

The Tongue - Friend or Foe?

This week's discussion will center on the tongue. Please review the following verses from the Proverbs and come prepared to discuss the the questions that follow. The proverbs are grouped by themes but like most proverbs might be applied in a variety of ways. Some address many aspects of the tongue.

We can start by again looking at Proverbs 6:16-19 -- "16 There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: 17 Haughty eyes, **a lying tongue**, And hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, 19 A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers."

Perils or Positives of the Tongue:

Wise or Foolish: 14:3, 15:2, 15:7, 16:23, 18:6-7, 19-1, 23:15-16

Righteous or Wicked: 10:20-21, 10:31-32, 11:11, 12:13-14, 13:2, 15:28, 17:4

Appropriate: 15:23, 16:21, 16:24, 25:11, 27:14

Silence: 10:19, 12:23, 13:3, 17:28, 18:13, 21:23

Controlled: 15:1, 17:27, 25:15

Flattery: 26:28, 28:23, 29:5

Slander or Gossip: 10:18, 11:13, 16:28, 17:9, 18:8, 26:22, 20:19, 26:20

Hurtful: 11:12, 12:18, 15:4, 16:27, 25:23, 26:2

Quarreling: 17:14, 17:19, 20:3, 22:10, 26:21

Lying: 12:19, 12:22, 17:20, 19:5, 19:22, 21:6

Power of Tongue: 18:20-21

I don't feel we should focus only on the Proverbs. There are certainly noteworthy scriptures in the New Testament that reinforce or reiterate the lessons of the Proverbs.

James 3:3-12 -- 3 Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. 4 Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. 5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. 7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. 8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; 10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. 11 Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

1 Timothy 5:13 -- 13 At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention

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Discussion Questions:

1. How can the tongue hurt you?
2. Can the tongue help you?
3. Can the tongue do both at the same time?
4. What should be consider before using the tongue?
5. What do we have today that can be as helpful or hurtful as our tongue and is used in much the same way?