

Wise Mouths – Proverbs 6:12-19, 18:20-21

As we begin this morning, I need to give you an early warning signal. From time to time there are topics which are not always well received from the pulpit. You know, messages on sin and repentance. Messages about money - tithing, or just giving in general. Messages covering topics on sex, or marriage, or divorce. You get my point. Well, this morning's message has the potential to be one of those messages because we are going to see what Proverbs has to say, along with a few New Testament passages, about how we use our mouth. Or, you could say, how we use our words. In my studies for this series, I was reminded that the Bible has a great deal to say about this topic. I found it interesting that Proverbs, the "Book of Wisdom," in just 31 chapters, references our tongue, or our speech, in 150 verses. That means every chapter has something to teach us about how we use our words.

I've used this before so it should not surprise anyone to hear "once the words leave your mouth, it cannot be unheard, nor can they be taken back." I'm sure many of us have been in this situation before. Some refer to it as "foot-mouth disease."

Mark Twain said, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is like the difference between lightening and the lightening bug." In other words, our words are powerful.

There are two focal passages from Proverbs that caught my attention and are the reason behind this message. Let's begin by looking at the first one from chapter six. As we look at this, pay special attention to the verses which reference speech, or some action related to speech. **Read Proverbs 6:12-15.** These verses warn us about the person who is deceptive by nature. One who uses their words for personal gain, in business or in personal relationships. This person is at the core, which is their "heart," dishonest. Just look at some of the adjectives used to describe this person. Have you ever encountered this type of person? Sure, you have. All of us have. Notice what Solomon says will happen to him/her because of these things. **(See verse 15)** Notice too, how someone with these characteristics should be labeled. "Worthless" and "wicked." These words warn us about the existence of people like this in our lives. The warning is also given to us for precautionary reasons as well. We need to guard our hearts from being this way.

****Christian...** if you are a little suggestive when you speak or if you like to use perverse language or tell jokes which carry a double meaning, you should see these words as a warning for you from God against those things. ******

Do you know why these verses stood out to me? They pointed out to me a much deeper problem. We have gotten away from holiness. God demands we seek a holy life. Why? Because He is holy. God is not interested in the “crooked” person, the “perverse” person, the “wicked” person. He’s after the one in pursuit of holiness. **Read Galatians 6:7-10.** We need to understand that we are dealing with a holy God, a righteous God, a just God! And it is those who He finds holy, righteous, and just because of their relationship with Jesus that He will bless, amen!

Next, look at **Proverbs 6:16-19** with me. Some people refuse to believe that God hates anything because they rightly view Him as only a God of love. It is absolutely true that God is love, but it is also true that He hates all things evil. The Psalmist reminds us of this in **Psalm 26:5**, *“I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.”* If you remember the poem of seasons found in Ecclesiastes, perhaps you’ll remember, *“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.”* Including *“a time to love, and a time to hate.”* (**Ecclesiastes 3:8a**)

In our verses from Proverbs 6, we see a list of six things God hates. We also see that a person who exhibits these things will also be a person who creates discord, among others. Solomon says that God sees these people as an abomination, which is to “loath or view with extreme disgust.” Of this list of hated things, notice how many deals with our mouth, or the words from our mouth, rooted in the heart. Half the list. Three things. A lying tongue, someone delivering false truths about God, and the one sowing discord. Once again, we can see where our words can be used in a negative manner. Here’s the thing, when God begins transforming us into image bearers of Christ and the world around us needs to see Jesus in us, this must include our speech. If God views the things in this list as evil, then He must view the opposite characteristics as good, or as holy. He hates prideful people but loves those who are humble. He hates liars but loves those who speak truth. He hates the murderer but loves those who seek to preserve life. He hates the one who is filled with deception and chases after evil things but loves the one who pursues righteousness and walks in that righteousness. He hates those who are a false witness of Christ but loves those who willingly share His truths. And finally, He hates those who constantly look to stir up trouble or create confusion but loves those who seek love, justice, peace, and unity.

Look with me at **Proverbs 18:20-21**. Of all the powers a person can possess, it's how we use our words that can be the most potent. We can speak words of life, or we can speak words of death. With one word, we can bring hope or despair. With one word we can bring joy or sorrow. With one word we can build up or we can tear down. Proverbs 10:19 says, *"When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent."* Sometimes we can say more than we should. When this happens, transgression (sin) is often unavoidable. But as Proverbs 25:11 says, *"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver."*

I want to conclude by saying this. This message is not to say you should never speak or think you should always keep your mouth shut. On the contrary, this message is a reminder that God wants us to use our words for encouragement and love and for helping advance the Kingdom. I also want to remind you of these words from Paul to the church at Ephesus. **Read Ephesians 4:25-32.**

If you need to change some things concerning your mouth. Guess what? You must start with the heart. The words coming from your mouth will change when your heart changes. If you can't control your tongue, then turn it over to the only one who can. The Holy Spirit is powerful enough to fix that for you if you'll let Him. That can only happen when we submit ourselves, mouth included to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Do you need to do this today? Are you willing to do this today?