

# Wise Words

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[ 0 : 00 ] So, what are you calling me? I'm just kidding. All right, if you've got your Bible, go to Proverbs.

Proverbs chapter 15. Proverbs chapter 15 is where we'll begin this evening. We're in a series, kind of a mini summer series on the power and importance of words.

Taking a break from the book of Exodus, and the plan is to pick that back up when we're in our new facility. So, we've been kind of jumping around, looking at different passages that address what is a very, very important topic in the Bible.

It is one that we tend to dismiss as being insignificant. We don't really think our words matter that much, and yet the Bible talks about how important it is in what we say.

And that's why that song we just sang, The Jesus Way, we've done that a couple of times now because I think it's a very fitting song for this series, that we want to be the kind of people that speak the way Jesus would speak, that our words would be guided by Him.

[ 1 : 27 ] And of course, we don't get that right all the time, but we want to grow in this area of our life. Amen? And so, we've been looking at this topic. We looked at what the Apostle Paul said in Ephesians chapter 4, where it says, let what?

No, let no corrupt talk come out of your mouths, but only, that is the only talk that is good for building up as it fits the occasion.

And here's why. Because we want to be a gospel people, we want to be a Jesus people. We want to give grace to those that we're talking to, those that hear.

And so, that's what the Apostle Paul said. Two weeks ago, we looked at what James, the brother of Jesus said. And tonight, we're going to return to the book of Proverbs. The reason is, did you realize, this is a little Bible trivia so you can look smart at parties, that the number one topic the book of Proverbs addresses, more than any other topic aside from wisdom itself, the number one issue Proverbs addresses is your mouth, your tongue, your words.

It wants to instruct us how to use our words wisely. In fact, another little trivia, there's almost 150 Proverbs on our mouth, on our speech alone, and we're going to look at every one of them tonight.

[ 2 : 56 ] So, I hope you get comfortable for a while. No, we're not going to look at all 150. But listen, that's how important God thinks our words are, that in the book of wisdom, he speaks on that topic more than any other topic aside from wisdom itself.

So, we're going to begin this journey tonight working through some Proverbs of how to be wise with our words. Anybody want to be more wise with your words?

Yeah, kind of a relevant topic. So, Proverbs 15 will be the launching point, but we're going to be all over the place tonight, and I'll explain why in just a moment. So, if you're able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word.

In Proverbs 15, we're going to read down through verse 7. Notice this. A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of the fools pour out folly. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

[ 4 : 10 ] A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit. A fool despises his father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.

In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, but trouble befalls the income of the wicked. The lips of the wise spread knowledge, not so the hearts of fools.

Over and over again, the Proverbs is addressing the words of the wise, the tongue of the wise. Let's pray and ask God to teach us tonight. Lord, as you've been doing over these many weeks this summer on this topic, you've been instructing us from your Word about our words.

And once again, we come before you under the authority of your Word. And we ask God that you would teach us tonight. Continue to help us learn how we can grow in this area, become more like Jesus, the true Word, the ultimate Word, and the way that we talk.

And so this time is yours. Come and talk to us now, we pray. In Jesus' name and God's people said, Amen. Amen. Amen. You can be seated. Honk if you love Jesus.

[ 5 : 32 ] That's what the bumper sticker said. It was actually a story that my youth pastor told me when I was a teenager about his mom. And he told me this story about a time when his mom was driving behind this individual that had a honk if you love Jesus bumper sticker.

You ever seen one of those? Well, she saw that bumper sticker and she was a Christian. She loved Jesus a lot. And so she thought, I might as well honk. And so she honked.

And I mean, she laid on that horn for several seconds because she really loved Jesus. She didn't think anything about it until just a few seconds later, she decides to pass the guy.

He rolls down his window and with a, I don't know, certain finger lets her know he thinks she's number one, if you catch my drift, right?

Now, I thought about that story when I came across a research study. This was so interesting to me. Conducted by Colorado State University on the topic of road rage.

[ 6 : 38 ] This might get a little uncomfortable tonight, okay? So it was on road rage and the study researched different variables that lead people to express road rage.

And one of the interesting conclusions they came to is that people who have bumper stickers on their car are more likely to express rage.

In fact, the more bumper stickers they have, the more likely they are to experience or express rage. So, Faith Family, be very careful around these people, okay?

If you're driving behind them, maybe go a different way, okay? Not only was that interesting, but what was also interesting in the study is it didn't matter the content of the bumper sticker.

So it didn't matter if the bumper sticker said honk if you love Jesus or honk if you're Amish. And that's funny. If you don't get that, like really?

[ 7 : 38 ] The Amish don't drive automobiles. They drive horse and buggy. You can't honk a horse. Okay, anyways, all right. It didn't matter if the bumper sticker said coexist or my kid beat up your honor student.

It didn't matter if the bumper sticker said be kind to animals or my favorite, so many cats, so few recipes. Right? It didn't matter.

It didn't matter. That is true, by the way. That is, there's not many recipes. Anyway, it didn't matter if it said vote Trump or vote Obi-Wan Kenobi because he's our only hope.

Didn't matter. Had no difference as to what the content of the bumper sticker was. Now, when I first came across this, I thought, this is silly. This really doesn't make a lot of sense.

But then the study indicated why. And it made sense to me. They said the reason most people have bumper stickers on their car is because they want to express their self.

[ 8 : 41 ] They want to express their view. They want you to know that they're the kind of person that supports this or that. They're the kind of person that believes this or believes that.

And what they said was, listen, that that urge to want to express yourself is the same urge, if you're not careful, that will tip over into rage.

And that's a real issue whether or not you have a bumper sticker on your car or not. Amen? You and I, and we know this, are living in what I call an age of rage.

The desire to speak your mind, to express yourself, to make sure everybody knows your opinion on everything, whether they want it or not, is at an all-time high.

And the pictures of this are everywhere. People will fill the streets wanting to express their views and express their opinions about a particular topic. Anger fills our meetings, and meetings can so easily erupt into chaos.

[ 9 : 51 ] Social media allows people to say anything they want to say, whether they know anything about the issue or not. You just take your social media and you just dive into a topic, even though you only have four followers and no one really cares.

But we think we have an opinion on the matter, and we want to express it. Hateful words spoken to people we love.

Gossip and slander that divides and destroys. Gossip and slander that divides.

Gossip and slander that divides. anyone, anyone in this room or listening online that doesn't stumble in what he or she says, well, then you're perfect. In fact, you're able to bridle your entire body. James is saying we all struggle with this. No one is perfect in the area of our words, and that is exactly why we need wisdom. We need wisdom when it comes to our words, and there is no better place to turn to learn how to be wise with our words than the book of Proverbs. In fact, God in his grace has given us a wisdom book that, as I said earlier, addresses the topic of words, our mouth, our tongue, more than any other topic aside from wisdom itself. So that's what we're going to look at tonight. Now, before we dive in, I want to say a few things about the book of Proverbs just on its own, because most of you have heard me teach a lot, and you know if you've heard me teach very much at all, I'm a big advocate. I think everybody should be. I'm a big advocate of understanding the passage correctly.

You with me? You got to know the context. You got to know everything around. Like, you don't just parachute in, pluck out a verse, and build something on it. No, you got to understand everything around it so that you can get the verse right, get the passage right. And one of the things I talk about all the time is the genre of a book. I've said this a thousand times. Let's make it a thousand and one.

[ 12 : 31 ] You do not, please do not treat every book of the Bible the same in terms of how you interpret it. The reason is, is every book is in a different type of genre. Some of the books are history. Some of the books are epistles. Some of the books are wisdom literature. Some of the books are prophetic and apocalyptic genre, and on and on and on. Some of the books are parables. And you have to approach those genres in a different way, because they all have their own different rules. Are you with me? Say yes.

I've said that a thousand and one times now, and I will continue to say it, because if you're going to get the passage right, you have to understand the literature, the genre. Well, Proverbs is wisdom literature, and it's unique compared to other types of genre in the Bible. Now, I could actually do a whole class tonight on understanding wisdom literature in the ancient Near East, but I'm not going to do that. I'm just going to give you two things that will help you when you come into the book of Proverbs to understand how wisdom literature works. Here's the first. Proverbs will often appear like they contradict each other. Proverbs, like one proverb up against another proverb, will seem like it contradicts. Let me give you maybe the easiest and most obvious example. Look here at Proverbs chapter 26 and verse 4. It says, answer, everybody say it, not. Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. Now, look at the very next verse. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes. So which is it? Do you answer a fool according to his folly or not? And the answer is yes. You see? Listen, that's the point of wisdom.

Lean in here. There are times when it's, listen, wise to answer a fool according to his folly, and there's times when it's wise to not answer a fool according to his folly, and that's the point of wisdom literature. Life is not formulaic. Have you learned that? One size does not fit all when it comes to living life, and Proverbs is trying to give you the wisdom that you've got to learn the skill to respond in different situations. So that's not a contradiction. That's real life, and that's what Proverbs is teaching us to do. Maybe if you want to remember how Proverbs works, the best way to remember it is the words of that. He's passed now, but the theologian by the name of Kenny Rogers.

You got to know when to hold up. You can sing along if you want. Know when to walk away. Know when to run. You never count your money. When you're sitting at the table, there'll be time enough for counting. When the deal is done.

That's Proverbs, and you shouldn't be some of your clapping for Kenny Rogers. Woo-hoo, yeah. Now, you got a redneck preacher. You should not be surprised by that illustration, but you're going to remember that now. What Proverbs is trying to say is here's the thing you got to learn in life. You ready? This is important with your mouth. You got to know when to hold them and know when to fold them. You got to know when to walk away. You got to know when to run.

[16:02] You never, no, I'm just kidding, all right? So that's the whole point of wisdom is that like I can't approach every situation the exact same way. You see, wisdom is not about having a high education or IQ. Wisdom is learning the skill to make the right decision in the right moment. So that's why when you're reading through Proverbs, there'll be times it looks like it contradicts itself, but it's not contradicting itself because it's teaching you wisdom in life. You with me?

All right, here's the second thing, is that Proverbs are sporadic. Proverbs is sporadic. Have you ever, some of you may be, anybody like read a proverb a day? That's part of like your devotion. A lot of people will do that or have done that before. Have you ever noticed when you're reading through Proverbs, like if you read through one chapter, it will address like 12 different topics? I mean, you're reading along and one verse is about your speech and the next verse is about your money.

The next verse is about relationships. The next verse is about instruction and why you should receive it. It's just like all over the place. There isn't like a chapter on speech and then a chapter on money.

It does, that's not how wisdom literature works. Okay. Think about it this way. And this again, speaks to our life. In a single chapter, you're going to have several topics. Just like in a single day, you deal with several issues. Oh man, somebody say, preach preacher.

Are you learning about Proverbs? It's not like Monday for you is money day. Tuesday is relationship day. Wednesday is words day. No, no, no. You deal with all of that every day. Life is sporadic. You're dealing with multiple issues all the time. And so does Proverbs. It's teaching you how lots of different things come at you and you're to be wise with each of them. And so that's why there's 150 verses on words all spread out through the book of Proverbs. And I'm not, I was teasing about all 150 tonight.

[18:03] I'm just going to try to take a few of them. There's no way I could do a whole series just on the book of Proverbs and our words, but I'm just going to try to pull some things together tonight to help us understand how to be wise with our words. You ready? Here we go. Now that we understand a little bit about the Proverbs, let's jump in. Here's the first thing we need to realize. If you're going to be wise with your words, you need to know that Proverbs says the wise realize what they say matters.

That's where it starts. The wise realize that what they say matters. Now, this is not new. I've addressed this every week on purpose. Part of this is because this is summertime and people are in and out. And so for some of you, this may be the first sermon you've heard in this series and that's fine. And I want you to get this point every single week and it bears repeating that you need to be reminded how powerful your words are. Yes, you, every one of you, your words matter. They carry with them great power.

Proverbs says it this way. Look at Proverbs chapter 12, verse 18. There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the, say it, the tongue of the wise brings healing, right? Rash words are like the thrust of a sword, but the wise person uses their words to bring healing. That is, the Proverbs here are recognize that our tongue is like a weapon. And reckless words can do significant damage. Words have the power to do great destruction in a way that cannot be undone. I know this is a little somewhat graphic, but it's, to get the image, it's like a sword thrust. That your word is like pushing a sword through somebody. And you can pull that sword out, but you don't pull the wound out with it. The wound remains. Like that's the imagery that, that Proverbs is saying. Now, imagine if you walked in here tonight and I just walked up here with like a, you know, one of those big, like Braveheart, you ever seen Braveheart? Big Braveheart sword. And I'm just slinging it around, walking around the whole church, just like throwing it every direction. You'd be like, whoa, everybody get out of here. Okay. What you wouldn't do, listen, listen, you wouldn't do is, you know, that's just his personality. You know, some days he has a bad day and he just like goes around swinging a sword around. No, you'd say like, we need to address that because if that happens much longer, somebody is going to get hurt. Somebody is going to get seriously hurt. Why is it when we're rash with our words, we're like, you know what? That's just his personality. You know what? Some days you just have days where you just got to say stuff. No. Proverbs is saying that's not wise. Wisdom is recognizing your words are like swords. They, they're, it's a weapon. You need to constantly be reminded of the kind of damage that you can do. And listen, if you're taking notes, jot this down.

When I'm talking about words, I'm not just talking about words you say with your mouth. It may be words you type with your fingers. Amen. I mean, I know people that will like say nothing in front of you, but they'll send an email. That's like a dagger. You know, somebody like that. Some of you know, I'm talking like they'll send an email and it'll be a sharp dagger. Then you address that topic. No, no, everything's fine. Everything's cool. Right? Like your emails, a text message, those are still words. And a wise person realizes that this matters. Here's another verse. This was our kicking the series off. Death and life are in the power of the tongue and those who love it will eat its fruit. We talked about just, I'll hit this quickly. You can kill physically with words. Think about how many wars have been started or ended with words. Like literal people that have killed themselves or killed others because of words that was said. You can kill people psychologically.

I told you two weeks ago about the Johnny Cash story when his father, the oldest son, Johnny's brother died. And his father said to him, the devil took the wrong son. And that wounded him in a way that lasted the rest of his life. Listen, our words can shape our identities. They can impact the way we view the world. And listen, words not only kill physically, kill psychologically. Words kill community. Look at what Proverbs 16 verse 28 says. A dishonest man spreads strife and a whisperer, that is a gossip, separates close friends. That is whispering gossip can destroy community. That is why Paul warns against gossip and slander. It's why James says, look at the power of the tongue.

[ 23 : 13 ] Of the damage it can do. Look here at chapter three, verse five. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire. In other words, listen, just as a fire can destroy an entire geographic community, whispering and gossip can destroy an entire family community, church community. Like that's what words do. So a why, the wise person realizes, listen, I've been given a weapon. I've been given something of great power.

I can use this for healing or I can use this for destruction. The wise person realizes the power of this. Some of you may remember fruit farmers in California, this has been several years ago, faced a very serious crisis. It threatened to destroy all of the fruit crop, which is California's, one of their leading things in their economy and also is a majority of the U.S. economy.

And you wonder like what would cause something so catastrophic, something that would cause something that significant in California and even the U.S. You'd think it'd be like a California wildfire, you know, like it's taking place now or, or even like a California earthquake that that is what would have threatened it. But it wasn't any of those. It was this teeny tiny fly. That little insignificant fly threatened to destroy the California economy and the U.S. economy. It was the med fly. And what the med fly does is it attaches to a piece of fruit. It pierces through the skin and lays an egg inside.

That egg then hatches into larva. And what happens is the fruit begins to decay on the inside and eventually falls to the ground and it spreads throughout the entire crop. All because of a little fly. That's the power of your tongue. That is the power. It's just a little word.

You know, I just, I just really need to say this. And the wise realize the importance of what they say. You with me? Notice this, then we'll move on to the next one. The foolish person thinks their words don't matter. A wise person realizes the power of their words. Here's the second thing is the wise also realize that how they speak matters. The wise not only realize that what they speak matters, but how they speak matters. Now, Proverbs has a lot to say about the kinds of words we speak. Are y'all still with me? Okay. You're just taking so many notes. That's what it is, right? There's so much Proverbs says here, and I don't have time to cover it all, but let me just kind of start by something we all would recognize, and it's this. You can say the right thing the wrong way. Amen?

[ 26 : 26 ] You can say the right thing, but you can say it the wrong way. It might be true, but it's not in love. It might be accurate, but it's at the wrong time. It might be needed, but it's not the right context.

It might be important, but the right people aren't there. In other words, what Proverbs is saying is the how matters. It's not just that what you say matters. It's how you say that that matters, and the wise person realizes that how I say something is really important. I want to give you very quickly just five. There's probably 20, but I don't have time for 20, so I'm going to give you five that I've pulled together that Proverbs speaks about in terms of how we speak. Here it is.

Put your seatbelt on because here we go. The wise speak gently. The wise speak gently. Now, this is all over Proverbs 15. Look at chapter 1. A soft answer turns away wrath, which is then compared to a harsh word. Look at verse 4. A gentle tongue is the tree of life. Look at verse 18. A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention. So Proverbs says the wise person speaks gently, that is, softly. Now, don't misunderstand what this means. This is important. Come on, come on. If you've zoned out, what do you do? Zone back in. Zone back in. This is not some kind of namby-pamby pushover, quiet talker, somebody who's just always soft-spoken. No, no, no, no, no, no. No, listen. Notice this on the screen. Gentle words are not a matter of inflection. Gentle words are a matter of intention.

It's not about how loud or soft. I would violate this proverb every time I preach because I preach loud. Amen? It's not about the inflection. It's not saying a soft tongue in terms of a, you're really quiet when you talk. No. It's saying what's the intent that you have these words to do? In fact, notice what Proverbs 25, 15 says. It says, with patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft, that is a gentle tongue, will break a bone. It'll break a bone. So we know gentle and soft here is not in terms of the volume. It's the intent of what the word is wont to do. This Hebrew idiom of break a bone simply means breaking through resistance. So listen to me, faith family. Gentle speech can be pointed, challenging, convictional, but it is said in a way that penetrates the listener for their good.

The language is not motivated to put a person in their place. It's not motivated to prove them wrong. It's not motivated to belittle them. It is motivated by love enough to break through the bone and demonstrate you actually care. Here's how you know when you've spoken gently. Ready? The person you're talking to is going to say, I didn't really want to hear that, but it's obvious to me that person loves me. Amen? That's gentle speech. I didn't want to hear that. That might have been hard to hear, but it wasn't harsh. Somebody say, preach, preacher. That was good. That wasn't even in my notes. Just came to my mind. That may have been hard to hear, but it wasn't harsh. It was gentle and soft in that it was said with the intent of love. Number two, the wise speak graciously. The wise speak graciously.

[ 30 : 18 ] Proverbs 16, 24 says, gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body. This is very similar to what Paul says in Ephesians 4, that we want to speak in such a way that we give grace to those who hear. Now, what is grace? There's a lot of ways we could define grace biblically, but one of the ways is we know grace is getting what we don't deserve. So gracious words are telling people not what they deserve to hear, but what they need to hear. There are times you want to tell somebody what they deserve to hear, but gracious words don't tell people what they deserve to hear, but what they need to hear. Listen, listen. Grace is this. You deserve hell. You need Jesus.

God in his grace gives you Jesus by faith in him. You see, that's gracious words. Oh man, I want to tell you what you deserve to hear. I want to, I want to tell you how the cow ate the cabbage. There's that southern idiom coming back and right. It just always comes up. So my mother's raising, I want to tell you what you deserve, but I need to tell you what you need to hear. That's, that's more important. You deserve hell. You need Jesus. So I'm going to be gracious with the words I say. And the person may say, this was difficult. We disagree on this topic politically. I don't share the convictions that you do. Like we, we, we hashed it out, but it was said gently and graciously. That's how the wise talk. You still with me. Number three, the wise avoid gossip. Oh boy, this is everywhere in the book of Proverbs. Everywhere. I'm just going to give you a few verses that speak to this issue. Proverbs 25 verse 9. Argue your case with your neighbor himself and do not reveal another's secret. Proverbs 11 13. Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets. But he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered. Chapter 20 verse 19. Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets. Therefore do not associate with such a simple babblers. And finally,

Proverbs 26 verse 20. For lack of wood, the fire goes out. And where there is no whisperer, no gossip, quarreling ceases. Oh man, there's so many more verses on gossip in the book of Proverbs.

And we've already talked about how gossip is anti-gospel, right? That you should not talk about someone's personal life without them present. Why? It ain't your business. Amen? It's not your business.

And just think about all the whispering that takes place. You're not going to believe what I heard. And you won't believe what the news is reporting. And it's just whisper, whisper, whisper, whisper. And Proverbs is saying, stop it. A wise person, because they realize the power of their words, and because they realize that how they say things matter, that they avoid gossip. They avoid this kind of whispering. And I've already addressed this a few weeks ago. They avoid associating with people who do.

[ 33 : 42 ] Lack of wood, the fire goes out. Do you know how you stop gossiping? You learn to say, I'm not going to have any part of this conversation. We can talk about something else. How about them Vikings? But we're not talking about this because they're not here, or it's not appropriate, or we're in the right, we're in the wrong space. I'm taking the wood out of this fire so that it will go out.

That's how the wise use their words. Amen? Number four, the wise speak appropriately. The wise speak appropriately. Aren't you glad I'm not doing all 150 tonight? The wise speak appropriately. Here it is, Proverbs 10, 32. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse. This is important. And this takes, remember Proverbs, why I talked about what I talked about earlier in terms of understanding wisdom literature. Wisdom literature is trying to help you gain a skill. You are in school, faith family. This is like wisdom of words class.

And you're saying, okay, I'm not good at this. And I want to learn to be, I want to learn the skill to say appropriate things. Because the lips of the righteous here know what's fitting to say.

Now, early on, maybe you don't, and you have to trial and error. But the goal is to learn of, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. That's probably not the best time to say that. I'm going to know when to hold them, Kenny Rogers. Actually, in this case, I'm going to step in. And I'm going to say, because it's appropriate here, right? Like, for instance, you know, some of you can relate to this. You know, early on, when you're a Christian, and someone loses a loved one, you kind of want to do the, hey, cheer up, everything's going to be okay. Hey, shut up, right? That's not what I want to hear right now.

You know what I'm talking about? They just kind of step in. You know, if you had faith, you wouldn't be struggling like this. But you learn the skill of saying, you know what, right now, I don't need to say anything right now. I just need to be with them. We'll address their bad theology later, because it's probably words of the wind from the book of Job's in any way, like they probably don't even believe what they're saying. They're just hurting. And the wise learns that in this situation, it's fitting to say this, or it's fitting to say nothing. You with me? Here's another verse, Proverbs 25, 11. I love this imagery, right? Look at it, look at it. A word fitly that is appropriately spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Would you like to be an apple of gold in a church of silver? Learn to say the right thing to say. Learn to speak appropriately. Here's one more.

[ 36 : 45 ] I like this one, and then we'll move on, because I think this is interesting at first, but then you have to understand it. Whoever gives an honest answer kisses the lips. What in the world does that mean? Whoever gives an honest answer kisses the lips. In fact, this is the only another Bible trivia.



This is the only place in the Bible the phrase kissing the lips is used. What in the world does this mean? Well, it doesn't mean what you think it means, okay? It's another understanding of Hebrew, because in the ancient Near East, and you're just going to have to understand that this is true in often different cultures, so don't freak out on me, but it's very common. In fact, the Bible talks about greeting one another with a holy kiss. So it's very common in many customs, and certainly in the ancient Near East, that yes, even two guys, if you would greet each other, you would give each other a kiss, and there wouldn't be anything weird about that. That was just the normal custom that everybody with me say yes, but you would kiss according to your status. So if two guys came up to each other, and they were of the same status, they would kiss on the lips. If they were of different status, they would kiss on the cheek. If they were of very significant difference in status, you would bow and not kiss at all. You would bow before that person. Do you understand? So the idea in the ancient Near East is that the kissing on the lips is, listen, getting on the right plane, getting where they are, it's understanding where they're at, and getting to that level so that you can kiss on the lips, not literally, but biblically. In other words, the idea here is, I've got to, somebody say, preach, preacher,

I've got to learn how to best communicate with you at your level in a way that you can receive it based on the context you're in so that I can kiss on the lips. That is, that is say what needs to be said in a way that would be healing to you, in a way that would actually be helpful to you. Oh man.

I mean, can anybody think of examples of this? Like, can you imagine a couple? Anybody? You came from a family that was very direct with your words. I mean, you didn't hold anything back. You just say what's ever on your mind. Anybody? Don't point. All right? Say, and then there's others of you. You came from a family that was very tight with what your feelings were. You didn't express. So what happens if you enter into a relationship and you expect her or you expect him to always communicate the way you do? Good luck with that. No, you know this. What's a part of learning to communicate? It's learning. How do I talk to you?

How do I speak to you in a way that you will understand? That's the idea of kissing on the lips. Or parents with children, okay? Do you just sit down and use big words that your kids don't understand?

[ 39 : 38 ] Or do you learn to adapt your language in a way that they can understand? That's what Proverbs is saying. The wise learn to speak appropriately, fittingly, aptly. They kiss on the lips in a way of trying to, I want to learn the skill, listen, of how to talk to you. Can you imagine? I know I got to move on for the sake of time, but right here, can you imagine how much progress would be made in our culture, much less even our churches, if we learned that alone? I'm going to take the time to learn how to communicate appropriately to you. And what is wise with you may not be wise with you because we all communicate in different ways. Amen? Here's the last one. And that is the wise speak cautiously.

The wise speak cautiously. Maybe this one alone would be the most helpful to apply. Look at what Proverbs says in chapter 10, verse 19. When words are many, the preacher needs to stop here for just a moment, right? When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent. That is, the more you speak, the more likely you are to harm. Proverbs 17, verse 28 says, even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise. When he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.

You know, one of the smartest things you could do is just hush. You'd look a lot smarter if you said a lot less. It's what Proverbs is saying. Now listen, Proverbs is not saying never talk. Like some of you guys are going to be like, this is awesome. This is the best news ever because I am never going to talk again. I'm just going to grunt. That is not what Proverbs is saying here at all. It's not saying you should never talk. We need words. Communication is important. The point is be guarded. That is, when you speak, make sure you're ready to speak. When you speak, be cautious about what it is you're going to say. Not don't ever speak, but be cautious about this. One more, Proverbs 21, 23, whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble. Just be cautious. Okay? Now just think about these five. I'm just scratching the surface of what gently, graciously, not whispering with gossip, cautiously, appropriately. Can you imagine how much your communication would change? How better your relationships would be if you just took those five, much less all the other ones in Proverbs and appropriated them to your words? And again, this is just scratching the surface. In fact, if you want a homework assignment, do this. Here's what you got the rest of the summer. Take the rest of the summer.

Do a study on the book of Proverbs just on the topic of words. And in addition to these five, see what else you learn, not just that what you say matters, but how you say it matters. And see what God might teach you about your words. Here's the last point and we're done. You with me? All right.

Last point. Because this is the most important point. The wise realize how much the heart matters.

[ 43 : 17 ] It's not just what I say matters. It's not just how I say matters, but that the heart matters. I want you to think about the five we looked at tonight. And again, there's more. What if at the end of the day, you took inventory? Every day you stopped before you went to bed and you just said, okay, I'm going to evaluate all of my conversation, text, email, verbal. I'm going to look at all of it. Were my words gentle, gracious? Did I avoid gossip? Were they appropriate? Were they cautious? Most of us would fail that test every single day. I would. We would fail that test. And that's just with five categories, much less all the others in Proverbs. So what are we going to do about the fact that James talks about that we struggle so much in this area? Well, Proverbs shows us a clue as to how we grow in this area. Okay. Just give me a moment. I think you're going to enjoy this. You with me? You give me a minute or two. This is important. Okay. This is a connection that's already been made by James.

It was ultimately made by Jesus. So we've talked about this, but notice how it appears in Proverbs as well. The heart of the wise makes his speech right. In other words, once again, you get this connection that we've seen all over the Bible between the heart and the tongue. That is the heart of the wise impacts the right speech. And so we see this in Proverbs and we think, okay, we see the connection.

The heart impacts the speech, which is what I've said every week, namely this, that words are not a mouth problem. They're a heart problem. Words are not a mouth problem. They're a heart problem. Jesus said, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. So the question we've been asking every week is, then how do I get better with my words? How do I get more wise with the words I speak?

And I told you two weeks ago, it is not by trying harder. It is not, I'm just going to do better with my words. Okay. That'll work for a day or two, maybe a week, but you're ultimately going to fail.

I told you two weeks ago, it starts with abiding in Jesus, who is the ultimate word. In the beginning was the word. Jesus is the, he's the true and ultimate word. So the only way my words are ever going to be ultimately like him is to abide in the word. It's not, I'm going to focus on my words.

[ 46 : 08 ] It's, I'm going to focus on the word. The more I focus on Jesus, we've talked about this. He's the true vine. As I'm abiding in him, his life comes out of me. So I don't change my words by focusing on my words. I change my words by abiding in the word. And as I abide in the word, that impacts my words.

That's how it works. But I want to take it a little bit further because it's not just abiding in Jesus. There's another part of this that's really important too. I'm going to read a verse. I'm going to connect some dots and then we're done. Okay. I think you're going to enjoy this. Look at Ephesians chapter one, verse 17, particularly in light of what we've talked about tonight with Proverbs. Hang with me.

We don't like much. And that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory may give you the, I want everybody to say it, the spirit of wisdom. Huh? So the Holy spirit in Ephesians one 17 is called the spirit of wisdom. Now that's interesting because I've just spent the whole night talking about how to be wise with your words out of Proverbs. And Paul identifies the spirit as the spirit of wisdom. Here's the point. Lean in and listen. You don't have the ability to walk in wisdom when it comes to your words. You have to be filled with the spirit of wisdom.

To be wise with your words. Not only do you have to abide in the word, Jesus, to impact your words, but if I want my words to be wise, that's not going to come out of my own intellect. That's going to come out of being filled with the spirit of wisdom. And as I'm filled with the spirit of wisdom, my words will be more wise. Are you tracking with me? Let me give you one example and I'm done. Somebody say, preach preacher. What happened in Acts chapter two, the day of Pentecost, the spirit of God came down and filled them. And what did it impact their speech? They actually spoke in a tongue that is a language properly understood. This was not gibberish. This was not something random. They spoke in an actual language that the listeners. There was no chaos on that day. There was no confusion on that day. They spoke in a language with words. Everybody around them understood it. Everybody around them were encouraged and people around them were saved. The spirit came down, impacted their speech. There was clarity and salvation. You still with me? What was Acts chapter two, a reversal of? The tower of Babel.

Genesis chapter two, a reversal of? Genesis chapter two, a reversal of? Genesis chapter two, a reversal of? Humanity was filled not with the spirit of God. They were full of themselves. And they wanted to express themselves. They wanted to build a tower up to the heavens. They wanted to make much of self and pride self-expression. And what did that impact their tongue? And they began to speak in different languages and no one understood. And there was confusion. And there was chaos. And there was separation. Listen to me.

[ 49 : 56 ] On one occasion, the people spoke and understood, were encouraged, and were saved. On another occasion, people spoke and were confused and divided. And what was the difference? Somebody say, preach, preacher.

Here it is. Lord, help us. In Genesis 11, their hearts were full of pride and the desire of self. In Acts two, their hearts were full of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of wisdom. Listen, Proverbs is right.

The heart makes the speech right. The heart, oh man, Lord, help us see this. The heart makes the speech right. So the question is, what is the heart full of? Because if it is full of self, I'm going to say whatever I want to say. I'm going to let you know my opinion whether you want it or not. I'm going to shoot this email. I'm going to send that thing. And what does it cause? Division and hurt and confusion.

But when the heart is full of the spirit, the spirit of wisdom, it impacts the way you speak. And it brings unity. And it brings clarity. And it might even bring salvation.

The heart of the wise makes the speech right. Come on, y'all. Come on.

[ 51 : 34 ] Lord, we are living in an age of rage. An age of rage in our culture.

The desire for self-expression and saying whatever I want to say, whenever I want to say it. Stirring up division and killing one another with our words.

We need to be reminded through this little simple series this summer that we are followers of the word. Not just God's word, but Jesus who is the word. Look at Hebrews chapter one, verse one.

Long ago and at many times in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son. Jesus is the true and ultimate word of God. And our words should reflect him. He is, after all, the man that in the moment of cultural rage, when everybody around him was screaming, everybody around him was sharing their opinion, everybody around him was shouting out their own desires. Jesus didn't lose sight of his mission. And in that moment, faith family, when Jesus was hanging on the cross, he knew there was something in this world more important than self-expression.

He knew what was most important was your salvation. Remember that. When you speak.

[ 53 : 23 ] Let's pray. Lord, thank you for the wisdom of the book of Proverbs and just how practical it is. This is a skill we need to learn to navigate life. Every one of us needs to learn this skill. And it starts not with a class on our words. It starts with a class on our heart. And knowing that we need to be a people filled with the spirit of wisdom that we might speak wisely, gently and graciously, not whispering, appropriately, cautiously. These are things we can't do on our own.

And so we pray, Lord, that as we walk by the spirit, that we would see significant growth in the way we use our words. Help us tonight understand that what we say matters, how we say matters, and our heart, most importantly, matters. Because it's the heart of the wise that makes the speech right.

So, Lord, help us now as we enter in time of communion and remembrance, as we think about, as we have every single week, how Jesus used his words even on the cross. In the moment of rage, it was, Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.

Let's think on that as we enter into a time of reflection. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.