

PP Let the Wise Hear

Part 2 Proverbs 18:21-Let the Wise Speak

2/7-8/26

I like going to a Waffle House because I can see how the food is made right out in the open. Wildly popular shows like, *How It's Made*, or *Dirty Jobs* go behind the scenes and show how things really work.

Today, we are going to go behind the scenes, beneath our words, and see what really motivates our mouths to speak.

The book of Proverbs talks about our speech more than any other topic except wisdom itself. James hints why this is so: **PP "The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell...no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison."** James 3:6, 8

Christian, no human can tame the tongue, but God can, and His way is by giving wisdom. Remember from last week, **PP "Wisdom is the power to see and the inclination to choose the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it."** J. I. Packer

Wisdom is the God-given ability to discern right from wrong, and the motivation to choose right. Today we'll see how wisdom helps us learn to see our hearts through the words that we speak.

PP 1-Wise people consider their words carefully

PP "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."
Proverbs 18:21

Solomon is using the image of harvest here: **PP "From the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach is satisfied; he is satisfied by the yield of his lips."** Prov 18:20

The words we speak are seeds we plant, and they'll yield a harvest of death or life, good or evil. Let's sit under the weight of this truth...*our words potentially bring death or they bring life*. Wisdom enables us to discern which harvest will be produced by our words and choose carefully. What seed is lodged in the heart of a child when a father calls his son stupid, or an idiot, or a mistake, or rarely if ever speaks lovingly to him?

What future harvest will come when a mom is overly critical with her daughter, pointing out her littlest of faults and shortcomings?

But the harvest of our words is not one which is only for others to glean, we ourselves will reap a harvest.

The harvest that awaits one who lies and deceives will be one of death; at minimum the death of trust, or even the death of a relationship, or worse.

Even more personally though, are the words we say to ourselves.

Researchers tell us that the average person has 60,000-80,000 thoughts a day, which comes out to 2,500-3,300 thoughts an hour.

If our mental words are largely negative and critical of yourself, then imagine the harvest of self-hatred, self-doubt, bitterness, insecurity and resentment of others.

If our thoughts are tainted by anger then we can easily justify our slander and gossip.

Picture your words as seeds which will bear life-giving fruit, or toxic fruit that sickens.

PP 2-Wise people consider their words deeply

Wisdom puts the brakes on our mouths so we have time to discern the roots of our words.

The root or motivation of all we say is down in our hearts, the storehouse for our words.

PP "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.” Matthew 12:34-35

Where Solomon said the power of the tongue is life or death, Jesus used the words *good* or *evil*
PP An evidence of gaining God’s wisdom is the ability to pause before we speak

It is in that pause that we examine if our words we are about to speak are coming from good in our hearts or evil, knowing then they will produce a harvest of life or death

Think for a moment, that you develop the skill-through wisdom-to examine before you speak, the place your words are about to come from, and the effect they are about to have on those who hear then, including you, and God

For instance, **PP** **“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”**
Ephesians 4:29-30

Our talk affects others...*that it may give grace to those who hear*

Our talk affects God...*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit*

PP So how do we learn to speak in a way that brings life?

PP First, remind yourself daily, *God is listening to every word I say!*

The key to success is what Proverbs repeats: **‘the fear of the Lord’**

PP The **fear of the LORD** is a deeply profound, life-changing reverence and awe of God’s greatness and strong desire that we would never do anything that displeases Him

Without this, we cannot get off the starting block of gaining wisdom

For most of us, we are the most honest version of ourselves at home, and perhaps that means there are arguments and raised voices, and slammed doors and melt downs with the kids

But then guests visit, and magically, everyone is on their best behavior

The husband is kind to his wife, the wife smiles and serves, and most crazy of all, the kids clear the dinner table without being asked

If we put our best selves forward with other people, imagine how we would act if we were all conscious of the presence of Jesus at all times!

PP **“Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.”**
Psalms 139:4

He hears every word, and offers wisdom to slow us down before we speak and consider what is motivating us from the heart to say what we are about to say

PP **“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak”** Matthew 12:36

What a sobering thought, and one that should move us to pray with David, **PP** **“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!”** Psalm 141:3

The more we live in the conscious awareness of God’s examination, the more we will pay attention to what we say, asking, *Are my words leading to death or life?*

PP Second, ask God to give you wisdom to discern the root of your words

When David prayed the prayer of Psalm 139, he was asking God for wisdom

PP **“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”** Psalm 139:23–24

Our mouths let out what is in our hearts and when our hearts are full of life, joy, grace and kindness, our words will let those out and they will lead to life!

What is gossip but the love of power to destroy the life of another, for gossip never builds up?
There is the talebearer who spreads private information and the whisperer who poisons relationships with secret communications, and the busybody who creates drama

What is cursing at someone but the wish to destroy them?

What is slander but the arrogant desire to condemn others in order to elevate yourself?

What is lying but the demand to get what you want and avoid what you don't want?

What is flattery but manipulating others for your own benefit?

What is boasting but the desire to gain for yourself fame and credit and adoration?

What is complaining but the vertical discontent with God over your circumstances?

What is hyper criticism but focusing on the faults of others so you can disregard your own?

Friends, are you aware of what is motivating your words, for they are coming from your heart?

PP *The secret to a mouth that gives life to others is to possess a heart full of life!*

Words of encouragement come from a heart that seeks to give life and build others up

The words of a wise counselor are powerful: **PP *"The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out."* Proverbs 20:5**

Truthful words endure the legacy of times: **PP *"Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment."* Proverbs 12:19**

Have you driven into your heart that a half truth is a full lie?

Are you growing in wisdom, able to see what is in your heart that is motivating your words?

PP *Third*, discipline yourself to speak less

PP *"let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak"* James 1:19

Has anyone ever told you that you talk a lot, or that you speak before you think?

To hear someone say that to you might be upsetting but is it true?

God's wisdom tells us **PP *"When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent."* Proverbs 10:19**

Without wisdom working as a gate slowing down our mouths and giving us time to examine our hearts that are authoring our words, we will sin, and sin abundantly

In fact, gaining wisdom will teach us that a great many of our words are not at all necessary

Even when we talk with God, **PP *"Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few."* Ecclesiastes 5:2**

But I can hear someone thinking, *Great! My husband already doesn't communicate with me and now you're telling him to talk less!*

If your husband, or wife, or child doesn't communicate and instead bottles things up, that is a different problem and there are potentially many reasons for it

But the truth remains, **PP *"Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin."* Proverbs 13:3**

We would all show the benefits of wisdom if we learn to pause before we speak to discern if our words have the power of life or death

Then remember that God hears and knows every word we speak and is examining them

For that reason, let us ask Him to show us what is down in our hearts motivating the words, and through it all, speak less and listen more!