

THE POWER AND PROPER USE OF OUR WORDS

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV)

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

I. THE WEIGHT OF OUR WORDS:

- a. Words are the currency of life.

A formidable power dwells within each of us. This power has changed the course of nations. It is capable of starting and ending wars. And it has made men rich and women famous. It has the means to commend or corrupt—to bless or to blame. It can ease suffering and it can wound deeply. It is the power of the tongue.

1 Peter 3:10 (NKJV)

10 For “He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit.

Simply put, if we want the most out of life, we need to exercise control of our tongue. Our words will affect the quality of our life.

What we sow in word, we reap in relationships.

- b. Bridling our tongue is a mark of spiritual maturity.

James 1:26 (NKJV)

26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

Thinking something does not make it so. You can think you are a Christian, but according to James, the proof is in your words.

We have the power to undermine our own faith, witness and experience with God simply by refusing to get control of our words. (Verbal & typed)

- c. Words have creative power:

Hebrews 11:3 (NKJV)

3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

We are made in the image of God. While we cannot create matter, our words do have a certain creative power. Words either build or destroy human

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relationships. Words either strengthen or damage faith. Words either lift us or burden us. Words matter!

d. The tongue has a disproportionate power:

James 3:3–6 (NKJV)

3 Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

In James 3:3–5, James uses two vivid illustrations. He compares the tongue to the bit in the mouth of a horse and to a rudder on a ship. Horses and ships both possessing great strength and power are guided and governed by a very small fixture.

So it is with the tongue. The tongue is small. But its power, both for good and for ill, is out of all proportion to its size.

Don't underestimate its power!!!!

We may dismiss it as a small member, but don't underestimate the effect your words are having on your life and the life of those around you.

"A fool's tongue, is long enough to cut his own throat" - Bruce Waltke

e. We will be judged by our own words:

Matthew 12:36–37 (NKJV)

36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

The things we say will come back to us one way or another.

(I believe the Blood of Jesus is more powerful than our words, we must get our words under the blood through repentance and submission.)

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Question: *What kind of world do my words create? Both inwardly and outwardly?*

II. BOTH GOD AND SATAN HAVE A PLAN FOR YOUR WORDS:

God greatly desires for us to use this power to bring glory to His name and to advance His kingdom here on Earth. He wants us to speak with love and to declare truth boldly. But, Satan also wants a piece of that action. He tries to keep us in the dark about the power of our words and entices us to use them for harm instead of hope.

Our words can either advance the purpose of God or they can impede it. Sometimes our words can even unwittingly advance the cause of the enemy.

E.g. Job wife in Job 2:9 and Peter in Mark 8:32-33

Your words will serve someone's purpose! Your words can go either way!

Harsh words stir up anger, but a soft answer turns away wrath:

Proverbs 15:1–2 (NKJV)

1 A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

Question: *Which Kingdom's purpose are we advancing with our words?*

That is why we would do well to watch our words. It is not an easy thing to do, but it is possible.

How could we ever hope to tame such a thing as the tongue (James 3:1-12)?

III. HOW DO WE TAME THE TONGUE?

a. Remember its source: The heart is the source of the mouth

Luke 6:45 (NKJV)

45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Words don't just happen. They reveal an attitude of the heart.

The spiritual climate of our hearts will be experienced in the words of our mouths.

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Often an unregulated tongue is the symptom of an unregulated heart.

That is why we must surrender our whole selves to Christ and remember that when we call Him Lord, that makes Him our master and it makes us His slaves.

Psalm 19:14 (KJV 1900)

14 Let the words of my mouth, And the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

The surrender of our tongue must begin with the surrender of our heart.

b. Be slow to speak:

Verbal holiness includes both gracious speech and silence.

Proverbs 10:19–21 (NKJV)

19 In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; The heart of the wicked is worth little.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many, But fools die for lack of wisdom.

James 1:19 (NKJV)

19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

IV. PRACTICAL STEPS TO BRIDLING OUR TONGUE:

- a. Practice “not saying it”: Fight the urge to just say it. You need little victories to train you for intense moments.
- b. Walk away: Don't use someone else's bad behavior or provocation as an excuse to unload. If you have to confront, do it prayerfully, reluctantly and humbly.
- c. Listen to yourself: Intentionally put yourself in the other person's position. Imagine them saying to you what you just said or are about to say to them. How would it be received.
- d. Be accountable to others: It is hard to gauge our own attitude. It is like trying to smell your own breath. Allow them to help you with your choice of words, timing and tone.

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e. Measure your communication against the Word of God:

Question: Are my words consistent with my stated faith and with the Word of God?

V. IMPROPER USE OF OUR WORDS:

a. Lying: A false statement with the intent to deceive or withholding truth for the same purpose.

Revelation 21:8 (NKJV)

8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Colossians 3:9 (NKJV)

9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

b. Backbiting & slander:

Psalms 101:5 (NKJV)

5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, Him I will destroy; The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, Him I will not endure.

Romans 1:29–32 (NKJV)

29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,

30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

c. Gossiping and tale bearing:

Proverbs 26:21–22 (NKJV)

21 As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife.

22 The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body.

d. Sowing discord:

Proverbs 6:16–19 (NKJV)

16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,

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18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.

e. Profanity & Filthy Communication:

Ephesians 5:3–4 (NKJV)

3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;

4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

f. Murmuring and Complaining:

Philippians 2:14–15 (NKJV)

14 Do all things without complaining and disputing,

15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

VI. THE PROPER USE OF OUR WORDS:

a. Confessing faults to God and others:

James 5:16 (KJV 1900)

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

b. Worship & Thanksgiving:

Hebrews 13:15 (NKJV)

15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

c. Preaching the Gospel:

Acts 2:40 (NKJV)

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

d. Sharing our Testimony:

Revelation 12:11 (NKJV)

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

e. Speaking Truth in Love

Ephesians 4:15 (NKJV)

15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

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f. Edifying one another:

Ephesians 4:29 (NKJV)

29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

Question: *What is your speech seasoned with?*

VII. CONCLUSION:

Titus 2:6–8 (NKJV)

6 Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded,

7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,

8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

Proverbs 25:11 (KJV 1900)

11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.