

The Power of the Tongue

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

Introduction

1. God made our mouths and created man with the ability to use speech and language to communicate and accomplish great things.
2. By grace we have been given the gift of speech. With it, God gives much instruction.
3. Like a powerful tool with WARNING and CAUTION signs all over, God warns us about the power of the tongue and gives instruction for the proper use of it.
4. This is not a mystical power of declaration or creation. Rather, it speaks of the effect our words can have on our own lives as well as others.
5. In this lesson, consider the scope of that power and why we must learn to control it.

Discussion

I. Death and Life are in the Power of the Tongue: Proverbs 18:21

- A. The tongue is capable of great good (life), as well as great evil (death).
 1. Proverbs 10:20: Worthlessness or choice silver.
 2. Proverbs 12:18: To promote health or to pierce with our words (c.f. Psalm 64:3)
 3. Proverbs 15:4: To bring wholesomeness and life or to break the spirit.
- B. The fruit of our tongue.
 1. Our words have a profound effect on other people.
 2. In the end, we will eat the fruit of our own tongues.
 3. Proverbs 18:7: *“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.”*
 4. The question is, what kind of fruit will we eat?
- C. Those who love it will eat its fruit.
 1. We will eat the fruit of our words, whichever way our conversations tend.
 2. CONSIDER: The fruit you eat is determined by how you use your words. How would you describe the general character of your daily conversations? (i.e. giving thanks, edifying, encourage, gossiping, hurtful, piercing, complaining) _____
 3. What fruit have you been eating lately? _____

II. A Little Member that Boasts Great Things: James 3:5

- A. Our words have a profound effect on our lives.
 1. James 3:2: If we can master our tongues, we can master our own body.
 2. Vs. 3: With a small bit (average 5 inches), we can control a horse’s body.
 3. Vs. 4: With a small rudder a pilot steers a large ship.
 4. Vs. 5: A small flame can kindle a forest fire.

5. James 3:6: What happens when we underestimate the power of our words? ____

6. Matthew 15:11: *“Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”*

B. Mark 7:20-23: Consider, if we want to control our tongues, where must our efforts begin? _____

III. Guard our Mouth and Tongue: Proverbs 21:23

A. Proverbs 21:23: *“Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.”* Great care must be taken when wielding an instrument of great power.

B. To guard our lips requires at least three things:

1. Vigilance: Evaluate, examine, assess our thoughts prior to speaking.
2. Restraint: To guard means to keep.
 - a. When thoughts or words come to our minds, a guarded mouth will restrain them until they are proved fit to be spoken.
 - b. Proverbs 16:23: *“The heart of the wise teaches his mouth and adds learning to his lips.”*
 - c. Proverbs 15:2: *“The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.”*
3. Control: The point is not to refrain from speaking at all, but to control or filter our words so that only right and suitable conversation comes from our lips.

C. *“Keeps his soul from trouble.”*

1. Proverbs 12:13: *“The wicked is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, but the righteous will come through trouble.”*
2. Proverbs 11:9: *“The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.”*
3. Proverbs 2:10-12: Discretion and understanding preserve and keep.
4. Proverbs 15:28: This is the meaning of “studies how to answer.” The righteous does not just speak whatever comes to mind, but applies effort, wisdom, and diligence to find an answer that is both according to truth and to speak it in a way that is helpful.

Conclusion

1. By His grace, God has given us tremendous power in our words.
2. Being made in His image, He wants us to learn how to use that power the right way.
3. It is when we become careless and thoughtless with our words that we begin destruction on ourselves and on others.
4. With great effort and care we can learn to use the power of our tongues to accomplish much good in our own lives as well as the lives of others.