

APPS SERIES BY DAVID H. MCKINLEY

TONGUES

American Journalist Will Norris composed a little rhyme that carries a powerful message: “If your lips would keep from slips, five things you must observe with care: to whom you speak, of whom you speak and how... and when... and where.”

Have you ever said something and wished you could take it back?

Publius: “I have often regretted my speech, but never my silence.”

God’s Word provides a comprehensive and functional “App” to help you deal with difficulties that surface from the misuse of the tongue. I could title this message, *The Sermon on the Mouth*. There’s a reason God created us with two ears, one tongue and a cage of teeth with which to block the tongue.

Choosing your words and using speech rightly can be a challenge. Consider these tongue twisters:

Keeping customers content creates kingly profits.

Success seeds success.

Bigger business isn’t better business,

but better business brings bigger rewards.

Wanting won’t win; winning ways are active ways.

Seventeen sales slips slithered slowly southwards.

Don’t go deep into debt.

Ensuring excellence isn’t easy.

Time takes a terrible toll on intentions.

READ Proverbs 15:1-4.

The phrase, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me,” is far from the truth. We *are* hurt by what people say.

Let me share four e-words you can use as a gage to measure your words and what to say.

Evaluation. When you talk with others, do you scrutinize what to say before you say it? Take time and plan your response. Gather your thoughts so you don’t scatter your words.

READ Proverbs 15:2, 7, 28. Speech is connected to the “thoughts” of the heart. The difference between wise and foolish speech has to do with what is going on “back stage” in your life.

People often speak without thinking.

Here’s a simple plan to help you **T-H-I-N-K** before you speak:

Is it **True**? “The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body (Proverbs 18:8 NKJV).

People are often content to indulge, listen and perpetrate lies. Why do you think tabloids are so popular and profitable? In “trash talk,” there’s no truth or foundation, just fabrication and repeat communication.

In the Middle Ages, a young man went to a monk and confessed, “I have sinned; I said something slanderous. What should I do?” The monk said, “Go and put a feather on every doorstep in town.” Once the young man completed the task, he went back to the monk. The monk then instructed the man to go back and pick up all the feathers. The young man responded, “That’s impossible! The feathers have scattered with the wind.” The wise monk replied, “So it is with slander.”

Is it **Honest**? Dishonesty destroys relationships. Sometimes you can tell “half truths”—just enough to get by so people believe what you want them to believe. Have you manipulated others with the truth? The truth, used in this way, *is* dishonest.

Is it **Important**? If you’re not careful, you’ll learn to be content with trivial conversation. Do you say things that really don’t need to be said?

“A fool’s mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul” (Proverbs 18:7 ESV).

The “obsession of the unimportant” in our speech often leads to the “injury of the unintended.”

“When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent (Proverbs 10:19 ESV).

Is it **Necessary**? Sometimes we talk, talk, talk, but what we say is unnecessary. Unlike 24/7 news broadcasts, you don’t have to express opinions and comment on every topic discussed.

“A fool’s lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating (Proverbs 18:6 ESV).

Is it **Kind**? No where does the “Golden Rule”



Tongues


Proverbs 15:1-4

Tongues

Apps Series, Part Eight

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Scripture: Proverbs 15:1-4

 The tongue of the wise commends knowledge.

 Mouths of fools pour out folly.



WARREN
a way of life!

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TONGUES >>> CONTINUED

have greater application than in your speech. "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12 ESV).

Expression. Are you known for your "straight talk"? Do you mean what you say and say what you mean? Check your approach. If your speech lacks a good tonal quality, you may get yourself in trouble. You can say the *right* thing in the *wrong* way and cause injury.

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1 ESV).

So often issues are lost in attitudes and responses. Instead of addressing a problem in a wise manner, you can become the problem by how you approach a subject or express yourself. Harsh words and fiery attitudes will only increase the destructive power in a conversation. When you confront, challenge and correct, *how* you talk is as important as *what* you say. Tack and tone have everything to do with the effectiveness of your communication.

"Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue" (Proverbs 28:23 ESV).

"A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit" (Proverbs 15:4 ESV).

"The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is of little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense" (Proverbs 10:20-21 ESV).

Encouragement. It is amazing how an encouraging word can make a world of difference to someone.

"To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!" (Proverbs 15:23 ESV).

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver" (Proverbs 25:11 ESV).

"Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a

good word makes him glad" (Proverbs 12:25 ESV).

"Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body" (Proverbs 16:24 ESV).

"The lips of the righteous feed many..." (Proverbs 10:21 ESV).

Eternity. A judge can speak words and sentence a prisoner to life or place him on death row. A gossip can ruin a good reputation and stir an entire group toward distrust and division. A professor can speak words of cynicism and destroy the faith of a student.

It has been noted that for every word in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, 125 people died in WWII. Is it any wonder, the tongue is described as a *fire*, a *beast* and a *poison* in the book of James?

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue..." (Proverbs 18:21 ESV).

One of the Ten Commandments specifically relates to the tongue: "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain..." (Exodus 20:7 ESV). This is more than cursing; it has to do with surrendering to Almighty God.

"... if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved" (Romans 10:9-10 ESV).

Salvation is the recognition and submission to the rule of Christ in your life. It is a surrendered heart, evidenced by a redirected tongue.

What about the use of your tongue as a believer? Do you give witness that Jesus Christ is Lord?

"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so..." (Psalm 107:2 ESV).

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14 ESV).