

The Power of Words

Christian Ethics
from the Book of Proverbs

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The Power of Words

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CHAPTER 1

Letting the Word Judge Us

1. The Lord God created the world by the use of His **words**.

This shows us right from the beginning that words have power, are creative, can have long-term effects, and are to be used wisely and with fore-thought.

The very first recorded words of man (Adam) were also to do with creativity:

Genesis 2:23 - And Adam said: "***This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.***"

2. The creative power of words has been acknowledged throughout history. Even in the occult realm, "spells" hold this same basic fundamental.

Therefore, as Christians, we need to re-assess the use of our words, not just from the correct use of the tongue in not slandering, but realising that words can release either a blessing or a curse.

The Church today faces a major crisis. Generally it is to do with the mis-use of the tongue.

Of course, it is not a new problem but one that was recognised even by Solomon, the wisest man on earth at the time. We see this also echoed in the Epistle of James.

Proverbs 6:16 - ***These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him ...***

Proverbs 6:19 - ***A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.***

James 3:5 - ***Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!***

James 3:6 - ***And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among the members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.***

3. Why should things be any different now, in regard to our use of the tongue, than any other period in the Church Age? Because of the increased revelation of the *Faith Word Movement* together with the revealing of many prophetic ministries.

Of course, not everything about the *Faith Word Movement* was wholesome, but over the past fifteen years there has been a maturing by many who have come through this move.

Likewise, with the increasing release of prophetic Ministries in the past decade, it is obvious that the Enemy would attack the Church through slander, criticism and gossip.

We should also be aware that we are in line for many great deceptions of doctrine against fundamental Bible teaching. The Enemy will attempt to strike wherever Biblical Words and Word Ministries are breaking through.

He will try to stop the truth and power of these coming into full maturity by using the opposite weapon of words - namely slander, wrong teaching, and fault-finding.

4. Our teaching and preaching, our prophesying and sharing, must fall into line with the written Word of God, and what it strongly says about gossip and slander.

If we do not heed the Word of God we will fall under God's judgment in the matter.

Note what Paul says about judging ourselves according to the revealed Word.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 - ***For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.***

Here Paul clearly says that we should judge ourselves according to the Scriptures. If we do this we shall not come under God's judgment because the Bible is His ultimate standard and we have honoured it by accepting it as His direction for our life.

However, if we fail to judge ourselves according to this standard, we will come under God's judgment and suffer the same judgment as the world!

If we allow the Word of God to be our standard and find we are guilty of some trespass, then God will chastise us (as well as forgive), but the chastening will be for a better purpose - to bring us to maturity.

Hebrews 12:6 - ***For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.***

5. The Word of God is given so that it might establish peace in our hearts. This, of course, will only happen when we obey the Word.

Disobey, and we feel uneasy, convicted and unworthy.

The only remedy for this is total repentance ("change of mind and heart") together with a disciplined life that does not give way to falling back into sin.

6. God is concerned about the use of our tongue.

Much of the Bible deals with this issue, both in regard to the negative and positive side.

Proverbs 15:4 - ***A wholesome tongue is a tree of life.***

We are foolish indeed if we think we can avoid not reaping what we have sown in the way of slander and gossip.

Proverbs 18:21 - ***Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.***

7. I believe that many of the ills in the Body of Christ, and in an individual's own life, are due to the spiritual release of negativity that occurs when brethren speak against one another - even in private.

Many believers struggle in their daily walk without knowing why. I believe one of the major reasons is because of the gossip and backbiting that has gone on in secret, unknown to many.

When we speak out against a brother or sister without due cause, and when our aim is to pull down rather than to correct or discipline, we actually release a curse upon them in the spiritual realm.

This negativity effects them even though they do not know it. If questioned closely, I believe we would find that they "sense" something is wrong, that there is an "attack" of some sort against them, that they have been "isolated" somehow.

I have experienced this myself, but only later realised what had been happening to me and how it occurred.

This is one reason why Paul admonished the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 14:26 - ***Let all things be done for edification.***

Strong's Dictionary G3619

oikodome (pronounced *oy-kod-om-ay*) - architecture, a structure, figuratively meaning to confirm, build, edify, **to build up**.

8. In the Epistle of Jude there are five areas of warning relating to the tongue.

Jude 1:15-16 - ***To execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.***

Notice the five areas we are warned to guard against.

1. **Murmuring.**
2. **Complaining.**
3. Following our **own lusts**.
4. Speaking **words that will influence** people.
5. **Flattering others** for our own benefit.

9. Jude was writing against the ungodly who do such things, but we know that many "godly" people murmur, complain and speak great swelling words.

Murmuring and complaining are the same thing in Scripture. It was, in fact, the downfall of many in the Old Testament period. Compare Miriam, for example.

Murmuring is mentioned by Jude first because this is where all problems start that infect the Body of believers.

A person who murmurs against the brethren is also murmuring against the God of the brethren!

This is often not realised. When we murmur against a brother or sister we are also murmuring against God, especially if they are in leadership.

Jude 1:15-16 - ***To execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.***

Murmuring will let the Enemy come in, and the end result of this will be rebellion and division.

10. The Word of God is given to us to act as a hedge. If we ignore the boundaries that the Lord has given us, we give place to Satan, and he will work a great work of evil.

Ecclesiastes 10:8 - ***He who digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent.***

It is vital that the End Time Church resist the temptations of the Enemy to sow division in the Body of Christ through slander, criticism and backbiting.

If the people of the Word do not guard themselves in how they use their words, the Word of God will be our judge on that great day of Judgment.

Be warned. Read and reflect on what Jesus Himself says to us about this attitude:

John 12:48 - ***He who rejects me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him. The word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.***

CHAPTER 2

Truths From the Book of Proverbs

1. The Book of Proverbs (in Hebrew it is called "*The Proverbs of Solomon*") is a book of truths of a King.

It is representative of the truths found by one who was a king by divine decree.

Because we too are called to reign with Christ, we should take notice of the many principles and truths that are contained in *Proverbs*. The book is not simply a collection of morality sayings, although that is one level of its purpose. It is a handbook outlining the spiritual consequences of ignoring God's instruction for us, and, of course, of the blessings that comes from heeding it!

2. Solomon instructs us in his Book to understand the three-fold sequence of having knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.

Knowledge is the *acquisition* of facts.

Understanding is the *interpreting* of the facts.

Wisdom is the *application* of these facts.

We can have much knowledge, but unless we apply it, we will never be wise!

Proverbs 1:5 - ***A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.***

I believe that the Book of Proverbs is an End Time book, for the final age of the Church. Why? Because it instructs us to seek for wisdom!

"*Wisdom*" is an End Time characteristic of the Last Days Church.

In these End Times, we will need to speak great truths, preach solid doctrine, prophesy extraordinary words, and teach deep revelations.

All these require the use of words. How can we be pure in this calling unless we are controlling our tongues?

3. "*Knowledge*," in the Greek language of the New Testament, has three meanings that are important for us to consider.

This is first found in the Book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 1:2 - ***To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding.***

This three fold sequence of (1) knowing, (2) perceiving and (3) receiving, must be understood and applied by the Church if it is going to come into "full Sonship," into maturity. (For further insight see my booklet THE THREE FOLD TRUTHS.)

The three Greek words, found in the New Testament, for "know" and "knowledge" are as follows:

First word

GNOSIS

2 Peter 3:18 - ***But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen***

According to Strongs Dictionary (G1108), the word **gnosis** means **knowing the act**. By implication it means "knowledge" or science.

Its more accurate meaning is **to know by experience**. See John 8:22 and 17:3

So we see that there is a type of knowledge that can only be "known" through "knowing the act," or by experiencing what we know.

This is a profound concept and should really challenge our superficial concepts about "knowing" something!

Second word

EPIGINOSKO

Luke 24:31 - ***Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him, and He vanished from their sight.***

According to Strongs Dictionary (G1921), the word **epiginosko** means to know upon some mark, to recognise, **to become fully acquainted with**, to acknowledge; to have knowledge, to take knowledge, perceive.

Its more accurate meaning is **to know fully through revealed knowledge**.

So, in this type of knowledge, we discover there is an understanding that passes beyond knowing something just from experience.

Here we are told that we can know a truth fully by becoming intimately acquainted with it, just as the disciples at Emmaus did with the risen Jesus - even though it was only momentarily.

Third word

EIDO

Hebrews 8:11 - ***None of them shall teach his neighbour, and none his brother saying, "Know the LORD" for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.***

According to Strongs (G1492), the verb **eido** means (either literally or figuratively) "to see." By implication, the word means to know; be aware, **known knowledge**, look on, **be sure**, behold, consider, perceive, see, tell, understand.

Its more accurate meaning is **to know absolutely**.

What a truth! We can actually "know" knowledge to such a degree that we know it absolutely!!

4. So we see that there are three important stages in the development of "knowledge".

We should be diligent in applying these truths and insights so that we do not simply remain at a very superficial level of understanding.

First, we come to **know by experience**. Most people stop at this point in their Christian growth.

Then, as we mature, we come **to know more fully** by revealed knowledge.

Finally, we come **to know absolutely**. To "know knowledge" as it were!

Why have I laboured this point about the degrees of knowledge? Because it relates to the use of our tongue.

As preachers and teachers we should never speak out what we have not yet experienced for ourselves. See Proverbs 5:15.

How many times have you sat under some preaching or teaching, that might have been sound, helpful and even relevant, yet somehow lacked power? This kind of preaching and teaching comes when the preacher has come across some knowledge of truth in a book or at a conference, but who has not personally experienced it.

In his zeal to share the new found revelation, it is presented as important and even

current - but in fact the preacher himself has never experience it for himself. So it becomes "stale water" and does not accomplish very much, except perhaps to impart information to us.

Our soul and mind benefits, but not our spirit man.

5. Despite our reading of Scripture about the mis-use of our tongue, and by the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in how we use our words, most Christians are still at the stage of only having *acquired the knowledge* that backbiting is wrong.

We have not yet applied it to our innermost lives!

Hence, we are under judgment, because we have had the knowledge shown to us by the Word, yet we have not yielded to it.

That is why this issue is so important in the End Times. It is not enough just to know; we must also apply the truth that is revealed to us.

Remember that we shall be judged, not on what we did *not* know, but on what we *did* know, but failed to apply!

6. So let us go back to the Book of the Wise King (Solomon's proverbs) and see what the Word of God tells us to do.

We will concentrate on what Solomon wrote about controlling the tongue and its wise use.

Wisdom From the Book of Proverbs on How to Use the Tongue.

Proverbs 1:10-11

Here the righteous man is warned not to listen to the enticing words of sinners. They will always trap you. Notice that Solomon says the defence against this is to "*not consent*." That is, "*not to speak words of approval*." We are to resist such temptations and use our words wisely and powerfully to counter-attack any of the enemy's suggestions. This is what Jesus did to Satan in the wilderness temptations. He used the Word to resist His enemy.

Proverbs 2:10-11

Having wisdom, knowledge and understanding acts as a safeguard against those who speak out against you. When lies are spoken about you, or people attempt to harm you with words, it will be the applied wisdom you have stored in your heart that acts as a defence.

Proverbs 2:16

Sexual and spiritual seduction operates through words that are intended to flatter you. Be alert for this in both the natural and spiritual realms.

Proverbs 4:20-24

Honour the teachings of the Lord. Do not simply "accept" them as Truth but receive them into your heart. Believe them, apply them. Guard against tainting these precious truths by not having perverse lips or a deceitful mouth (verse 24).

Proverbs 6:12-15

A man who uses his speech wrongly will walk wrongly as well. His life will follow what his mouth speaks.

Proverbs 6:19

God hates those who speak lies and act as a bad witness. He also hates and abhors those who sow division amongst the believers by what they say or even imply.

Proverbs 7:4

Actually speak to Wisdom (the Lord) and treat this wonderful gift as honourable. Regard knowledge, understanding and wisdom as a near relative, for in this way words of natural and spiritual seduction will not influence you as sin.

Proverbs 8:8

The test of whether a person is wise or not is found in how they use their words. A wise person in God will never say or imply anything that is crooked or perverse.

Proverbs 10:11

Wise people use their mouth and words to impart life. On the other hand, people who are angry, violent and aggressive use their words to justify their actions.

Proverbs 10:19

People who talk a lot are restless in their soul and spirit. They are likely to talk a lot to cover up some inner turmoil of their soul. For some, the need to talk a lot is to quieten their conscience due to sin deep within. On the other hand, a wise person knows how to use his words and when to keep quiet. It is not an effort for him, he has control over both his inner and outer life.

Proverbs 10:31-32

A righteous person will be known by the wisdom they speak. On the other hand the perverse person will always mouth wicked things.

Proverbs 11:13

A person who can not control their mouth will blurt out secrets that should not be made public. However, a faithful person whom you can trust will always guard their words.

Proverbs 12:18-19

When you speak harsh words, they are like a sword that pierces; this is a curse. But the tongue of wisdom will bring spiritual and even natural health; it is a blessing.

Proverbs 13:3

Watch your words as they will protect and preserve life. To speak hastily will bring about some form of destruction.

Proverbs 15:1-4

The use of our words can be for good or evil. The sign of wisdom is always found in how people use their words.

Proverbs 18:6-7

The foolish person will always leave a trail of contention and division behind them. Look for this as a sign and discern it well.

Proverbs 18:8

The gossip of a talebearer is like a curse that goes deep into a person's soul, poisoning them.

Proverbs 18:21

The power of the tongue is so great that it can actually bring about life or even death. Blessings and curses! How you speak will determine whether you reap blessings or curses in your life.

Proverbs 23:9

Be cautious where you speak. Wisdom can only be received by those whose hearts are receptive. A foolish person will scoff at what is wise.

Proverbs 25:11

Chosen words given at a chosen moment are precious.

Proverbs 25:23

The face and physical demure of a backbiter will be evident, as certain as the north wind brings rain when it blows.

Proverbs 26:23

Do not be deceived by the fervency of a person's speech. It can be hiding something evil and base.

Proverbs 27:2

Do not boast about yourself, even if it is deserved. Let others see this in you and honour you in their own time.

Proverbs 29:20

Learn to be reserved with your speech. Talking too hastily will bring you into disrepute.

Based on all the above, let this verse from Proverbs 8:6 be our aim in all our speech:

**Listen, for I will speak of excellent things
and from the opening of my lips
will come right things.**

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