

The Mirror of Our Heart: The Words We Speak

Getting focused

One of the most difficult things we are called to do is to control what we say. The overall purpose of this study is to gain insight into those things that are right before we do those that are wrong. The control of the tongue begins with the preparation of the heart. Our words reflect what is in our heart. "For out of the heart the mouth speaks." To control what we say, we must control what we think. To control what we think, we must control what we put into our minds. The power and logic of this study will aid us in our every endeavor. The great task of controlling what we say can only be accomplished through the assimilation of the wisdom that comes from God.

Proper disposition and doctrine make the difference

Read Proverbs 15

We must learn to approach every situation with the proper temperament. The result in doing this will turn difficult confrontations into profitable discussions. Verses 1 and 2 inform us that it is not sufficient to merely possess knowledge, but we must also be able to express it in a proper manner.

If we find our relationships with others burdened by constant argument, we need to examine and alter our manner of communication. Proper communication brings:

- A cheerful countenance (v. 13)
- Calms contentions (v. 18)
- Joyful living (v. 23)

Other elements necessary in our communication with others are truth and righteousness. The basis for all truth is founded upon God's word. Therefore, before we can effectively communicate we must study. The first requirement in proper communication is listening (v. 5).

"The tongue of the **wise** makes knowledge **acceptable**, but the mouth of **fools** spouts **folly**."

- Proverbs 15:2

The second is thinking, and thirdly, speaking (v. 28). Too often we speak before we think. This leads us to say many foolish, damaging things that bring regret and grief.

Throughout this chapter you will notice the relationship of those who are willing to listen and learn with those who are righteous and wise (vs. 31-33). "The heart of the righteous studies how he will answer" (v. 28).

A modern day proverb states, "It is better to remain silent and allow others to think you are ignorant, than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."

A submissive mind leads to the control of the tongue

Read Proverbs 16

When we willingly allow God to guide and direct our steps, His controlling influence permeates every area of our lives. For those committed to Christ, even your thoughts shall be established (v. 3).

Notice the manner in which God operates in the life of the righteous:

- We prepare the heart to receive instruction; God provides the words of instruction (v. 1).
- We commit our actions to things right; God establishes our thoughts (v. 3).
- When we please God, God provides peace (v. 7).
- We plan our lives around God; God directs our steps (v. 9).

The passages mark the path that leads to wisdom and righteousness. It begins with your desire, dedication, and acceptance of God's word, but it depends upon God's grace, truth, and mercy (v. 6). To possess this spirit and learn this principle is to find true happiness (v. 20).

The single element that prevents one from receiving direction and blessings from God is **pride!** We must recognize our heart to be the fountain through which blessings flow or the source from which trouble, strife, and separation from God come. Pride is the contemptuous, arrogant attitude that can rise up within a person when they are given instruction and correction. Humility is that state in which God exalts us (1 Peter 5:6).

Memorize and meditate

"Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

- Proverbs 16:8

Jesus said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication...pride..." (Mark 7:20-22).

Though we often say things we should not, desire accompanied by wisdom eliminates careless speech. "The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips" (v. 23).

Questions to consider

1. How should we respond to someone who is angry with us? _____

2. What is the best method to use in making plans for the future (15:22)? _____

3. What do a positive attitude, pleasant words, and a heart that trusts in God have in common (15:13, 26; 16:20)? _____

