

POWER OF WORDS

Friday, January 16

Reading: Proverbs 12

Proverbs 12:22 *The LORD detests lying lips, but He delights in people who are trustworthy.*

Why does the subject of our words come up so often in this book?

“Proverbs winds the theme of words through its chapters just like words wind their way through the days of our lives... God created the world by speaking words. In His image we speak and make things with words... we humans are word-creatures like our Maker. Jesus is the Word – the Word made flesh (John 1:1, 14). No wonder Proverbs highlights the life-and-death power of words.”¹

TEACHING WORDS – This chapter begins with “discipline.” We do not like to be told that we are wrong, but the wise person loves correction because they want to know and do what is right (12:1; 13:1). They “choose their friends carefully” so as not to be led astray by bad advice (12:26). Unlike the foolish who think they are always right, the wise listen to advice and are open to sound council and even rebuke. They have a teachable spirit (12:15). Are you a “know-it-all” or are you open to being taught?

HELPFUL WORDS – Unlike the wicked who use their words to attack others, the wise person’s words bring help (12:6). They are filled with good thoughts and good intentions (12:14). When insulted wise people know how to hold their tongue while the foolish retaliate against a perceived wrong (12:16). The wise don’t need to “put in their two cents” on everything, while the foolish “blurts out folly” (12:23).

“He has learned not only what to say, to whom to say it, and how to say it, but especially when to say it. The fool gives himself away. Thinking he is the fountainhead of wisdom he opines on every subject, revealing how little he really knows.”²

HEALING WORDS – Reckless words are compared to a sword that pierces and kills. The wise use their words to bring healing (12:18). Kind words are also the cure for anxiety (12:25). Anxiety is the fear of loss, fear of the future, fear of the uncertainties of life. These can “weigh down the heart” and even cause physical and emotional problems. A wise person will come alongside struggling people and comfort them.

TRUSTWORTHY WORDS – A wise person will always tell the truth (12:17, 19). While a lie may be convenient at the moment to get you out of trouble, it will eventually lead to destruction. More lies will be told to cover the original lie until you are trapped in a web of lies from which you cannot escape (12:13). The truth will always stand the test of time. There is no need to worry about what you have said in the past. “The truth can stand on its own two feet! It requires nothing to prop it up.”³ Proverbs again uses the words “detest” and “delight” (12:22) when speaking of God’s opinion of telling the truth. Can people trust what you say is true? Would God delight in the things you have said today?

¹ Kathleen Nielson. Proverbs for You, p. 111, 115)

² A. J. Higgins. What the Bible Teaches: Proverbs (Ritchie Old Testament Commentaries), p. 143

³ A. J. Higgins, 141