job's past—that portion of his life about which God declared, "There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil" (Job 1:8; 2:3). Read the following verses from Job 29 and describe Job's life in terms of what he said and what he did.

Verses 11-12

Verse 13

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verses 21-23

Verse 25

2. Job 27:1-4 gives us a glimpse of his convictions *after* he had been robbed of his peace, his possessions, and even the lives of his children. What was his commitment concerning his speech in the midst of this incredible person pain? Do you see this as significant? If so, why?
3. Job's friends were convinced that his calamity was clearly God's judgment for sin in his life. Contrast the effect of what they said with what Job said concerning his suffering, according to Job 16:1-2 and 19:2.
4. Describe the principle about our speech outlined in Proverbs 18:21.

Explain how you see this principle illustrated in the life of Job.

5. Scripture makes some astounding assertions about the seriousness of our speech. What is the plain message you see in each of the following passages?

Psalm 34:12-13

Isaiah 29:13

Matthew 12:36-37

James 3:2-5

6. Read Matthew 12:34-35 and Proverbs 16:23. What principles about our speech do you discover from these passages?

Thoughtfully read Psalm 119:9-11, Proverbs 7:1-3, and Colossians 3:16. What additional insights can you add to your answer to the previous question?

LOOKING BACK...

In Ezekiel 14:20 God indicates that Job was one of the most upright men who ever lived. And in the book that bears his name, we see not only how he responded to an avalanche of suffering that God allowed and ordained, but also how he handled being wrongly accused by close friends. And through it all, even though some of his thinking was off, Job's *speech* was faultless before God. The Bible portrays our mouth as the exit ramp of the *heart*. What we say reflects who we are. For this reason, God places a very high premium on our *speech*. In fact, the relationship between our heart and our mouth is so close that at the Day of Judgment our *words* will be the evidence used to describe the condition of our hearts! So if we *are* being sanctified (transformed to resemble Jesus), how we talk is one thing that others should clearly see changing; the reflection of what is happening to our hearts.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

7. Following is a list of Scriptures that deal with different aspects of our speech. Read each one and explain the main point, including both positive and negative instruction.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Psalm 40:10

Psalm 141:3

Psalm 141:5

Proverbs 9:8

Proverbs 10:19

Proverbs 12:18

Proverbs 15:1

Proverbs 17:27

Proverbs 29:1

Isaiah 50:4

Ezekiel 2:6-8

Ephesians 4:29

Ephesians 5:4

Ephesians 5:19-20

Colossians 4:6

1 Peter 3:15

8. Prayerfully review your responses to question 7. Choose two areas in which you are not glorifying God in your speech. Put a star next to those verses. Write them out on an index card and plan to memorize them this week. Ask a friend or family member to hold you accountable to do this, and give that person permission to remind you of your commitment to change your speech when he or she hears you break your commitment.
9. Think back on your conversations this past week. In the following subject areas, what would people (your friends, family, coworkers, and such) conclude is in your heart, based on what *they* heard you say? List examples when you can.

God's character

Your relationship with God

Someone who has hurt you

Your level of contentment

What you believe about gossip

What you believe about God's sovereignty

Your feelings toward family members

Your feelings toward coworkers

10. Review your responses to question 9. What is one area in which you would like to see God change your heart and your speech? Prayerfully, write-out a few steps to take you in that direction on a 3x5 card or sticky note, and post it someplace you'll see it each morning.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY (optional)

- The tongue's guide—Proverbs 16:23
- Sanctified speech —Ephesians 4:29