

Proverbs –  
Mouth Matters

## Words come in unlimited supply

- Proverbs reminds us that words have potential for good and evil

**“Death and life are in the power of the tongue” – Prov.18:21a**

# Preliminary remarks

- Cannot discuss every passage that includes “mouth”
- Solomon’s son must learn to control his mouth. . . . So must we
- Must also consider *tongue, lips, and words*

# I. Many Ways To Misuse The Mouth

## Hypocritical (godless, ESV)

- Prov.11:9, The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.
  - Slander or insinuation cuts victim to pieces
  - Thief . . . Murderer . . . Gossip
    - “When the debate is lost, slander becomes the tool of the loser” – Socrates

# Wide open

- Prov.13:3, He who guards his mouth preserves his life, But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.
  - Sam Rayburn
  - To sin more, talk more
  - Be sparing with promises, assertions, disclosures... Rv.21:8

# Fool

- Prov.14:7, Go from the presence of a foolish man, When you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.
  - Worthless experience
- 26:9, Like a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
  - Painful experience

## Not enough by themselves

- Prov.14:23, In all labor there is profit, But idle chatter *leads* only to poverty.
  - Some are all talk. Ja.2:14-17
- Prov.29:19, A servant will not be corrected by mere words; For though he understands, he will not respond.
  - Schools without power to discipline



# Harsh

- Prov.15:1, A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- 29:20, Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- 29:22, An angry man stirs up strife, And a furious man abounds in transgression.
  - Sticks and stones...
  - Faultfinding, hurtful nicknames, sarcasm, unjust criticism...

# Talebearer

- Prov.18:8, The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body.
  - Neh.6
  - National Enquirer...

# Deceit

- Prov.20:17, Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, But afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.
  - Sin always has an aftertaste
  - “Why did I say that?”

# Abusive speech

- Prov.21:19, Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.
- “Beneath this stone, a lump of clay, Lies Arabella Young, Who, on the twenty-fourth of May, Began to hold her tongue.”

# Hatred

- Prov.26:24, He who hates, disguises *it* with his lips, And lays up deceit within himself; 25 When he speaks kindly, do not believe him, For *there are* seven abominations in his heart; 26 *Though his* hatred is covered by deceit, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.
- Disguise: “Don’t think I’m gossiping, but...”

# Self-praise

- Prov.27:2, Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.
- Prov.30:32 If you have been foolish in exalting yourself, Or if you have devised evil, put your hand on your mouth.

# Flattery

- Prov.28:23, He who rebukes a man will find more favor afterward than he who flatters with the tongue.
  - Rebuke is better in the long run.

I. Many Ways To Misuse Mouth

II. Many Good Ways  
To Use The Mouth



# Restrained

Prov.10:19, In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.

15:28, The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.

18:13, He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.

18:17, The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him. [cf. 17:28]

# Delivers

12:6, The words of the wicked are, 'Lie in wait for blood,' but the mouth of the upright will deliver them.

- Sincerity is best defense against slander
- Live so that no one will believe a false charge

# Tongue of the wise heals

12:18, There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health...

25: Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad.

- Some delight in speaking words that wound the soul
- Tongue of the wise promotes health

# Fruit

13:2, A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, but the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence.

- Words pass; their fruit remains
- Mentors...

# Guarded

13:3, He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.

21:23, A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims foolishness.

- Wisdom lets us know when to speak, when to keep silent.
- 'I have often regretted my speech, never my silence' (Publius).

# Answer

15:1, A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

16:1, The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

- Man proposes, God disposes

# Answer

16:21, The wise in heart will be called prudent, and sweetness of the lips increases learning.

- Catch flies . . . honey
- The charm of wisdom

16:24, Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

- The pleasure of words. 1 Sm.14:27
- 25:15, By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue breaks a bone.

# Well-timed

15:23, A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is.

- Verbal skill
- Timing is important
- 25:11, A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Col.4:6
- 27:14, He who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, It will be counted a curse to him.



# Knowledge

20:15, There is gold and a multitude of rubies,  
but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

- *The Millionaire*
- Better gift: knowledge of God
- “The world is poor because her treasure is buried in the sky and all her treasure maps are of the earth” – Miller

# Kind

31:26, She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.

- Instead of opening her mouth in gossip and slander, she speaks kind words.
- She would want embarrassing info about herself kept quiet ... she refuses to divulge sensitive secrets of others.

I. Many Ways To Misuse Mouth

II. Many Good Ways To Use Mouth

**III. Conclusions**

# 1. We reap what we say (sow)

James 1:26

- When we speak wisely, we bless . . .
  - Ourselves
  - Others
- When we speak foolishly or maliciously, we harm ourselves and others . . .

## 2. We carry a deadly weapon

James 3:...5-6

- Gossip / slander / false rumors...kill souls

### 3. We tend to hurt those we should love

James 4:11

- Some tear down others to make themselves look good
- Some spread rumors / share confidential information to appear important
- They will always find someone to listen

## 4. We can eliminate gossip

Obey the gospel!

- Confront it directly, Mt.18:15-17
- Refuse to listen, Prov.20:19, He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips.
  - godsib
- Learn to love, Prov.10:12, Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.

## 4. We can eliminate gossip

Obey the gospel!

- This is a test

1. When is the last time you gossiped?
2. When is the last time you encouraged someone?
3. If tongue sins are serious, where do you expect to spend eternity?

A beautiful life blesses others, too