

THE POWER OF *WORDS*



THE POWER OF *PRAISE*



THE POWER OF *LOVE* led by Mary Lowman



The Power of Words

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led by Mary Lowman

True or False: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."

Proverbs 18:21: *The tongue has the power of life and death...*

Words of Death

James 3:5 - 12

Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹²My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

All of us have power in our words, capable of injuring others or capable of helping others. Our words have power to do good or to do harm.

James 3:10: *Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing... This should not be.*

James 1:26: *Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.*

"Keep a tight rein on their tongues!" How well do you keep a tight rein on your tongue? Not just a rein, but a tight rein.

James 3:2: *Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.*

In order to control your words, you have to control your thoughts. You say what you think.

Philippians 4:8: *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

How do you put this verse into practice in your life?

James tells us in that third chapter that the tongue corrupts the whole person. So, if you really want to “keep a tight rein on your tongue,” you begin by addressing your thought life and your attitudes.

2 Corinthians 10:5: *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Have you learned how to bring every thought into captivity and make it obey Christ?

What is the difference between responding versus reacting?

Here are some examples of words of death.

Harsh words - Proverbs 15:1: *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

Example: *Question:* I don’t know what I did, but my computer is frozen. Can you help me?

What would be a Christ-like response?

Gossip - Proverbs 17:9: *He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.*

How do you assess whether it's gossip or just concerned conversation?

Are you guilty of gossiping even if you just listen to gossip?

Example: *A friend says:* Now, this is just between us, but my husband told me he saw Alice having lunch with some guy—don’t know who—but they were very cozy. You know what I mean?

What would be an appropriate response?

Quarreling - Proverbs 20:3: *It is to one's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.*
Proverbs 17:19: *He who loves a quarrel loves sin...*

Who do you find it easy to quarrel with? Someone at work perhaps? Or very frequently your children or other family members. Quarrelsome words are deadly. We have to learn to run from them.

Example: *Your 17-year-old daughter says:* Mom, I told you I had to have my cheerleader uniform clean for today. Look at it—it’s a mess. I told you I needed it cleaned!!

What would be an appropriate response? What can you do to defuse that conversation?

Hasty words - Proverbs 29:20: *Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

Example: *A friend from church says:* I really need your help with this luncheon tomorrow. Can you come early and help me set up?

Even if you really can’t come early, what would be a more appropriate response?

Lying/Flattery - Proverbs 26:28: *A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.*

Lying is an area where Satan, our enemy, really digs in. You see, he's the father of lies, so when he sees us lying he knows we're in his territory. Today lying is hardly ever thought of as sin. Most people think of it as a necessary part of life, and they even admire people who know how to lie and get by with it.

Flattery is giving compliments insincerely, for the purpose of advancing our own “cause.”

All of us have a propensity to lie for various reasons:

- To make ourselves look good
- To avoid punishment or bad results
- To avoid responsibility
- To get something we want
- To try to make someone do what we want them to do
- To cover up another lie

Example: *Your boss asks:* Have you finished that proposal to the ABC Company? I really hope we can land that business.

What would be an appropriate response?

Insults - 1 Peter 3:8-9: *Finally, all of you live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.*

Example: *A co-worker says to you:* The boss should have assigned that customer to me. You've never been good at getting new business. It should have been given to me.

What is an appropriate response—a response with a blessing?

Profanity - James 3:9-10: *With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.*

Too Many Words

In addition to these harmful words, the Bible says a lot about **talking too much**.

Proverbs 17:27-28: *A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.*

Proverbs 18:2: *A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.*

Proverbs 18:13: *He who answers before listening—that is his folly and his shame.*

Proverbs 20:19: *A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much.*

Proverbs 10:19: *When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.*

Do you remember what Jesus said about idle words?

Matthew 12:36-37: *"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."*

We will be held accountable on the day of judgment for our idle, careless, unnecessary words.

Romans 10:9 – 10: *If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.*

The Bible says that we have to confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord in order to be born anew. Without this verbal confession, according to this verse, you are not saved. So, those words of confession of faith in Jesus Christ will be used to acquit us of sin's penalty.

Once you say something, you can't "unsay" it. You can apologize; you can ask for forgiveness, but the words can never be "unsaid" and often the damage cannot be undone.

Your Words Affect You

So, it's very clear that we can inflict heavy damage on others by the words we speak, but have you ever thought about the damage you do yourself by speaking inappropriately? Our own words have an incredible influence on our attitudes, on our emotional stability, and on our physical health as well.

We're frequently victims of our own words. The words you are saying have a great influence on your attitude, your productivity, your motivation, your self-respect.

Satan is our enemy, and he's out to defeat you wherever he can. Why does he seem to know just where to attack you? Could it be because he hears the words you speak and that gives him all the information he needs to know about your weaknesses? I believe that our words quite often give Satan his ammunition which he uses to defeat us.

Words of Life

The words you say can give life to others and to yourself.

Proverbs 15:1: *A gentle answer turns away wrath.*

Proverbs 12:18: *Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.*

Proverbs 16:24: *Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.*

Proverbs 15:23: *A person finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word!*

I want to challenge you to join me in determining, by God's grace, to use your tongue to bring life and not death, to yourself and to others.

Are you willing to allow him to do that? It begins with a submission of your will, and giving God permission to work this miracle in your life. What a testimony that would be! Why should we settle for anything less?

Pray about your words

Ephesians 4:29	<i>Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.</i>
Psalms 17:3b	<i>I have resolved that my mouth will not sin.</i>
Proverbs 21:23	<i>He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.</i>
Proverbs 16:24	<i>Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.</i>
1 Timothy 4:12	<i>...set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.</i>
Psalms 141:3	<i>Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.</i>
James 1:19	<i>My brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.</i>
1 Thessalonians 5:14	<i>And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.</i>
Hebrews 3:13	<i>But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.</i>
Hebrews 10:25	<i>Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.</i>

Work on one problem at a time:

- Determine to encourage at least two people every day.
Write their names down on your "to-do" list. Then do it!
- Make signs and put them around you, such as:

"Today I will not complain."

"Today I will not criticize."

"Today I will not lecture or dictate."

"Today I will say half as many words as I usually say."

"Today I will encourage two people."

"Today I won't talk about me."

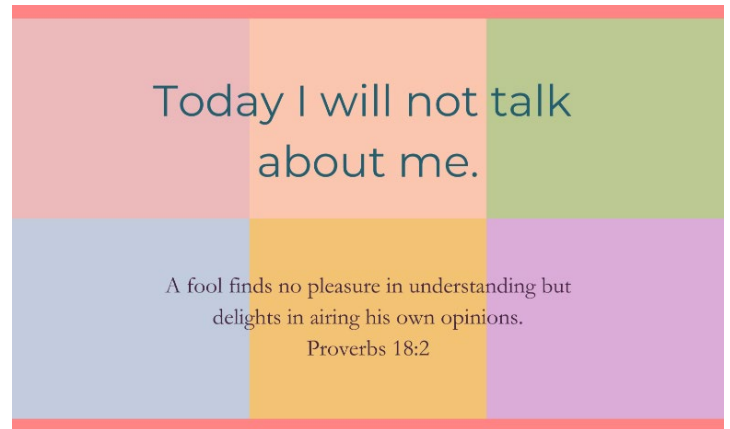
"Today I will compliment two people."

"Catch someone doing something right and tell them."



Today I will not criticize.

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord;
keep watch over the door of my lips.
Psalm 141:3



Today I will say half as many words as I usually say.

Those who guard their mouths and their tongues
keep themselves from calamity.
Proverbs 21:23

