



PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Sermon Series Overview:

Each of us builds a life through the daily decisions we make. Our decisions determine our direction and our direction determines our destination. The Bible speaks of the choices of life that allow us to build wisely or foolishly. In this sermon series, we'll mine some clear and practical teachings of the Bible for wisdom that works in the day-to-day stuff of our lives. Proverbs offers real help for everyday life. God gave us these proverbs to help us develop the wisdom and discernment needed to build a healthy life.



HIGHLIGHT: What does the Scripture say?

Primary Passages from Sunday

Proverbs 18:21 - The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 12:18 - The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Proverbs 17:27-28 - The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered.

Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent,
and discerning if they hold their tongues.

James 1:19-21 - ¹⁹My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.





EXPLAIN: What did it mean back then?

To Be Reviewed before the group gathering

Proverbs 12:18

Words are powerful. They can do great and mighty things, but they also can bring massive destruction and devastation to people's lives. Solomon shows in this passage one of the dichotomies within the power of words: words can destroy but can also bring healing. Solomon understood that words pierce deeply into our hearts and souls so when a hurtful word is shared it does great damage. He writes that a hurtful word is like the wound of a sword; it cuts and hurts deeply, and even when healing occurs the one who was hurt is never the same. The wound may heal but there will always be a scar and lingering effects. We might heal and be able to move forward, but we are still never left the same.

Proverbs 18:21

In this passage Solomon goes even deeper into the power of words; he states that words can literally give life or bring death. Tim Keller states, "Words have been triggers for murders, suicides, and actual wars. Also, words kill psychologically. Call a child 'stupid' or 'not worth anything' and that person might spend all his or her life trying to rid him/herself of the self-doubts it has planted in them." On the flipside, words can also bring life. A word of encouragement can be exactly what is needed to change the trajectory of someone's life and bolster the courage in him/her to pursue the purpose in life God has for him/her.

Proverbs 17:27-28

The above two verses focused on the power of our words toward others, but in this passage Solomon focuses on the power of words to ourselves. He writes that the person who is wise with words uses restraint, meaning he/she doesn't blurt out impassioned or recklessly, but instead remains even tempered and measures his/her words carefully. Solomon said this way of thinking even helps fools because if fools remain silent no one knows they are a fool, but if they open their mouth they confirm that they are indeed a fool.

James 1:19-21

James understands the power of words and seeks to give us some instruction on how to harness this power and use it for good. James explains the first step in harnessing the power of words is to be quick to listen and slow to speak. He writes this because this not only keeps us from blurting out hurtful, impassioned, and unwise speech, it allows us to avoid becoming angry. James writes this because he knows our words aren't formed in our mouth, they are formed in/flow from our hearts (see also Matthew 12:34). He is getting to the root of the issue; yes, we need to control our tongue/words, but we do this by purifying our hearts before God. We need to repent and let go of sin in our life and cling to the word that has been planted within us, because it can save us. It can save us from heartache, it can save us from hurting people we love, it can save our marriage, it can save us from shame, etc. But ultimately, it can save us from the eternal destruction of sin and death, because Jesus Christ is the Word of God (see John 1). He is the one who has flowed from the Father's heart and has come to offer us peace, hope, restoration, freedom, and life. Just as our words reveal our heart, God's Word (Jesus) has revealed His heart to us.





APPLY: What does it mean for us?

For Group Discussion

1.) “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”
Though this statement isn’t true, why do you think it is so commonly shared with kids as they grow up?

2.) Read the following Proverbs: 18:21, 10:19, 10:21, 11:30, 13:14, 10:14, 11:9, 12:18, 16:24, 15:23. What do these Proverbs say about the impact that words have on whom they are spoken to? How have you experienced this to be true in your life?

3.) Read the following Proverbs: 10:10, 12:14, 18:6-7, 17:27-28, 13: 3. What do these Proverbs say about the impact that words have on the one who speaks them? How have you experienced this to be true in your life?

4.) Read the following verses: Matthew 12:34, Prov. 12:23, 16:23, 18:4, 10:30. What do these verses speak about the connection between our mouth and our heart? How have you experienced this to be true in your life?

5.) Read James 1:19-21. What does James say brings about change in our heart? Practically, how do you do this?





RESPOND: What does it mean for me today?

Bringing the discussion to a point of action and accountability

We have all been a victim and the culprit of destructive words. We also have been the recipient and giver of encouraging words. There may not be a more practical way to make life better than learning to control our words and tongue. It both benefits us and those around us.

As a group, discuss the following:

- **Share an edifying word with the group. How have you seen Christ through a Community Group member? What gifts do you see in a fellow member?**

This week, personally commit:

- **Who in your life do you need to apologize to because of the negative impact your words had on them?**

