

## Gleanings from the Book of Proverbs: The Tongue

Scripture Reading: Psalm 19:7-14

Certainly David taught his son, Solomon, the importance of the use of our tongue – the words of our mouth. This excerpt of Psalm 19 shows the correlation between our reverence and attentiveness to God’s word and the thoughts of our mind and heart, and also the words of our mouth. We want to serve God and please God with our thought-life and our conversations with people. God’s commandments are designed to bless and protect us. They are more valuable than gold. They are sweeter than honey to our souls. They also will make a way for us to be rewarded by God when we obey Him.

Through the law of the Lord we will be given understanding about our sinful natures and temptations. We are warned about being presumptuous and willful, letting things slide. Most translations show Psalm 19:13 to say that we don’t want sin to dominate us, thereby committing a great amount of sin in our life. Sin has a way of “snowballing.” See I John 1:5 – 2:6. As we allow the Book of Proverbs to speak to our heart from this lesson, may we be asking God to work, not only on our words, but also on our heart which produces our words (Luke 6:43-45). James warns us that in order for a person to not sin with their tongue, they would have to be perfect – having complete spiritual maturity (James 3:2). When we have Christ as our Lord and Savior, we certainly can be thankful for those last words in Psalm 19:14, *“O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.”*

### **The great value and importance of using our tongues carefully and respectfully**

- Be wise. – Proverbs 15:1-4 (vs. 4 – a life-giving force, or that which breaks a person’s spirit / morale).
- Use discernment. Seek to be useful and edifying. – Proverbs 10:32; 9:7-9; 16:23.
- Know the power of the tongue and the destiny it will bring us.
  - Proverbs 4:23-24.
  - Proverbs 10:20,31.
  - Proverbs 12:18-19 (cp. Proverbs 22:8).
  - Proverbs 17:20.
  - Proverbs 18:21 (“it” = “tongue” – i.e. love to talk cp. Matthew 12:33-37; James 3:3-18).
  - Proverbs 19:5,9.
  - Proverbs 21:6,23.
  - Proverbs 25:15

## Truth or Consequences

God hates liars and their lying. These are an “*abomination*” to Him (i.e. It makes Him sick and want to vomit). Dealing with truth and not lies is a black and white contrast. Avoid the gray areas of carelessness and compromise.

- Proverbs 6:16-17
- Proverbs 12:17,19
- Proverbs 14:5,25
- Proverbs 17:4 (See how some people are attracted to lies for evil purposes. Bad people are drawn to bad talk.)
- Proverbs 22:20-21 (We should commit ourselves to learning the truth, to teaching the truth, and to counselling others – II Timothy 2:2; Romans 15:14.)
- Proverbs 23:23 (To deal with truth requires an investment of time and attention. It also requires reverence, loyalty, and discernment.)

## Love one another

The tongue has been described as a tree of life or a source of death and destruction. Truth can bless or be used malignantly. Truth becomes malignant when It is exaggerated or mixed with lies. Truth is malignant when used for evil, selfish and unkind purposes. The following verses deal with flattery, gossip, and slander. Before speaking about someone, ask yourself, “*Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?*”

- Proverbs 6:23-24 (The whorish woman cp. the virtuous woman – Proverbs 31:10,26)
- Proverbs 26:28 (Lies and flattery are forms of hatred – Proverbs 10:18; 29:5.)
- Proverbs 16:28
- Proverbs 28:23
- Proverbs 25:23 (Gossip and slander need to be dealt with. See Ephesians 4:25-27,29-32; Colossians 4:6; Mark 9:50; II Corinthians 12:19-20.)

*To be continued*