

THE POWER OF YOUR WORDS

PRECEPT

Proverbs 15:1-23

¹A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.² The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge, but the mouth of a fool gushes foolishness.³ The Lord is watching everywhere, keeping His eye on both the evil and the good.⁴ Gentle words are a tree of life; but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.⁵ Only a fool despises a parent's discipline; whoever learns from correction is wise.⁶ There is treasure in the house of the godly, but the earnings of the wicked bring trouble.⁷ The lips of the wise give good advice; the heart of a fool has none to give.⁸ The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but He delights in the prayers of the upright.⁹ The Lord detests the way of the wicked, but He loves those who pursue godliness...

PROMISE

Words have consequences. A harsh word stirs up anger. A wise person doesn't simply say whatever comes to mind; they pause, think, and consider the consequences of their words.

Words can cause harm and crush someone's spirit, but words can also give life. The message is as important as the delivery. What you say matters, but how you say it matters too. Our words often reveal what is inside our hearts.

BE QUICK TO LISTEN. James 1:19 says, "My dear brothers and sisters, let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger." Are we quick to listen? Sometimes the problem is that we listen only to answer back. Before responding, slow down. Give the other person a chance to speak. Listen not just to their words, but also to what they are trying to communicate. Let's listen to understand.

CHANGE "YOU" TO "I". Proverbs 15:1 notes, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Instead of accusing the other person, talk about your experience. Communicate how you felt rather than immediately placing blame. Changing "you" to "I" doesn't mean avoiding the truth. It means communicating the truth in a way that can lead to understanding rather than defensiveness.

ASK THESE FOUR QUESTIONS: Is it TRUE? Is it NECESSARY? Is it HELPFUL? Is it LOVING?

Ephesians 4:29 says, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what helps build others up according to their needs." Not everything that is true needs to be said immediately. Sometimes the words we want to say are true—but are they necessary? Are they helpful? Are they loving? Truth shouldn't be used as a weapon. Before you speak, pause and ask yourself these four questions.

SPEAK LIFE INTENTIONALLY. Proverbs 18:21 states, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." What we speak matters. A careless mouth can lead to bad relationships. Venting will never cause division; gossip always causes division. It's okay to talk about your feelings with someone you trust, but there is a difference between sharing how you feel and talking badly about someone. We can be honest about our hurt and frustration without gossiping or putting someone down. So before you speak, pause and ask yourself the four questions, and then choose to speak life intentionally.

PRACTICE

1. **Respond.** Why do you think it can be difficult to listen to understand instead of listening just to respond?
2. **Words matter.** Think about the four questions: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it helpful? Is it loving? Which one do you think you most often forget, and how could remembering it change the way you speak to others?

PRAYER

I. Ministries

- Pray that God will empower all of our ministries with sincerity and strength.

II. Life Kids

- Pray for more volunteers and for our children to encounter God.

III. Life Sports

- Thank God for a healthy body, abilities, and the gift of sports.

IV. Life Link

- Pray that our ushers will serve our brethren filled with the Holy Spirit.

V. Life Line

- Pray that we foster genuine connection through our social media postings.

VI. Life Worship

- May they continue to wholeheartedly serve God and His people.

VII. Growth

- May He guide us as we seek to grow in faith and character and to learn from Christ.