

The Proverbs: Choosing Wisdom in a Foolish World
The Power of Words
James 3:1 – 4:10 & Various Proverbs
Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney/ July 8, 2018

I. Don't Ever Marginalize or Minimize the Sins of Your Mouth

The Bible talks about our words in very serious and sobering ways.

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

Words have power so they will always produce a harvest of some kind, because your words are seeds that are sown in the lives of everyone around us.

Jesus ties our words to our hearts and then holds us accountable for them.

Matthew 12:34, 36 "... For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks... I tell you on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak."

Even when you're not thinking before you speak or aren't careful with your words, it still reveals your heart. Your words don't have to be intentional for you to be accountable for them. If it shoots out of your mouth, it came out of your heart.

The book of Proverbs catalogs a number of ways that our words lead to death. One of the ways that is most attractive to us is gossip.

Proverbs 26:20, 22 "Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down... The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts."

Gossip, as opposed to slander, is the sin of sharing negative information about someone else even if it's true.

We are prone to gossip because we like being 'in the know,' it makes us feel powerful and important, it promotes ourselves and puts others down, and we hope it'll gain us acceptance from those listening to it.

You are guilty of promoting gossip not only when you spread it, but when you listen to it. When you listen to gossip you are condoning and tolerating evil as well as not loving other people well.

Two questions you can ask and one bold statement you can make that will get you taken off the list of favorite people for someone to gossip to:

- Why are you telling me this? Now that you've told me about this, what you going to do about it?
- Now that you've told me about this, you've obligated me to make sure that you go to them and talk to them about it.

II. Don't Ever Forget that Words are the Currency with Which You Invest in What Matters Most – Other People!

A. Your Words Can Encourage Other People

Proverbs 12:25 “Anxiety in the heart of a man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad.”

B. Your Words Can Build Up Other People

Proverbs 10:11, 21 “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life... The lips of the righteous feed many...”

People are starved for encouragement and hope. They're wondering whether what they do matters at all. God could use you to feed their hungry heart.

C. Your Words Can Put On Display the Gospel by Giving and Receiving Forgiveness

“Will you forgive me?” and “Yes, I forgive you” are some of the most life-giving words you could ever speak into the lives of people around you.

Whenever forgiveness becomes optional, relationships become fragile and ultimately unsustainable and disposable.

III. You'll Never Muzzle Your Mouth Until You First Discover What's Going On in Your Heart

The Bible tells us that the war of words is rooted in a much deeper problem in the heart!

Proverbs 21:23 “The one who guards his mouth and tongue keeps himself out of trouble.”

You'll never consistently guard your mouth until you persistently get a hold of what's going on in your heart because what's coming out of your mouth is tied to you what's going on in your heart.

Proverbs 4:23 “Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life.”

People and situations around you don't make you say what you say, but they simply put enough pressure on you to expose your heart through your words.

James 4:1-3 gets to the heart of what's behind this war of words that's raging between us and so many other people. It's the desires in our own hearts.

The problem arises when you want your desires, even good desires, so much that you're willing to go to war to get them.

Ask yourself what you're craving, because cravings underlie conflicts.

Real change begins when you submit to God by laying down your own agenda, repenting, and then living for God's glory instead of your own. All of this is only possible with the humble, resurrected Savior ruling and reigning in your heart.