

“The Power of the Tongue”

Proverbs 18:21

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“A man working in the produce department was asked by a lady if she could buy half a head of lettuce. He replied, “Half a head? Are you serious? God grows these in whole heads and that’s how we sell them!”

“You mean,” she persisted, “that after all the years I’ve shopped here, you won’t sell me half-a-head of lettuce?”

“Look,” he said, “If you like I’ll ask the manager.”

She indicated that would be appreciated, so the young man marched to the front of the store. “You won’t believe this, but there’s a lame-brained idiot of a lady back there who wants to know if she can buy half-a-head of lettuce.”

He noticed the manager gesturing, and turned around to see the lady standing behind him, obviously having followed him to the front of the store. “And this nice lady was wondering if she could buy the other half” he concluded.

Later in the day the manager cornered the young man and said, “That was the finest example of thinking on your feet I’ve ever seen! Where did you learn that?” “I grew up in Grand Rapids, and if you know anything about Grand Rapids, you know that it’s known for its great hockey teams and its ugly women.”

The manager’s face flushed, and he interrupted, “My wife is from Grand Rapids!”

“And which hockey team did she play for?”

Source Unknown.

Recently a beloved brother from the church went to see Jesus. I read all of the awesome words my dear brothers and sisters had to offer the man on his Facebook. I began to wonder if people had shared those kind words with him while he was alive. I am sure that many of them did, but in any case, he can’t read his Facebook now. It made me think of the people in my life and the opportunity I have to tell others how much I appreciate them and not to take it for granted that they know how I feel.

The Power of the Tongue

Proverbs 18:21 “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

- Our words are extremely powerful!
- Once they are spoken, you can’t easily take them back!
- We are cautioned in the word to use our words wisely.

- “The power of speech is one of the greatest powers God has given us. With the tongue, man can praise God, pray, preach the Word, and lead the lost to Christ. What a privilege! But with that same tongue he can tell lies that could ruin a man’s reputation or break a person’s heart. The ability to speak words is the ability to influence others and accomplish tremendous tasks; and yet we take this ability for granted.” Wiersbe
 - I would add that we can build our home up or tear it down with our words.
 - Telling a child you are proud of them, versus they are a disappointment.
- **Proverbs 13:3** “He who guards his mouth preserves his life, *but* he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.”
- **Proverbs 18:4** “The words of a man’s mouth *are* deep waters; the wellspring of wisdom *is* a flowing brook.”
 - **Proverbs 18:4** “The words of a man’s mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.” ESV
 - Water is life giving, but an out of control amount of water is destructive!
- *The Motivation for our words*
 - **Matthew 12:34-35** “...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.”
 - *The Mouth is connected to the heart!*
 - **Matthew 15:18-20** “¹⁸ But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. ¹⁹ For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. ²⁰ These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”
 - The Pharisees taught that the law applied to the external and therefore could be kept externally. Jesus showed them that the heart is the root of the issue
- **James 3:7-12** “⁸ But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.”

To Build Up

- **Ephesians 4:29** “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”
 - *Corrupt* – Rotten or unwholesome

- *Edification* – to increase the potential of someone or something, with focus upon the process involved—‘to strengthen, to make more able, to build up.’
 - The point of my speech to others should be to build others up and bless them.
- **Colossians 4:6** “Let your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”
- **Colossians 3:16** “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
 - To build one another up in the Lord!

To Confess

- *Confession unto salvation* –
 - **Romans 10:8-11** “‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
- *Confession unto restoration* –
 - **1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

To Thank God

- **Colossians 3:17** “And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** “¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
 - The growing amount of thanklessness is a sign of the times.
 - **2 Timothy 3:1-5** “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”
 - Sounds like the current generation to some degree that we see in our culture.

To Praise God

- **Hebrews 13:15** “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.”
- **Romans 15:5-6** “⁵ Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Conclusion;

1. Put Off

- a. **Colossians 3:8-10** ⁸ “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge...”
- b. **1 Peter 2:1-2** “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby...”

2. Guard Your Mouth

- a. **Psalm 39:1** “I said, “I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle.”
- b. **Psalm 141:3** “Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.”
- c. **Proverbs 21:23** “Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.”
 - i. T.H.I.N.K before you speak
 1. True- is it true
 2. Helpful – is it helpful
 3. Inspiring – is it inspiring
 4. Necessary – is it necessary
 5. Kind – is it kind

3. Fill the Heart

- a. **1 Peter 3:15** “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

4. Bless with your mouth

- a. **Ephesians 4:29** “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”
 - i. From now on, let us not assume that our children, family, friends and co-workers know how we feel about them. Let’s tell them!