

Tommy Meador / General

The Book of Proverbs / Proverbs 11

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## Introduction

- VBS throw up - that was probably top ten list of dumb things to say to my wife...
- I talk a lot, and I don't always use my words well. What about you? How well do you use your words? This past week, how often did you use your words to encourage? Or, was your speech less than encouraging this past week? How often were your words harsh this past week? How snarky were you? How sarcastic were you? How manipulative were you with your words? How deceptive were you? How many times did you lie?
- We don't use our words well. In [James 3](#), James writes that the tongue is a fire, a restless evil, a deadly poison, and untamable ([James 3:5-8](#)).
- We need to learn to use our words well, because we talk a lot. Some research states that we speak an average of 7,000 words a day! How intentional are you in what you say? How many of those words glorify God and help others?
- Solomon knew the struggle that we have with our words. The Book of Proverbs addresses speech more than any other topic. Approximately 90 proverbs deal with the things that we say. We're not going to look at every proverb dealing with speech this morning. However, I want to look at some of the proverbs that address our speech, and I want to show you two truths about our speech that I think will help you to use your words better.

## Don't underestimate the power of your words.

***Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit ([Proverbs 18:21](#)).***

***There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing ([Proverbs 12:18](#)).***

- You've had words spoken to you that have felt like a sword thrust. You felt like you were dying on the inside as someone insulted you. You've been lied about, gossiped about, yelled at, told you didn't amount to much, etc. Maybe your words haven't caused physical death, but they have caused an emotional death. For some, the way they view themselves is based off of the hurtful, destructive, and abusive words of someone else.
- You've also experienced the power of healing words. The words of someone who encouraged you at just the right time. For some, you've had someone in your life who has constantly affirmed you and pointed you to Jesus. You had people who told you how they saw God at work in you, or encouraged you as you pursued Jesus.
- **Deception is destructive.**

***Lying lips are detestable to the Lord, but faithful people are his delight ([Proverbs 12:22](#)).***

***A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth causes ruin ([Proverbs 26:28](#)).***

***What is desirable in a person is his fidelity; better to be a poor person than a liar ([Proverbs 19:22](#)).***

- If deception is destructive why do we do it? Some of us struggle with truth telling because we don't want people to see who we really are. (A hateful person disguises himself with speech and harbors deceit within [Proverbs 26:24](#)). We don't want people to see our shortcomings, or we

don't want people to find out what we did. Or, we want to exaggerate our accomplishments and make ourselves look better than we really are.

- Deceptive people are not trustworthy. Once trust is broken, it is difficult to build back. It takes time.
- The cure for a deceptive heart is consistent truth telling knowing that God is truth, and when we consistently tell the truth we imitate His character ([Ephesians 4:25](#)).
- **Speaking harshly is destructive.**

***A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath ([Proverbs 15:1](#)).***

- Some of us are in the habit of speaking harshly to the people we love. We “speak our minds” not realizing how destructive it is. Some of us are in the habit of yelling at the people we love or constantly fault finding in our relationships. Or it's the biting sarcasm. Sarcasm comes from greek word meaning “tearing of the flesh.” It's hostile speech disguised as humor. It can be hurtful.
- Harsh words hurt and not help the relationships. Harsh words produce anger.
- If you would be gentle with others, even in the midst of conflict, you would be amazed at how often a gentle spirit and gentle words can diffuse a situation. (Not always, but often.)
- If you can't speak reasonably or gently, you are better off keeping your mouth shut. BUT... you won't be gentle unless you constantly remind yourself how gentle Jesus has been with you. ([Matthew 11:29-30](#)).
- **Gossip is destructive.**
  - *Gossip is bearing bad news about someone out of a bad heart behind someone's back (Matthew Mitchell).* It's destructive. Gossip is a

betrayal. How many relationships destroyed because of gossip?  
Churches divided?

***A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends. [Proverbs 16:27-28](#)***

***The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body. [Proverbs 18:8](#)***

- Some thrive on gossip. Gossip seems delicious because it makes us feel better about ourselves to hear that someone else has it worse off than we do. For some, putting someone down is a perverse way of building ourselves up.
- Imagine a life without gossip – a church without gossip. There would be peace!

***For a lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases. [Proverbs 26:20](#)***

Some principles to keep in mind when tempted to gossip:

**Principle 1:**The less you gossip the less conflict you will be involved in.

**Principle 2:**Unless you are going to say something that will build someone up in front of others, keep your mouth shut.

**Principle 3:**If you have something against someone, take it to the person, don't gossip.

**Principle 4:**If you hear someone gossip, call them on it, change the conversation, or leave the conversation.

***Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets: therefore do not associate with a simple babbler. [Proverbs 20:19](#)***

Your words are powerful! They can bring death; or they can bring life. What do your words bring?

## Don't underestimate the power of Jesus to change your words.

- Proverbs shows us how destructive are words can be. Proverbs also shows us how life-giving our words can be. How can we use our words to give life?
- **Be truthful with your words.**

***Whoever speaks the truth declares what is right, but a false witness speaks deceit ([Proverbs 12:17](#)).***

***Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment ([Proverbs 12:19](#)).***

- Don't exaggerate. Don't deceive. Truthful words reflect Christ. Truthful words build relational trust that is so desperately needed.
- The Bible does not call us to speak "our truth" but to speak God's truth. It's God's truth that sets free - the truth of the Gospel, the truth of the joy found in living God's will.
- **Be kind with your words.** Speak the truth with love.

***Pleasant words are a honeycomb; sweet to the taste and health to the body ([Proverbs 16:24](#)).***

- You can be honest and right without rubbing it someone's face. Someone of you are truthful, but you deliver the truth in a way that hurts. You're condescending, sarcastic, and mean. That's sinful. Jesus was full of grace and truth. He was full of kindness.
- Kind people see the Gospel potential in every person.
- Kind people assume the best about people and not the worst.

- Kind people know that everyone is a work in progress, even themselves.
- I want to grow to be a person who is not afraid to speak the truth, and I want to learn to speak the truth with much grace and mercy.
- **Be timely with your words.** If a truthful word is spoken at the wrong time it won't be heard.

***A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver ([Proverbs 25:11](#)).***

- **Be selective with your words.** Some of us simply talk too much. You don't have to get the last word in. You really can stay keep your mouth shut when you need to. [James 1:19](#)

***When your words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent ([Proverbs 10:19](#)).***

***Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips come to ruin ([Proverbs 13:3](#)).***

- **Be tempered with your words.**

***Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding ([Proverbs 17:27](#)).***

***A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention ([Proverbs 15:18](#)).***

- How much good are you doing when you lash out in anger? How is your screaming at your spouse and kids helpful? How is losing your cool good for the Kingdom?
- Our excuse for angry words is venting. "I'm just venting..." Venting is sinful because it shows your lack of self-control— your inability to control your emotions and your words. Venting is not an excuse for sinful speech.

***A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back ([Proverbs 29:11](#)).***

- How do we change the way we speak? Will power? Try harder? A change of heart is our only hope because our sinful words stem from a sinful heart.

***But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart and this defiles a person. [Matt. 15:18](#)***

- You gossip because you are prideful. You lie because you want to cover up your sin. You brag because you are prideful. You raise your voice when you don't get your way because you are selfish. Your destructive speech is a result of a sick heart.
- **The only way to fix a heart problem is to run to Jesus in confession and beg for Him to help you to speak in a way that gives life.**
- **Why is Jesus able to heal your destructive speech?** Because He is the Word of God who declares us righteous through His death and resurrection. [Matt. 4:4](#), **“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”** We need the Word of God to speak peace over our sinful hearts. And He can because of His death and resurrection.
- Sometimes what's more hurtful than destructive words is the silent treatment. On the cross, Jesus got the silent treatment. He cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” and He got silence! Jesus cried out to His Father and He got no mercy. Instead He got punishment for our sins.
- You and I will never experience the silent treatment of God because Jesus experienced it for us. Because the One who spoke perfectly went to the cross and died for us who have used our words to destroy, instead of silence when we cry out to our Father, we get to hear, “This is my beloved son or daughter in whom I am well pleased.” Righteousness is

spoken over you instead of wrath. Jesus rose from the dead defeating the penalty of our sin and offering us new and eternal life.

- **The power of words: words can either bring death or life. God has used His Word (Jesus) to bring life to you.**
- How do you habitually speak words of life? Fill your heart with Jesus instead of sin. Run to Him in repentance and learn from Him. Spend time with Him. Grow in Him. The more you grow in intimacy with Christ the more your speech will reflect His character and nature. Jesus is the answer because Jesus is the wisdom of God.