

## *Think before You Speak*

Proverbs 18:20(NKJV) says "A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth; From the produce of his lips he shall be filled. 21; Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit." This verse lets us know undeniably that our mouths are powerful instruments that will either bring us the blessings of life or the curses of death and destruction. Plainly said, people can do a great deal of good, or a great deal of harm, both to others and to themselves, by what they allow to roll from their lips.

From this verse in Proverbs 18, we know concretely that words are powerful. Words are important to God, and if they are important to Him they ought to be extremely important to the Christian, but from some of the conversations that you and I have no doubt overheard, some of us Christian folk didn't understand the message. It truly is amazing to listen to people sometimes, to hear the venomous remarks that they make towards and about others. You have to wonder if some folk have ever read Proverbs 18:20.

The words that we speak inform others who we are. They bring to the outside what we are on the inside. The confessions we make will either back our faith or prove our fear. So as the mental health experts would say, we need to listen to our inner dialogue. We need to think before we speak, because our mouths can get us into serious trouble.

What kind of trouble? Proverbs 18:21 give us the worst case scenario which is death. You don't get more trouble than that. This verse isn't only referring to physical death, but it also refers to the destruction and darkness that is heaped upon our relationships, finances, and other circumstances as a result of the words we use.

A lot of us will make negative confessions out of habit. We'll say things like "*I just can't catch a break...*", "*I don't think I'll ever get married...*", or "*There are no good men out there anymore.*" Statements like these shape and mold our reality because they convey our doubt of God's Word. You cannot expect to take an untamed tongue into your marriage. You have to understand the impact of your words and begin to change the way you speak NOW, before you partner. You must make the connection between your mind, heart, and mouth; and then be sure that all of these are in alignment with the goodness of God.

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### **James 3:5 (NLT)**

*So also, the tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do. A tiny spark can set a great forest on fire.*

This verse lets us see just how much damage we can do with our tongues, but we have to understand that it isn't simply the words, it's the thoughts and intents that back them. We speak evil and doubt because evil and doubt are in our hearts, and that's a dangerous path. To think before you speak is to go into those places of darkness within your own being and let God's Word shine a light on them. To think before you speak is to discipline yourself to quickly consider how the Word fits in the situation, then make a decision to choose love's way instead of the way of the world.

You must be careful of what and how you say things because unkind words can cut deeper than any weapon; they can destroy a marriage or any other relationship as well.

This warning in James 3:5 is especially poignant for women, because if we'll be honest we'd have to admit that women, often times more than men, will make a science of gossiping. As Christians, our mouths should be used to uplift and inspire, but there are times when an untamed tongue will win. We use our tongues as weapons against others when we gossip and talk freely about their business. This leads us to throw our opinions and judgment of others around haphazardly, but there is a steep price to pay for this. Look at Romans 1:1-5 (The Message):

*1-2 Those people are on a dark spiral downward. But if you think that leaves you on the high ground where you can point your finger at others, think again. Every time you criticize someone, you condemn yourself. It takes one to know one. Judgmental criticism of others is a well-known way of escaping detection in your own crimes and misdemeanors. But God isn't so easily diverted. He sees right through all such smoke screens and holds you to what you've done.*

*3-4 You didn't think, did you, that just by pointing your finger at others you would distract God from seeing all your misdoings and from coming down on you hard? Or did you think that because he's such a nice God, he'd let you off the hook? Better think this one through from the beginning. God is kind, but he's not soft. In kindness he takes us firmly by the hand and leads us into a radical life-change. 5 You're not getting by with anything. Every refusal and avoidance of God adds fuel to the fire.*

You and I have no other choice, for God has made it very plain, we must take full responsibility for what we say, how we say it, and when we say it. We have to take a very honest look at our lives and understand that the life we have at this very moment is a monument to the words we've believed and spoken.

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Make positive confessions about your life and your intentions. Through Jesus Christ, God has provided access to every good thing. He is willing and able at all times to help us carve out the life we desire.

Stop doubting and start doing. Keep your mind and attention focused on your purpose and your dreams. Find ways to speak life into those things. Speak life into the people around you and don't curse yourself or others through profanity. Be sure to allow words of encouragement to flow from your lips rather than venomous words that leave people feeling devalued or crippled. Remember, if you're not thinking Godly thoughts—not putting the Word on in your mind, then you are opening the door for the enemy to come in. This can be totally avoided. Simply think before you speak.

Understand what you've been given. God has told you that you can either speak life or speak death. Through your confession and speech you can either birth something really fantastic or something really horrendous. I vote for fantastic, don't you?●

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