

Talk – Proverbs: Speech and Words

The value of a proverb...

The proverbs of Solomon

What is their use?

Why listen?

The Structure of the Book of Proverbs

Chapters	Section
1:1-7	Introduction – What is Wisdom?
1:8-9:18 <i>(Wisdom calls for a response)</i>	Instruction – Lady Wisdom vs. Dame Folly
10:1-31:9 <i>(Humans must respond)</i>	Wisdom Sayings:
10:1-22:16	375 sayings of King Solomon
22:17-24:24	30 Wisdom Admonitions
25:1-29:27	140 sayings of King Solomon (con't)
30:1-31:9	Agur & King Lemuel's Mother
31:10-31 (acrostic poem)	Epilogue - The (impossibly) perfect wife

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Proverbs: Speech and Words

Improper Use of Speech

- We are told that the Lord hates a lying tongue, a false witness, and finds the person who uses their words to stir up a community as detestable (Prov 6:17-19 c.f. 12:22).
- To fear the Lord is to hate evil – and that evil is often heard in perverse speech (Prov 8:13 c.f. 10:32)
- It is behind lying lips that hatred is concealed, and it is a fool who slanders and gossips (Prov 10:18 c.f. 11:13; 26:28) – they should be avoided (20:19)
- Cities (and communities) can be built up, but by the mouth of the wicked they can be destroyed (Prov 11:11)
- It is by sinful talk that the evildoer is eventually caught out (Prov 12:13), those who speak rashly come to ruin (13:3 c.f. 18:7).

Proper Use of Speech

- Wisdom would say that there was a better way.
- The tongue of the righteous is compared to silver, gold and rare jewels (Prov 10:20 c.f. 20:15) and their lips nourish many (Prov 10:21).
- The lips of the wise spread knowledge (Prov 15:7), their words respected even by kings (16:13 c.f. 22:11).
- The prudent and discerning hold their tongue (Prov 10:19, c.f. 11:12; 21:23; 29:20) and even fools are thought to be wise if they keep silent (Prov 17:28)
- It is by a gracious word that others are built up (Prov 12:14 c.f. 16:24) and by a kind word that one is cheered up (Prov 12:25)
- A gentle word turns away wrath (Prov 15:1), a soothing tongue brings growth (15:4), a timely reply is good (15:23), an honest answer is like a kiss on the lips (24:26).
- The tongue has the power of life and death and those who love it will eat its fruit (Prov 18:21)

Using Speech and Words

New Testament Words of Wisdom