

# The Tool in Everyone's Mouth

LIFEFAITHFUSION  
DEVOTIONAL  
DAY THREE

## SCRIPTURE STUDY

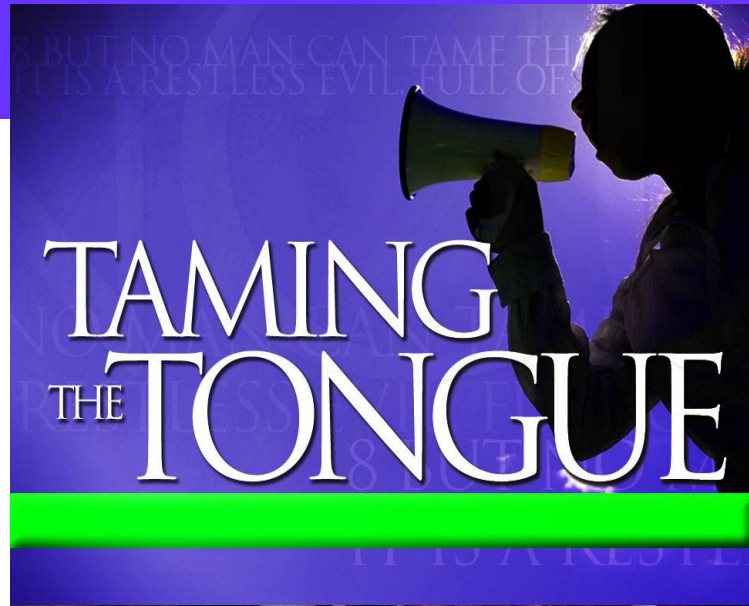
Proverbs 6:2-3  
James 3:5-10  
Proverbs 18:6-7  
Psalm 101  
Matthew 23  
Proverbs 6:16-17  
Proverbs 11:3  
Proverbs 26:7,9  
Proverbs 12:18  
John 8:44.

## DIGGING DEEPER

Kings and priests were anointed by God for their calling. The Levites used anointing oil to consecrate the temple implements to God. James further instructs the elders of the church to use anointing oil to pray for the sick. Proverbs 12:18 states that kind words are like healing oil.

## PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,  
Help me weigh my words that they may bring glory to you and grace to others.  
Amen



## WORDS CAN HURT

Keeping in mind that speech itself is a divine gift which we seem to use and abuse, let's examine how Proverbs provides guidance for the tool in our mouths. In Proverbs 26:7 and 9, King Solomon calls the words of a fool useless (like a lame man's legs) and destructive (like a piercing thorn in the hand). In Proverbs 12:18, the king contrasts negative speech that inflicts piercing wounds, with positive speech that provides healing oil. As you begin this study, *pray* that with God's help you can identify negative speech patterns and begin to speak with grace and truth.

Words can create or break friendships, bring laughter or tears, even start wars. Solomon writes that **lying words** can be a destructive force in our lives. Man, in his fallen nature, does not have to learn to speak untrue words. He began to lie in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3:4, Satan, the serpent in the Garden of Eden, lied to Eve about the consequences of disobeying God. He assured her she would not die if she ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. When God gave the ten commandments to Moses, He simply said: "No lies about your neighbor." Exodus 20:16 (MSG) Jesus, in John 8:44, called Satan the father of lies, and as unregenerate men, we naturally "bend the truth."

"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

One of the seven detestable things to the Lord is a lying tongue. According to Proverbs 6:16-17, God hates pride, lies, and murder. It is humbling to understand that lying and murdering are in the same company in this passage. None of us would consider killing someone-but lying somehow seems more palatable. Haven't we all been tempted to temper the truth to avoid conflict, pacify relationships, or flatter ourselves? We hurt ourselves and others by lying, even when we think the truth would be more painful. Lying only postpones the truth. In Proverbs 12:22, Solomon assures us:

“The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful.” (NIV)

- How does lying hide, twist or misrepresent truth and lead others away from truth?
- Can you think of a time when you confessed a lie, and God blessed you for “owning up to your mistake?”
- What situations do you face that are the most difficult to tell the truth? List them here. Ask God to give you the grace to be a person of integrity.

#### HYPOCRISY REVEALED

Ancient potters had a written guarantee for their wares. If a pot emerged from the firing with no cracks, the potter claimed that it was “sine cera”, or without wax. You see, some crooked craftsmen would camouflage their defective pottery by filling the cracks with wax. A “sine cera” container would withstand heat when used as cookware. A cracked pot would not. We must live our lives “without wax.” A hypocrite speaks one way, and acts another. On the surface, a hypocrite looks pretty good. Underneath the surface, we discover a hidden life with cracks in the foundation. Hypocritical words are decried by Solomon as destructive lies.

“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.” Proverbs 11:3 (NIV)

Some of Jesus' most scathing words were said to the Pharisees as He painted a portrait of their hypocrisy. Matthew 23 contains the seven “woes” or judgments that Jesus pronounced over the Pharisees. He called them “white-washed tombs” in verse 27, indicating their lives appeared to be clean and filled with life on the outside, but dead and rotting on the inside. Duplicitous words are repugnant to God. In James 3:9–10, James denounces hypocritical speech:

“With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.” (NIV)

- Spend some time evaluating your words. Are your words about yourself truthful? Do you portray yourself to others as you really are, how you really feel, what you really think? Why or why not?
- Do you think that times of pressure or stress make it even harder to control what you say? Why?
- Spend some time reading Psalm 101. List the qualities a sincere man or woman possesses. Write them on the back of this sheet.

## THOUGHTLESS WORDS

Broken bones heal more quickly than wounds inflicted by a malicious tongue. More painful than “sticks and stones,” cruel words can last a lifetime. Conversely, timely words aptly spoken can contribute to comfort and healing. In Proverbs 16:24, King Solomon describes pleasant words as sweet, nourishing, and healing:

“Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” (NIV)

Never underestimate the power of words. Solomon didn't. He warns us that the **tongue can get us and others into a lot trouble**. Just as one spark can ignite a deadly forest fire, our small tongues can wreak disastrous consequences:

“A fool's lips bring him strife, and his mouth invites a beating. A fool's mouth is his undoing, and his lips are a snare to his soul.” Proverbs 18:6-7 (NIV)

James provides the most vivid biblical picture of the effects of malicious, evil words in his letter. In James 3:5-6, he writes:

“Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.” (NIV)

Wise King Solomon warns that we will become more careful with our speech if we realize the ramifications of our words. Thoughtless words are like a pebble thrown into a pond that causes waves emanating in concentric circles for a great distance. Poorly chosen words stir up dissension. Washington Irving said that “a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use.” Pray today that your tongue will develop the soft edges which help build unity in relationships. A humble, repentant heart goes a long way to heal wounding words. Solomon urges us to repent and rectify our careless words in Proverbs 6:2-3:

“If you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth, then do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands: Go and humble yourself; press your plea with your neighbor!” (NIV)

- When has your tongue gotten you into trouble with another person? Explain. How did you “press your plea with your neighbor”?
- Who do you know that speaks wisely and carefully? What qualities do they demonstrate? What can you learn from them?
- Spend some time praying each day this week for God to give you positive, healing words. Ask Him to remind you of those you know that need your encouragement and blessing. List them here.

### APPLYING THE SCRIPTURES:

Summarize the key verses below. What do you learn about wise speech and honest living? Write your observations on the back of this sheet.

Proverbs 6:2-3, James 3:5-10, Proverbs 18:6-7, Psalm 101, Matthew 23, Proverbs 6:16-17, Proverbs 11:3, Proverbs 26:7,9, Proverbs 12:18, John 8:44.