

Proverbs: Words of Life and Death 7/8/2018

Two Ways to Live: The Good Life vs. The Foolish Life

Accidental emails- Work Email Situation...Words Matter

Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

Why Words are so Powerful

4 Resolutions to Make with our Mouths

1) Why Words are so Powerful

-Words are Abundant

Proverbs talks about the theme of words more than any other topic. I think one of the main reasons is because of how much we use them. On average 16k words per day. This is like writing a 60 page book every day with the words you speak. Add to that every word you text and tweet, that is a lot of words.

-Words are Creative

The God who speaks at creates life, made us in his image. We are made in the image. God has given us words as a tool. We can either use them to speak life or death.

We know that words have creative power. Words spoken into our lives paint on the canvas of our soul. Words spoken to us can shape our lives- Who we are, what we often believe about ourselves, even can influence what we become. Some of you are in careers because someone you respected or had influence in your life spoke it to you. "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me."

Proverbs 12:18

Words of the reckless are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Some marriages couldn't stay together because of creative power of destructive words. Some friendships have been destroyed, churches split, careers ended and wars begun because words created havoc and chaos. But words can also creatively bring life.

Proverbs 12:18

Words of the reckless are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Right words spoken at the right time reconcile peoples and make peace. Words can make marriages sweet, families strong, and churches healthy. Just the words- "I'm

sorry, I was wrong, please forgive me, I love you.” - for some have made all the difference in the world.

-Words are Permanent

Tattoos are permanent which is probably why I never ended up getting one. If you are a tattoo person I have a lot of respect for your commitment to that level of permanence. Ill. **Bad Tattoos.** Words are more like tattoos than haircuts. But we often treat words as if they are haircuts. Probably shouldn't have said that but not a big deal in two weeks. You can say something hurtful in ten seconds, but ten years later, the wounds may still be there.

Words are Powerful because: they are abundant, they are creative, and they are permanent.

Several years ago a friend confronted me, in love, about my speech. My tongue could be too witty, too sarcastic, too biting, ran my mouth just too much. I had a hard time controlling my tongue. He said, read Proverbs. God used Proverbs powerfully in my life. After reading proverbs I made 4 Resolutions with my mouth. I want to share those resolutions with you that come right from the book of Proverbs.

4 Resolutions To Make with our Mouths

#1 Resolve to speak less and listen more.

Proverbs 10:19

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

Proverbs 17:28

Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; When he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.

Proverbs 18:13

If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.

Are you the kind of person who needs to have the first and the last word in an argument? Do you struggle with foot-in-mouth disease? Does your mouth get you into trouble? Some of us just talk too much. We all know someone that just talks too much. It's one directional conversation, you are being talked at, not talked with. And if you don't, it's probably you! Are you very adamant that you are heard, but aren't really trying to hear others? Do you think you have the answer to everyone's problems, before they even share it with you? These proverbs are for you. Memorize them. Maybe what you need to do is go into a season of listening and asking other people questions. Maybe you need to go into a season of not giving your opinion. The person who made the step counting technology could maybe make one that counts words, shocks you when you go over a certain number??

#2 Resolve to Promote Unity, Not Gossip

We LOVE to have juicy news...

Proverbs 11:13

A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.

Proverbs 16:28

A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.

Proverbs 26:20

Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.

Loose lips sink ships. WWII, warn citizens to be careful, might be heard by the enemy. Loose lips also sink relationships. We have an enemy that would love for us to speak a careless word that would do damage in relationships, in the body of Christ.

Our words should be aimed to bring life. Almost w/o exception, when we talk negatively about somebody to somebody else, we are not trying to bring life. We are trying to tear down. Even if you preface it with "prayer request." Now, you say, "Aren't there times when you really do have to explain something negative about someone to someone else?" Yes, there are times. But if so, you better a) make sure the motive of your heart is love; b) there better be a clear benefit for telling (if you were about to hire someone I knew was a thief). Here's a little acid test: if you enjoy telling this thing.... It's not love.

Instead promote Unity. You are gatekeepers in the church for unity. Don't be a gossip, and don't receive gossip. A little practice I picked up... someone would come in my office and really start to throw someone under the bus... time out have you talked about this with them? Do you know the way you feel?

#3 Resolve to Speak Truth, not lies. There are a number of Proverbs about how seriously God takes this.

Proverbs 12:22

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight.

God hates lies. Of the 7 things Proverbs says are an abomination to God in Proverbs 6, he repeats lying twice. But God delights in speaking the truth because this is in harmony with his character.

Proverbs 4:24

Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you.

We follow a savior who said over and over again, truly truly I say to you. He is the way and the truth and the life. We should be known as people who speak the truth.

Don't give a half true, twisted truth... Listen, sometimes that truth is hard truth. I had to share the difficult news with a couple recently that I could not marry them because they were not equally yoked. Bible is clear. And I encouraged the Christian woman to NOT marry the non-Christian man. He was furious with me. A friend ran into him recently and said, man this guy does not like you.

Proverbs 28:23

He who rebukes a man will find more favor afterward, Than he who flatters with the tongue.

#4 Resolve to Encourage not Criticize.

Some people consider criticism a spiritual gift. Have you been around these people? Who just always have a negative word? Always finding the worst in everything in life? They just drain the life out of you. U. Denver study on marriages- when there are 10 or more critical comments for every 100 comments in that relationship, one of greatest predictors of divorce. Workplace- 10 year study 200,000 employees- 79% of those who quit their job site a critical environment with a lack of encouragement.

Proverbs 10:11

The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.

Proverbs 15:4

A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

Our words are to have as their aim healing. The opposite of that is that you speak in a way that breaks the spirit... Often, you can say things to someone that are true, but the effects of your words are not healing, but breaking.

Some of you dads... do you only speak negatively to your sons, do you encourage them in their academics, sports, music, whatever they are into? Some of you wives... is the only thing you ever really say to your husband is negative! You note the one thing on his day off he didn't do that you asked him rather than the 3 things he did do! Healing words flow out of a positive, affirming, believing relationship. So, if you are trying to talk to your friend about something that might hurt, build the relationship so that when you do speak a word of rebuke, the person you're giving it to can receive it as if from someone who loves them, embraces them, approves of them, and accepts them!

I think about the men that had the greatest impact on me... it wasn't the ones that just gave me constructive criticism; it was the men who saw something in me that I didn't even see yet and they called it out in me!

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#2 Resolve to Promote Unity, Not Gossip

#3 Resolve to Speak Truth, not lies.

#4 Resolve to Encourage not Criticize.

I used to find it funny when I was a kid when, during a checkup with the family doctor he would tell me to stick out my tongue. Normally I would get in trouble for that kind of behavior. He seemed to be able to tell a great deal about my health by looking into my mouth. That is a parable of spiritual reality of what Jesus said accurately.

Luke 6:45

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

What comes out of our mouths is usually an accurate index of the health of our hearts. And this is why these resolutions mean very little if we don't pay attention to what is going on more deeply inside us. How can you change your heart? Not just by changing your speech. That's like putting lemonade powder into polluted water...

The words of the Bible tell a story that goes into our hearts and changes us. The promise of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that we are given a new heart.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

When we embrace the gospel. That Jesus Christ lived a perfect life. Every word that Jesus spoke was true. Jesus never had to put his foot in his mouth. Jesus spoke life into what was dead. He spoke with perfect wisdom. He lived the perfect life in every way that we could never live. And his death paid the penalty for every careless, evil, hateful, lying word we ever spoke, and every other sin. He made peace with God for us. And he promised to change us from the inside out. He doesn't leave us on a treadmill just trying to do better with our words. He has given us the Holy Spirit that breathes new life. When we humble ourselves. When we yield to the power of the Spirit and ask for him to change us. When we meditate on these powerful words of God, he changes us from the inside out. Take these resolutions and pray them.