



THE BOOK OF PROVERBS 4U



PART 3



7. THE TONGUE

There is great power in the tongue, both for good and evil, as many of Solomon's proverbs clearly show in this important section. Having a godly and right attitude with one's tongue under control has a good influence on others. One proverb states that a kind and gentle tongue is a balm to the soul and brings help and healing. Other words, usually best from a trusted friend, include constructive criticism. The gracious words of the righteous can bless, encourage and bring hope, whereas wicked lies and slander can harm, even ruin a person's reputation and in some instances can kill. In public life, as is generally known, the hurt can be so destructive that it can lead to a person's suicide. The best use of the tongue tells others about the Saviour, Jesus Christ, and so changes lives.

Out of an open mouth comes good or evil speech – wise advice or foolish ways. Satan delights in the folly of the tongue. Even unintentionally it is easy to say the wrong thing and be misunderstood. Just a few words of appreciation or praise can inspire someone and even have a life-changing influence. Thoughtless words may have a disturbing impact on another and sometimes much greater than would ever be known – so watch your words! However, God defends those who walk in His ways of wisdom and righteousness. As one of the proverbs records, the Lord delivers the faithful out of trouble for He is their refuge.

*Discretion shall watch over you, understanding shall keep you.
To deliver you from the way of evil, from men who speak perverse things and are liars.*
Pr 2:11-12

Put away from you false and dishonest speech, wilful and contrary talk put far from you.
Pr 4:24

A worthless person, a wicked man is he who goes about with a perverse mouth.
Pr 6:12

He who hides hatred is of lying lips, and he who utters slander is a self-confident fool.
Pr 10:18

The mouths of the righteous bring forth skilful and godly Wisdom, but the perverse tongue shall be cut down (like a barren and rotten tree).
Pr 10:31

He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy and faithful in spirit keeps the matter hidden..
Pr 11:13

The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips, but the righteous shall come out of trouble.
Pr 12:13

There are those who speak rashly, like the piercing of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Truthful lips shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is (credited) but for a moment.
Pr 12:18-19

THE TONGUE - Continued

Lying lips are hateful to the Lord, but they who deal faithfully are His delight.
Pr 12:22

He who guards his mouth keeps his life, but he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.
Pr 13:3

A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise utters knowledge rightly, but the mouth of the self-confident fool pours out folly.
Pr 15:1-2

A gentle tongue with its healing power is a tree of life.
Pr 15:4

*A man has joy in making an apt answer
and a word spoken at the right moment – how good it is!*
Pr 15:23

The mind of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.
Pr 15:28

The plans of the mind and orderly thinking belong to man, but from the Lord comes the (wise) answer of the tongue.
Pr 16:1

Right and just lips are the delight of a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right.
Pr 16:13

The wise in heart are called prudent and winsome speech increases learning.
Pr 16:21

Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the mind and healing to the body.
Pr 16:24

An evildoer gives heed to wicked lips; and a liar listens to a mischievous tongue.
Pr 17:4



THE TONGUE - continued

The Proverbs of Solomon continue to give instructions and guidance to his sons.

A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to himself.

Pr 18:7

The words of a whisperer or a tale bearer are as dainty morsels; they go down into the innermost parts of the body.

Pr 18:8

He who answers a matter before he hears the facts – it is folly and shame to him.

Pr 18:13

He who states his case first seems right, until his rival comes and cross-examines him.

Pr 18:17



It is wise to listen to both sides of an argument by keeping silent, as in the following English proverb – 'Hold one's tongue.'

However, in certain circumstances Silence implies consent, but refraining from speech is often best, as in the well-known English proverb – Silence is golden.'

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it – (for death or life).

Pr 18:21

He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore associate not with him who talks too freely. (that flattereth (Pr 20:19 A.V.))

Pr 20:19

He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from troubles.

Pr 21:23

The following proverb from the Sayings of the Wise is included in this chapter.

Speak not in the ears of a (self confident) fool, for he will despise the (godly) wisdom of your words.

Pr 23:9

8 DECEIT AND HONESTY

God's word is Truth and that's His standard of righteousness as recorded in the Scriptures. There are no grey areas. It is right for Man, made in God's image, to speak the truth at all times. Doctors take the Hippocratic Oath of right conduct and not to betray the confidences of their patients. In all relationships, to speak the truth is an excellent rule but in certain circumstances it takes courage and the wisdom of diplomacy.

An unwise question "What is Truth?" is often asked today! If people are honest, their speech and dealings are always straightforward and without deception. Computer language is a good example (WYSIWYG) – **What you see is what you get!**



A false balance and unrighteous dealings are extremely offensive and shamefully sinful to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight

Pr 11:1

The wicked man earns deceitful wages, but he who sows righteousness shall have a sure reward.

Pr 11:18

Deceit is in the hearts of those who devise evil, but for the counsellors of peace there is joy.

Pr 12:20

He who is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live.

Pr 15:27

That which is desired in a man is loyalty and kindness, but a poor man is better than a liar.

Pr 19:22

Diverse weights (one for buying and another for selling) and diverse measures – both of them are exceedingly offensive and abhorrent to the Lord.

Pr 20:10

It is worthless! It is worthless! says the buyer; but when he goes his way, then he boasts (about his bargain).

Pr 20:14

Food gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth will be filled with gravel.

Pr 20:17

Like the first proverb, another about false weights and scales concludes this chapter.

Diverse and deceitful weights are shamefully vile and abhorrent to the Lord, and false scales are not good.

Pr 20:23

9 TRUE AND FALSE WITNESSES

The proverbs in this section are about Truth in the heart and the courage always to speak it out. A truthful testimony can save a life, whereas a false witness in a court of law can result in imprisonment or even death.

By the accusation of two false witness in agreement, Jesus Christ was condemned before the Jewish court of the Sanhedrin and was crucified by the Romans. (Matthew 26:59-65)

The following proverb recalls one of the Things God hates.

A false witness breathes out lies (even under oath). Pr 6:19

Some of the following proverbs are good examples of maxims that state the opposite - True or False characteristics in the same verse.

*He who breathes out truth shows forth righteousness,
but a false witness utters deceit.* Pr 12:17

*A faithful witness will not lie,
but a false witness breathes out falsehoods.* Pr 14:5

*A truthful witness saves lives,
but a deceitful witness speaks lies and endangers lives.* Pr 14:25

*A false witness shall not be unpunished,
and he who breathes out lies shall not escape.* Pr 19:5 (Pr 19:9)

A worthless witness scoffs at justice, and the mouth of the wicked swallows iniquity. Pr 19:28

*A false witness will perish,
but the word of a man who hears attentively will endure and go unchallenged.* Pr 21:28

The following proverb on the subject of FALSE WITNESSES was copied by Hezekiah's men.

A man who bears false witness against his neighbour is like a heavy sledge hammer and a sword and a sharp arrow.

Pr 25:18



10 PLEDGES

Read Proverbs 6:1-5

Although it is good to be generous, a pledge is not a kind act to a friend in need, but a foolish promise to pay or underwrite another's debts. Solomon advised his sons never to become security for a neighbour or a stranger. In the Hebrew scriptures, to be released from such a promise was a matter of great urgency.

Becoming ensnared by a pledge could even end in the ruin of one's family. The children's inheritance was thus endangered and even lost, reducing the family to work as hired servants until the next Year of Jubilee. According to Jewish law, Jubilee years of restoration occurred every fifty years; so this could mean a long wait for freedom.

Yes, a matter of urgency, so waste no time to be freed from paying a friend or neighbour's debt - plead that the money be paid to obtain release from the unwise pledge.

My son, if you have become security for your neighbour, if you have given your pledge for a stranger or another, You are snared with the words of your lips, you are caught by the speech of your mouth.

Pr 6:1-2 (3)

The quote from Shakespeare's Hamlet is a telling reminder –

'Neither a borrower, nor a lender be.'

There follows the warning - loss of the friendship!

Better to give a gift rather than a loan. For Christians it is wise to sort out financial matters, avoid borrowing and so avoid the possibility of rising interest rates.

He who becomes security for an outsider shall smart for it, but he who hates suretyship is secure (from its penalties).

Pr 11:15

A man void of good sense gives a pledge and becomes security for another in the presence of his neighbour.

Pr 17:18

Be not one of those who strike hands and pledge themselves, or of those who become security for another's debts.

Pr 22:26



11 LAZINESS OR SLOTH

Read Proverbs 6:6-8

Many sayings in the book of Proverbs are on the subject of Laziness. Solomon gave dire warnings about the slothful and the sad consequences of poverty and begging with hardship for families. He also gave advice never to employ lazy people – either for work or to send on an errand or mission of any sort.

Such persons are slow to get going in the mornings and usually lie long in bed. They are slack and manage somehow to avoid work being work-shy; some being too lazy to feed themselves!

To avoid poverty Solomon instructed his sons to consider the industrious ways of ants.



Go to the ant you sluggard; consider her ways and be wise.

Pr 6:6

How long will you sleep, O sluggard? When will you arise out of your sleep?

Pr 6:9

*He becomes poor who works with a slack and idle hand,
but the hand of the diligent makes rich.*

Pr 10:4

*As vinegar to the teeth and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who
employ and send him.*

Pr 10:26

*He who tills his land shall be satisfied with bread, but he who follows worthless
pursuits is lacking in sense and is without understanding.*

Pr 12:11

*The appetite of the sluggard craves and gets nothing,
but the appetite of the diligent is abundantly supplied.*

Pr 13:4

In all labour there is profit, but idle talk leads only to poverty.

Pr 14:23

LAZINESS OR SLOTH - continued

He who is loose and slack in his work is brother to him who is a destroyer.
Pr 18:9

Slothfulness casts one into a deep sleep, and the idle person shall suffer hunger.
Pr 19:15

*The sluggard buries his hand in the dish,
and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.*
Pr 19:24

*The sluggard does not plough when winter sets in;
therefore he begs in harvest and has nothing.*
Pr 20:4

*Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty;
open your eyes and you will be satisfied with bread.*
Pr 20:13

*The desire of the slothful kills him,
for his hands refuse to labour.*
Pr 21:25

*The sluggard says, There is a lion outside!
I shall be slain in the streets!*
Pr 22:13



Read Proverbs 24:30-34

According to these verses (from the Sayings of the Wise) the field of a lazy farmer is full of weeds; and a vineyard overgrown with thorns belongs to a man who loves to sleep for he is without sense.

*Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep –
So shall your poverty come as a robber, and your want as an armed man.*
Pr 24:33-34

BOOK OF PROVERBS



PART 4 follows next.

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