

## Proverbs: Words

### **Words can affect us for good or ill**

12:18 — The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

18:21 — The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

15:4 — The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.

### **Words can also spread in ways that help or harm.**

13:3 — Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.

16:24 — Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

16:28 — A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.

### **Words are not everything. They cannot compel someone to act, and one who listens to deceit is as liable as the liar. Not speaking is sometimes better.**

14:23 — All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

29:19 — Servants cannot be corrected by mere words; though they understand, they will not respond.

17:4 — A wicked person listens to deceitful lips; a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue.

18:13 — To answer before listening— that is folly and shame.

- Derek Kinder gives a few characteristics of how the wise speak.
  - They will speak truth. They will speak with few words. They will be appropriate and timely.
  - 16:13; 24:24-26; 17:27-28; 15:1, 23; 25:11
- Naturally James 3:1-12 and Jesus words in Matthew 12:34 add to the biblical picture.

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## Questions

1. Look at some Proverbs, either those listed here, or one's you have found on your own. How do words help us or harm us?
2. What are traits of those who use them wisely and those who use them foolishly?
3. What are the limits of words?
4. Do you tend to fixate on what people say and miss what they meant? Or do you tend to overlook what someone says and focus on what you think they mean? Why does this matter?
5. How does confession and forgiveness help us become more wise as we speak and misspeak to one another?