

# Abide in Me

**John 15:4**  
*Bible studies for disciples  
who make disciples*



Volume 8 - Number 14

The Week of January 29, 2023

*Get Wisdom*  
**Thoughtful Words**  
Selected Proverbs

*Words.* We can't live without them, but alas, we don't use them very well. One of God's excellent gifts, the ability to speak, is daily upended by our tendency to misuse and abuse this amazing facility. Rightly so did James call the tongue a restless evil, full of deadly poison. In our series in Proverbs, we are going to take this week and the next to talk about its most mentioned topic—the words we use and the power they possess. During this two-part series on the tongue, we will look at a number of proverbs clustered around a theme related to our speech with questions provided accordingly.\*

## I. THE POWER AND PERIL OF THE TONGUE

- Proverbs 10:11: "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence."
- Proverbs 10:20: "The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is of little worth."
- Proverbs 10:31: "The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off."
- Proverbs 18:21: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."
  - Read Matthew 15:18-19. How are our words a barometer of our hearts?
  - How have you experienced the power of healing words or the peril of hurtful words?
  - How do these proverbs help us avoid careless words and impart life with the words we use?

## II. THE POWER OF THOUGHTFUL WORDS (or, How do you talk to people?)

### A. Speak Less

- Proverbs 10:19: "When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent."

- Proverbs 13:3: “Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.”
- Proverbs 17:27: “Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.”
- Proverbs 17:28: “Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.”
- Proverbs 18:2: “A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.”
- Proverbs 21:23: “Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.”
  - Restraining the tongue is hard. Are you a person of few words or many? What are those times when you tend to use many words?
  - What is one wise step you can take to reduce the volume of words you use?

## **B. Speak Aptly**

- Proverbs 10:21: “The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense.”
- Proverbs 10:32: “The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse.”
- Proverbs 15:23: “To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!”
- Proverbs 16:24: “Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.”
- Proverbs 15:1: “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”
- Proverbs 15:4: “A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.”
- Proverbs 25:11: “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.”
  - Think of a relationship where you struggle to use apt words. Have you ever said the right thing at the wrong time? How do these verses impart wisdom you can use?
  - The way we talk to and about people matters. How can we help each other do this in the right way?

## **C. Speak Honestly**

- Proverbs 12:19: “Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.”
- Proverbs 24:26: “Whoever gives an honest answer kisses the lips.”

- Describe a time you lied to someone. What kind of situation causes you to shade the truth?
  
- How can you watch yourself for a day to see how often you may twist or conceal the truth?

#### **D. Speak Courageously**

- Proverbs 28:23: “Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue.”
- Proverbs 31:8-9: “Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.”
- Proverbs 19:28: “A worthless witness mocks at justice, and the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.”
  - In many places Proverbs encourages the closed mouth. According to the proverbs listed above, when is it wrong to keep our mouths shut?
  
  - Does rebuking a friend come easy or hard for you?

**Closing Prayer:** How can you pray for one another this week so that you can speak less, aptly, honestly, and courageously?

