

Words – 5

Proverbs 18:21 (The Message)

²¹ Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit—you choose.

Even though there are about 800,000 words in the English language the average person knows only about 10,000 words, and uses only about 5,000 of those in everyday speech!

That is not many words to choose from to communicate every idea, emotion, event or desires

Each of the words we choose to use carry enormous power with them

- Power to heal or wound
- Encourage or discourage
- Speak the truth or tell a lie
- To praise or to criticize

The words we choose when opening our mouth are extremely important

Words are connectors, in fact they are our God connection

He connects with us – Genesis 1, 2; John 1:14; Psalm 107:20

We are created in His image – “speaking spirit” – Genesis 2:7

We connect with Him and others through our words

James 3:1–2 (NKJV) The Tongue

3 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. ² For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

Your Tongue as a Bridle

- A “wild horse” runs in any direction they wish
- Virtually **aimlessly** arriving at no specific destination
- The same is true if we fail to bridle our tongue
- We will never accomplish the full purposes of God
- We’ll never experience true, lasting success

The Tongue as a Rudder:

James 3:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. ⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

- The rudder is also disproportionately small in comparison with the rest of the ship

Even in good weather the rudder steers you where you’re going

- If your rudder doesn’t work, you won’t be landing at that nice sandy beach
- You are at the mercy of the wind and current

Your tongue is a spark

James 3:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! ⁶ And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

- All it takes is a spark to start a forest fire
- The devastation of a forest fire is immense
- Wipes out virtually everything in its path
- Estimated that it takes 11 years for a forest to “begin” to grow back
- Decades to completely restore the damage
- A cigarette “*carelessly flicked*” out a window

The little spark has the power to cause massive ruin that can be felt years down the road

James says our tongue is a “world of iniquity” inherently evil from birth

- You don’t have to teach a toddler to lie or say mean things to his sister
- It comes naturally
- Our “default” setting of the tongue is “evil”

Remember some of the hurtful things that were said by you or about you in elementary and high school?

- Maybe you wore glasses or braces
- Maybe you were shorter, skinnier or heavier than everyone else
- Fatty, fatty 2 x 4 can't fit through the kitchen door
- You're so skinny if you stood sideways and stuck out your tongue, you'd look like a zipper

*“A joke is a very **serious** thing.” – Winston Churchill*

The Tongue is Humanly Untamable

James 3:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸ But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

- Haven't we all tried to not say something “again”?
- You might do good for a couple weeks at best
- Eventually you will make up for the dumb things you didn't say

The tongue is unruly – its evil!

- It's impossible to tame – humanly
- Only God can do that! – more to come on that

The tongue is capable of being “Contrastingly Productive”

James 3:9–12 (NKJV)

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.

- The tongue is not only productive
- It can be productive in two completely directions
- No tree can produce 2 kinds of fruit
- A spring cannot have fresh and bitter water
- The tongue can do what nature cannot do
- The cursing is usually done towards people
- This is “unnatural” for children of God
- Brothers and sisters should not bless God and curse each other

The tongue is

- Disproportionality powerful
- Inherently evil
- Humanly untamable
- Contrastingly productive

Even though the tongue is untamable there's hope!

God can tame and control the tongue

Exodus 4:10–12 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Then Moses said to the LORD, “O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I *am* slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

¹¹ So the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? *Have* not I, the LORD? ¹² Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”

- I am not eloquent
- Who made your mouth?
- If God can make the blind see He can teach us what to say!
- God says, “I will be with your mouth”
- When we submit our words to God He will tame the tongue

Death and life are available – **Proverbs 18:21**

- You can bring the dead back to life – “Trish believed God”
- You choose

The Holy Spirit can fill our mouths with the right words

Mark 13:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit can give us the right words to say

Example:

- Talking to someone and you sense something outside of your understanding about their situation
- Holy Spirit gives you words of life about their situation
- If we want the Holy Spirit to use us in a powerful way, it will start in the realm of words

Don't just say, I can never tame this tongue – its hopeless!

- We can and we must cooperate with God in the *Process*
- Just as any language needs to grow, the words God will use in our lives will expand and increase

Just like when you first put a bit in a wild horse's mouth

- It takes some getting used to
- It takes some time and training

Ultimately it will be the power and grace of God that tames our tongue

- For that to happen we must learn to *bridle* our tongue
- We must choose to cooperate with God
- If we “Submit to the Bit”, God will lead us

Ways to “Submit to the Bit” – Bit prop

#1 Cultivate the ability to *Pause*

Ecclesiastes 5:2–3 (NKJV)

² Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few. ³ For a dream comes through much activity, **And a fool’s voice *is known* by *his many words*.**

- It’s a rare ability to wait and say nothing for a moment
- We need to learn to “hold or tongue”
- Pause until you know precisely what to say – or say nothing
- You do not have to be continually talking
- The universe will exist just fine without you speaking
- Remember: you are about to speak death or life – choose wisely

James 1:19 (NLT)

¹⁹ Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

- You can keep your temper under control by choosing not to speak
- Most of us have this backwards
- Slow to hear and quick to speak

Former President Calvin Coolidge was known to be a man of well-chosen words – “Silent Cal” – nickname

Once when seated next to a loud and talkative woman, she turned to him and said, “*My husband bet me I couldn’t get you to say three words tonight!*” Coolidge reportedly turned to her and said, “*You Loose*”

The three great themes of proverbs are...
Morals, money and our mouth

Proverbs 21:23 (NKJV)

²³ Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.

- Our responsibility is to guard our mouths

#2 Learn to *Ponder* what has Been Said

Four types of people...

- Those who think before they speak
- Those who think while they speak
- Those who think after they speak
- Those who just speak

“It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt” – Mark Twain

Proverbs 10:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips *is* wise.

Proverbs 17:27–28 (NKJV)

²⁷ He who has knowledge spares his words, *And* a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. ²⁸ Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; *When* he shuts his lips, *he is* considered perceptive.

- We should purposefully choose to reflectively think about what has been said before we answer

#3 appeal to a Higher Authority

Pause – Ponder – Pray

After we choose to pause and ponder what we will say we should pray and get God’s word on the situation!

Isaiah 6:1–5 (NKJV)

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. ² Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts; The whole earth *is* full of His glory!”

⁴ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ So I said: “Woe *is* me, for I am undone! Because I *am* a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”

- When Isaiah was in the full radiance and presence of God he suddenly and painfully became aware of his words

Isaiah 6:5 (The Message)

I said, “Doom! It’s Doomsday! I’m as good as dead! Every word I’ve ever spoken is tainted blasphemous even! And the people I live with talk the same way, using words that corrupt and desecrate. And here I’ve looked God in the face! The King! GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies!”

- He became convicted of his mouth
- Not only his but his entire nation

Isaiah 6:6–7 (NIV)

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

- The fiery coal symbolizes the only one that can cleanse our lips – Jesus
- We need this touch every day!
- We should daily ask God to sanctify our lips so that we can start to speak life instead of death

Psalm 19:14 (The Message)

These are the words in my mouth; these are what I chew on and pray. Accept them when I place them on the morning altar, O God, my Altar-Rock, God, Priest-of-My-Altar.

In Christ God has given us a new heart – let us put off the old self and put on the new one!

- Pause
- Ponder
- Pray
- Take some time before you speak and let the new person on the inside tell you what to say

Cut Down the Tree of Bitterness

If you have spoken words of death over people instead of life you need to seek forgiveness

If someone has spoken over you, you need to extend forgiveness

- Even if they haven't asked for it
- If you don't you are letting a tree of bitterness grow inside of you
- All fruit carries seed
- Seeds can produce more trees
- And an entire forest over time

Matthew 3:2 (NKJV)

² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

- John is talking about repentance
- Some trees need to be cut down
- Forgiveness is the axe for unforgiveness
- We must ask for, and give, forgiveness
- Lay down the axe to the root of the tree of bitterness

Mark 11:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.