THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Topical studies in Proverbs - Words & Speech

The power of words

- The book of Proverbs emphasizes the power of words to do good or do evil, to heal or to harm, to create or destroy (10:11; 11:9; 12:18; 15:4; 16:24; 18:21).
- True words & honest speech put us in touch with the real world, with the way things really are. Foolish speech & false words distort our perception, foster delusion, & lead us astray (12:17, 19; 16:13; 18:13; 25:11, 18; 26:28; 29:5, 12).
- Words of knowledge, insight, instruction, and discipline are the medium of wisdom (1:20-21; 2:1-5; 4:1-5; 5:1-2; 6:20-23; 8:1-11; 9:9; 10:17).

Notes & Questions:	

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Speech, character, and the "heart"

- Persons' words and speech reveal who they are —their hearts or inner being. (10:20; 12:23; 16:23; 20:15; see Mt. 12:34). This is true even when the foolish or wicked speak with deceptively charming or flattering words (2:16; 5:3; 26:23-26).
- Controlling one's speech is a key characteristic of the wise person (10:19; 11:12; 12:23a; 13:3; 17:27-28; 18:13; 21:23; 29:11b), as rash & hasty speech is a characteristic of the foolish person (12:16, 23b; 15:2, 28; 29:11a). (see James 3:1-12)

Notes & Questions:		

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Foolish speech and harmful words:

- Lies
 - Lies are knowing, willful deception. A liar knows the truth but chooses to misrepresent & distort it for selfish or underhanded motives (12:5b, 17, 20a; 14:5, 25).
 - God hates liars (6:19)
 - Lies cause trouble (29:12), damage others (15:4b; 25:18), and destroy those who spread them (19:5, 9; 21:28).
- Slander & Insults
 - Slander & insults can be based on lies or rumors, or by betraying confidences and sharing private information (10:18; 20:19; 25:9).
 - Mockers who slander & insult disrupt a community (22:10).

Notes & Questions:							

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Foolish speech and harmful words:

- Gossip
 - Gossip is tempting & pervasive (18:8; 26:22).
 - Gossip leads to dissension, division, & quarrels (16:28; 26:20)
- Quarreling
 - Being quarrelsome is an outward sign of inward pride & foolishness (13:10; 17:19; 20:3; 22:10).
 - Quarrels lead to disputes & strife (17:14; 26:21).
- Flattery & Boasting (7:21-22; 26:28; 28:23; 29:5; 27:1-2)
 - Flattery is manipulative; we should both avoid & beware of it.
 - Boasting is self-glorifying, self-flattery, a sign of pride & ego.

Notes & Questi	ions:			

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Wise speech and healing words

- The wise use words sparingly, thoughtfully, and fittingly (10:19; 11:12; 13:3; 15:23; 17:28; 21:23).
- The wise man will always speak with honesty & truth (8:6-9; 13:5; 14:5, 25; 16:13).
- The wise man avoids foolish & harmful forms of speech; his words will promote harmony & healing. (4:20-22; 10:11a, 21a; 12:18b; 15:4a, 30; 16:24).

Notes & Questions:			