

Beat: News

Unguarded Speech Ruins Peace, Reputation And Success

Be Quick To Hear, Slow To Speak

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USPA NEWS - “A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. Proverbs 18:7”

Guard your speech at any cost. If you talk too much, cut your words in half. If you cannot say something gracious or helpful, say nothing at all.

A fool cannot control his speech. It often gets him in trouble. His speech traps him in sin. Much of the pain in his life is because of words he should not have said. Training your lips can save your future.

King Solomon used simple figures of speech, metonymy in this case, to make a powerful point in a few words. Mouth and lips, the means of talking, refer to a fool’s speech. Destruction and snare are metaphors for pain and trouble he causes himself. Ruling your speech is important to avoid the fool’s problems in life (Pr 12:13; 13:3; Eccl 10:11-14).

Solomon knew unguarded speech could ruin his son’s peace, reputation, or success. In context, he warned about contentious words that cause fights (Pr 18:6) and talebearing that wounds others (Pr 18:8). He warned elsewhere against the snare and trouble of speaking foolishly (Pr 6:1-5; 10:31; 12:13; 15:28; Eccl 10:3,12-14). He constantly warned that words can cause life or death, depending on your use of them (Pr 18:21).

Tongues often cause mischief to others, but this proverb shows mischief to the speaker himself. Saul and Herod brought snares on their own souls by foolish words (I Sam 14:24-46; Mark 6:21-29). Gideon whipped the men of Succoth with thorns for their speech, and Elisha cursed 42 children for theirs. The slander of Daniel’s peers cost them their own lives, and so did the prepared speeches of Ananias and Sapphira.

Do you grasp the warning? Have you spoken harshly, and then regretted it? Have you committed to do something, and then wished you had not? Have you lied to protect yourself, only to find you had grievously complicated matters? Have you been disrespectful and wished you could get your words back? Sin multiplies with the number of words spoken (Pr 10:19). You will give an account of every idle word (Matt 12:36).

You can save your life from destruction. Cut your words in half (Pr 17:27-28). Listen eagerly; speak reluctantly. Be quick to hear, slow to speak (Jas 1:19). Say only kind and positive things about others (Eph 4:29). Let your speech be always with grace, and criticize only rarely when necessary (Col 4:6). Replace foolish talking and jesting with giving thanks (Eph 5:4). Never speak evil of those in authority (Deut 27:16; Jude 1:8).

Ask God for help. David prayed, “Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips”^[1] (Ps 141:3). And again, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer”^[2] (Ps 19:14). You can rule your speech by the power of Christ in you by His Spirit (Phil 4:13; II Pet 1:3).

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