

# Principles from Proverbs: The Importance of Godly Speech

Introduction: In many ways a man's speech is a window to his soul. Jesus taught that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Simply stated, you get a sample of a man's soul by the words he speaks. Since "life and death are in the power of the tongue," it would behoove believers to develop godly habits of speaking.

I. The Christian's speech should be pure and edifying.

A. Right speech is evidence of Christ's work in the life.

**"The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth." (Proverbs 10:20)**

**"The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." (Proverbs 16:23)**

**"The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words." (Proverbs 15:26)**

1. Words spoken by a just or righteous man have inherent worth. A righteous heart produces valuable speech. Such speech is, unfortunately, a relatively rare commodity.
2. A wise man thinks before he speaks. It is vital that words and concepts be carefully measured and framed.
3. The pleasant nature of a man's speech is an indication of purity—sincerity, genuineness.

B. Right speech enhances every aspect of one's life.

**"The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked." (Proverbs 10:11)"**

**"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit." (Proverbs 15:4)**

1. Righteous men speak words that empower others to life. Their words become a source of help, solace, and comfort. Righteous speech tends toward life, wicked speech tends toward death.
2. A wholesome tongue is one that speaks healthy words. That tongue becomes a source of life. Any crookedness in the speech crushes the spirit—disappoints and damages.

C. Right speech shares wisdom and knowledge with others.

**“The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom...” (Proverbs 10:31)**

**“The lips of the wise disperse knowledge...” (Proverbs 15:7)**

**“The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.” (Proverbs 10:21)**

1. The gift of speech is not just for survival communication. God gave speech as a vehicle of edifying others. The gift of speech has the community in view.
2. God intends that wisdom and knowledge be dissipated through speech. One should share what he knows. Speech is the principle method of passing on God’s truth (preaching and personal witness), and individual mentoring is the standard of both the Old and New Testaments.
3. Righteous lips should enjoy a wide influence, and many should find sustenance through words of wisdom. In an increasingly secular age, it is important that God’s wisdom be on our lips continually.

II. Edifying speech is positive and productive.

A. Use pleasant words to encourage others.

**“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.” (Proverbs 16:24)**

1. Kind, sweet words encourage the soul of the discouraged. They come as a welcome and delightful boost.
2. Pleasant words also foster physical health. The bones are on the inside. Medical science tells us that stress and tension arise from deep within a person. Kind, encouraging words may help to alleviate stress; therefore, promoting inward health.

**“Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.” (Proverbs 12:25)**

1. Everyone experiences times of discouragement. Sometimes even strong people lose heart.
2. A simple word of kindness can turn discouragement into gladness. How generous we should be in words of encouragement!

**“There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.” (Proverbs 12:18)**

1. Sharp speech can damage and even kill.
2. Wise men employ healthy speech in a constructive, edifying manner. Even in correction, one should choose his words carefully.

B. Choose your speech style to best meet the need of the moment.

**“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.” (Proverbs 15:1)**

1. A soft answer is not weak; it is reasonable.
2. A soft answer conveys compassion, kindness, and openness.

**“The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.” (Proverbs 16:21)**

1. Instruction is best accomplished from a positive standpoint.
2. Harshness tends to detract from the message one desires to convey. Harshness gets in the way of communication.

**“By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.” (Proverbs 25:15)**

1. Patient entreaty is the best method to use with those in authority. Demanding rights rarely works.
2. The soft tongue (kind, gentle) will eventually “get through his thick skull.”

**“...a word spoken in due season, how good it is!” (Proverbs 15:23)**

1. Sometimes timing is everything. Consider your timing as well as your wording. Is the message “due” just now, or are you jumping the gun.
2. A timely word may “save the day.” The same word spoken prematurely or too late may have little or no positive impact.