

**Prov. 18:2, 4, 6-8, 20-21:** A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion . . . <sup>4</sup> The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook . . . <sup>6</sup> A fool's lips walk into a fight, & his mouth invites a beating. <sup>7</sup> A fool's mouth is his ruin, & his lips are a snare to his soul. <sup>8</sup> The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body . . . <sup>20</sup> From the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach is satisfied; he is satisfied by the yield of his lips. <sup>21</sup> Death & life are in the power of the tongue, & those who love it will eat its fruits.

**Intro:** We are considering the tongue & the words we speak again today. We just had a sermon on this! This is one reason most pastors don't preach through every Proverb. This is also one reason I'm not preaching through the whole book of Proverbs without breaks. But I believe we need this repetition!

**Research:** Most adults speak between 7,000 & 20,000 words per day. A commonly cited average is around 15,000 to 16,000 words per day.

1) We are not good with words: **Jas. 3:1-10:** Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. & if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the ships also: though they are so large & are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! & the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, & set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast & bird, of reptile & sea creature, can be tamed & has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord & Father, & with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing & cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

2) Our words have profound consequences: **Matt. 12:34-37:** You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, & the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, & by your words you will be condemned.

You can use your words to speak death or to speak life: in Christ speak life! **GOSPEL!**

### **1. Fools Speak Death Because They Delight In Being Dumb**

**Prov. 18:2:** A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion (uncovering his heart).

**Kidner:** Closed mind, open mouth.

**a. Fools don't take pleasure in wisdom:** What you take pleasure in says a lot about who you are! Fools don't delight in God & His wisdom & His Word & in true understanding. We saw this warning in chap. 17: foolish people love to talk, but they don't know what they are talking about. They don't have understanding. They don't fear God. Notice they don't take pleasure in understanding! But they do take pleasure in blabbing out their opinions. Beloved, if you don't know what you are talking about, stay quiet! Learn first! Be teachable!

**Bruce Waltke:** The fool's counter-productive loquacity proceeds from his lack of insight into the damaging effects of his speech & [lack of] self-control over his emotions & from his being wise in his own eyes. Ironically, the fool aims to let his heart expose itself, but it exposes what he did not intend, namely, his folly.

This fool is a know-it-all, unteachable, & arrogant. He always has to be telling others what he perceives to be the truth & the way things are. Do you ever act this way?

**b. The wise take pleasure in wisdom:** The wise delight in God & His wisdom & His Word & in true understanding! We don't just want to win the argument, we want to win with God's truth!

- **Prov. 2:6:** For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge & understanding

- **Prov. 3:13:** Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, & the one who gets understanding

- **Prov. 10:23:** Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool, but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding.

- **Prov. 16:16:** How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

**c. Jesus always knew the perfect time to speak & the perfect time to be silent:** Jesus always took pleasure in the right things! Jesus had all understanding & wisdom & knowledge! No man ever spoke like Jesus spoke! He knew when to answer the Pharisees & stun them into silence! & He knew when to keep silent: **Isa. 53:7:** like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

You can use your words to speak death or to speak life: in Christ speak life!

## **2. The Wise Speak Life Because Their Words Are Heard & Understood**

**Prov. 18:4:** The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.

**a. This proverb is a contrasting proverb:** "Deep waters" means unable to understand, not accessible, over your head. In contrast, the "bubbling brook" is understandable, accessible, & makes sense: **Bruce Waltke:** The "bubbling brook" is a constant & inexhaustible supply of living water with its ready accessibility & abundance.

**Prov. 18:4 (NIV):** The words of the mouth are deep waters, but the fountain of wisdom is a rushing stream.

**Bruce Waltke:** The lack of the "but" to introduce verset B favors interpreting the parallels as [both positive] descriptions of wisdom's speech. But the meaning of "person" & of "deep waters" favors interpreting the parallels as [a contrast]. "Person" denotes the average person, not the wise or the ideal . . . "Deep" occurs 16 times, seven times in Leviticus 13 of a sore that is more than skin deep. Otherwise it is used in poetry of "physical depths," always with the negative connotations of inaccessibility & for foreboding danger.

- **Prov. 20:5:** The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

**b. This proverb is a parallel positive proverb:** "Deep waters" means profound [great understanding & wisdom] & the bubbling brook is accessible & useful & gives life, rest, & refreshment.

**John Kitchen:** It seems preferable to understand this as a synonymous parallelism. The first line points out the profundity of the thoughts expressed in words by the person of wisdom. The second line reveals that, while their words are deep & thus valuable, they are also accessible, life-giving & practical. The imagery of a "fountain" of wisdom has been seen often, though more frequently it is a "fountain of life." The difference is not significant, however, because the "fountain of life" is never disconnected from wisdom, understanding, righteousness, & the fear of the Lord. The words of such a person are a delight to listen to. They stretch you. They make you think. They shed light on your situation. They are never trite, canned or easy cliches. One has the inescapable sense that they are only the bubbling forth of a vast supply of wisdom that lies much deeper within. **[Gospel depths/ease]**

**c. Jesus is the most unknowable & knowable man who has ever lived:** Jesus is the infinite God-Man, so there's a sense in which He is unknowable: **Eph. 3:17-19:** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted & grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth & length & height & depth, & to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge . . .

Yet He is the most knowable! "Friend of tax collectors & sinners" "Common people heard Him gladly!"

You can use your words to speak death or to speak life: in Christ speak life!

### **3. Fools Speak Death Because Their Words Cause Violence & Death**

**Prov. 18:6-8:** A fool's lips walk into a fight, & his mouth invites a beating.<sup>7</sup> A fool's mouth is his ruin, & his lips are a snare to his soul.<sup>8</sup> The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body.

**a. Prov. 18:6: A fool's lips walk into a fight, & his mouth invites a beating:** Fools provoke to violence with their words. They speak the exact opposite of "a soft answer turns away wrath". They give hard answers that invite, stir up, & cause wrath to explode! **Prov. 15:1:** A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

**b. Prov. 18:7: A fool's mouth is his ruin, & his lips are a snare to his soul:** You can very literally ruin your life with your words. Lying will ruin you. Gossip will ruin you. Harsh, ungodly speech & cursing & taking God's name in vain will ruin you. **Col. 3:8:** But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, & obscene talk from your mouth.

- **Eph. 4:29:** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

**John Kitchen:** The fool's unexamined words, hasty, counsel, uninvited information, unwise promises & other drivel bring about his own "ruin." . . . it is . . . some unspecified destruction that will overtake him because of his foolish unguarded tongue. The "ruin" comes because his words become a "snare" to him. Hasty promises & rash vows have trapped many who should have known better, such as Jephthah [&] Saul . . . . Ultimately, the fool will be ruined forever in hell – they will give an account for every idle word they speak!

**c. Prov. 18:8: The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body:** This proverb warns against the dangers of gossip – listening to & telling lies about other people. You are warned here that gossip is so attractive – like the most delicious food. You must say no to it. You must stop others before they do it in your presence. You must realize how gossip goes down into the inner parts of the body.

- **Lev. 19:16:** You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people

- **John Kitchen:** Once gossip is shared & heard, one cannot help but be influenced by it. It settles deep within you. You never look at the person of whom the gossip [is spoken about] in the same way again, even if you tell yourself the gossip was probably not true. Gossip irrepressibly shapes our view of people.

- **Commentator:** Even if it's true, it's given to inappropriate people at the inappropriate time.

**d. Jesus's Words did get Him killed, but because they were the most perfect, sinless, true, & loving words:** The worst gossip ever told was told about Jesus! They said He did His work by the power of the devil! They said He was a blasphemer! They said He was so bad that He must be put to death! & they said all of this against the most kind, loving, godly, perfect Man Who ever lived! Yet He always spoke the most appropriate, perfect words! He is the Word come in the flesh! & He died & rose again for all of your sinful words! & then He changes us!

You can use your words to speak death or to speak life: in Christ speak life!

### **4. Words Of Fools & Words Of The Wise Have Serious Consequences**

**Prov. 18:20-21:** From the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach is satisfied; he is satisfied by the yield of his lips.

<sup>21</sup> Death & life are in the power of the tongue, & those who love it will eat its fruits.

**a. Godly, wise words will satisfy you deeply: Prov. 18:20: From the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach is satisfied; he is satisfied by the yield of his lips:** Like fruit satisfies your stomach, so your words, the fruit of your mouth, can satisfy you. There is a kind of peace, joy, rest, & satisfaction when you use your words in a way that pleases God. This is true for all the obedience of the godly!

**Eric Lane:** Here [the power of words] is pictured as a farm or garden. A man grows fruit, vegetables or grain so

that at harvest time his stomach may be filled & he may be satisfied. He takes great care over his work – it is life or death to him. If his harvest fails or his fruit is bad he will starve & die. If it is good & plenteous he will eat its fruit & be satisfied. Since his very life depends on it he will put his heart & soul into his work, he will love it. We are being asked to put as much loving care into what we say. If we did but realize the consequences (fruit) of our words we would certainly do so. There is great satisfaction in speaking what is true, edifying, informative, understanding, instructive, sympathetic, comforting & even rebuking. But lies, misinformation, blasphemy, cursing, boasting, vilifying poison the soul of the one who speaks them & ensure he will be “condemned” on “the day when we must account for every careless word we have spoken” (Matt. 12:36f.).

**b. Your words will not only affect those who hear them, but they affect your own life as well: Bruce Waltke:** This synonymous proverb instructs the disciple that whatever he says to impact others will in fact fully impact him. It pictures one's words as something that people feed on, that influences their behavior, & that in turn determines [what will happen to the speaker of those very words] . . . Eating one's own fruit (words) is an oxymoron; in other words, to satisfy one's hunger by what comes out of the mouth is an absurdity. The oxymoron forces the thought that whatever a person dishes out, whether beneficial or harmful, he himself will feed on to full measure through what his audience in return dishes out to him.

**c. Prov. 18:21: Death & life are in the power of the tongue, & those who love it will eat its fruits:** 1) What does this verse not mean: This proverb does not mean that you can speak things into existence.

**- Joyce Meyer:** We must realize & understand the power carried by our thoughts & words. They're so powerful that they can bring either blessings or curses into our lives, depending on their nature . . . Remember, what's in our hearts & minds will come out of our mouths. If our soul (mind, will & emotions) is full of negative things, we'll find those things coming our way. On the other hand, when we think & talk about God, the Truth & more positive things, we'll find that those good things will come our way. The choice is ours!

**- Creflo Dollar:** As free moral agents, choosing to speak God's Word instead of the world's words keeps us out of danger. Words are powerful; God spoke the entire universe into existence with the authority of His Word (Genesis 1:1-25). We have the same authority & must use it wisely. Speaking life helps us tame our tongue.

I listened to a Joel Osteen sermon in which he encourages his hearers to be very careful about what they say after the phrase, "I am" because what follows the "I am" follows you. He warns not to speak negative words after the "I am" but positive words like: "I am strong, I am healthy, I am talented, I am disciplined, I am focused, I am prosperous, I am getting younger, I am attractive!"

**But what do we see in the Bible:** **Isaiah:** I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips; **Jeremiah:** I am lost; **John the Baptist:** I am not worthy; **Roman Centurion:** I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; **The Syrophoenician Woman:** Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. [Yes, I am a dog.]; **Peter:** I am a sinful man; **Prodigal Son:** I am no longer worthy to be called your son; **Paul:** I am of the flesh, sold under sin; **Paul:** Wretched man that I am!; **Paul:** I am the least of the apostles; **Paul:** I am the very least of all the saints; **Paul:** Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost

2) What does this verse mean: You can really tear people down, discourage them, & rip them apart with your words (death) or you can really build people up, encourage them, & breathe life into them with your words (life). & those who love doing this will reap what they sow – they will eat its fruit & receive the consequences of their words.

How do you use your words? Do you encourage more than you correct? Do you use God's Word? Do you share with people evidences of grace you see in their lives? Do you pray & ask God if you should say that? [Podcast for wives; men's meeting for only encouragement]

**d. Jesus is the way, the truth, & the life: Prov. 18:21:** Death & life are in the power of the tongue, & those who love it will eat its fruits.

Jesus is the life & His Words brought life! The Gospel! May you speak this Gospel to others as well! Gospel love!  
Gospel encouragement! Remind people of the Gospel truths they already know!

You can use your words to speak death or to speak life: in Christ speak life!

Christ Jesus Spoke Like None Before  
Or Ever Since So Praise! Adore!  
His Words Give Life And Joy Galore  
He Is The Life – Hope's Guarantor  
He Is God's Word In Flesh And More  
He's God And Man You Can't Ignore  
His Words Are Pure Down To The Core  
Wise Like A Bubbling Brook They Soar  
Yet He Would Die – God's Wrath He Bore

The Temple's Open – Curtain Tore  
He Rose Again To Life Restore  
Trust Him Alone – Salvation's Door  
Then You Will Speak Not As Before  
He'll Change Your Heart And Words And More  
All Sinful Words You Will Abhor  
And On Them Make An All Out War  
For Christ Is All The Word Adore  
We Live To Please Him More And More!