

Read: Proverbs 17**Key Verses:** Proverbs 17:27–28**Reflect:**

Our words have power. If you've known someone for more than one day, you've probably experienced the pain of an untimely critique that hit you in the soul. Or maybe you've been the one speaking harsh words to someone else. All throughout the book of Proverbs, Solomon shows us that what and how we say things is a matter of wisdom and maturity.

The wise among us are those who don't feel the need to speak on everything they hear. Instead, they listen and process before they speak. Have you ever gotten yourself into trouble because you were too quick to speak? This occurs often in the context of relationships, where we start talking and our words get away from us. We embrace wisdom when we resist the urge to speak and we choose, instead, to measure our words. In verse 28, Solomon tells us that even someone who is foolish appears wise if they choose to stay silent. While you may not be a fool, you have likely said many foolish things. The wisdom of Scripture calls us to measure our words and, in doing so, we appear wise. But appearing wise is not the only benefit. Staying silent will minimize our sin because we will not feel the urge to continue in a sinful and unwise conversation. This is a matter of self-control. The gospel is for all of us who do not have a great deal of self-control. We are no longer controlled by our sinful impulsivity, but by the Spirit of God in our hearts giving us the ability to restrain our words and listen.

Action Steps:

1. *When you listen to someone, what does it communicate to that person about his or her value?*
2. *In what situations do you need to listen more than speak?*
3. *Pray that you would take time to stop and listen today, to God and to others.*

Read: Proverbs 18

Key Verse: Proverbs 18:10

Reflect:

When Solomon wrote many of the Proverbs, he wrote them to his son that would undoubtedly face many types of scenarios in his upcoming life. One thing was certain: Solomon's son would have good and bad times, make good and bad decisions, and have successful and unsuccessful years. To help his son continuously take his next best step regardless of the good and bad around him, he gave him nuggets of wisdom to guide his life and keep him safe. This scripture shows us three truths that we can rest in.

1. I can be confident in the Lord - I have nothing to fear when I run to Jesus.
2. I can rely on the Lord - Jesus is our strong tower in the midst of trouble.
3. I can trust in the Lord - We can trust in the promises of God.

Prayer:

“Lord, when life is good and when life is bad, may I always run to You, my strong tower and safe place. In Jesus Name, Amen.”

Read: Proverbs 19**Key Verses:** Proverbs 19:20–21**Reflect:**

Have you ever received really bad advice? Maybe you've heard something like, "you only live once" or "follow your heart." In the book of Proverbs, Solomon often shares wisdom about giving and receiving advice.

In verse 20, he encourages us to, "listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future." It's important to note that Solomon isn't telling us to listen to just any advice. Instead, we should seek advice from godly counsel and take the time to verify that it's consistent with scripture. Though it's not always easy, receiving godly counsel is healthy for our walk with Christ, because it provides an opportunity to gain wisdom down the road. James affirms this by saying that, "if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (1:5). If we want to grow spiritually, we need to make a habit of both listening to godly counsel and seeking wisdom from God.

Have you ever regretted following someone's advice? Do you find it difficult to accept godly instruction? What godly advice have you previously rejected that you should listen to? When was the last time you asked for God to give you wisdom in a situation? In what areas of your life have you relied on your plans instead of God's? How can you release control and allow God to direct your paths?

Prayer:

"God, thank you for giving me your Word and helping me to live by your Spirit. Help me to listen and seek out godly wisdom from those who you have placed in my life. Remind me daily of your plans and give me a humble spirit to set aside my plans. Continue to draw me close to you and to share your love with others. In your name, I pray, Amen. "

Read: Proverbs 20

Key Verses: Proverbs 20:6–7

Reflect:

As we journey through life we are leaving a legacy, whether good or bad. The way we live our life today affects our children. Are we leaving a legacy that will help our children develop into the next Christian leaders? It should be our hope that one day our children will say that we tried our best to lead them on the path of Jesus, but we can take comfort in knowing that our heavenly Father will not let them down.

The two words from verses 6 and 7 that will help you in everyday life are the words, “faithful and integrity.” Being faithful can be described as being loyal, dedicated, and devoted. Ask yourself a question. Are you a faithful person? Would people around you consider you a faithful person? Integrity can be described as having moral principles and being honest at all costs. Integrity is something that takes a lifetime to prove and one decision to ruin. Are you a person of integrity? Would people around you think of you as a person of integrity?

Prayer:

“God, help me be a person of integrity. Help me to be forever faithful to you as you are forever devoted and faithful to your children. In your name, I pray, Amen.”

Read: Proverbs 21

Key Verse: Proverbs 21:23

Reflect:

We all know our mouth can get the best of us. Maybe it's a word spoken when someone cuts us off in I-26 traffic. Or when we've had a long day at work or school and a family member does something that pushes us over the edge. Or when we're tired but we see a friend's political social media post that we feel must be countered with our blunt opinion on the matter. Sadly, not only do these situations reflect poorly on us personally, but they usually give us less ability to speak the Gospel message into others' lives.

So how do we take control of our mouth? Practically speaking, this can look like waiting to respond until the next day, or taking time to simmer down when we're in a heated "conversation" with our spouse, coworkers, or classmates. During this waiting time, consider seeking wise counsel (Proverbs 27:17) and consult scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17), as they both provide wisdom in how we should react to the situation. We should feel free to participate in many of the tough conversations we face, but it should always be done while we are in control of our words, and not the other way around.

Prayer:

"God please let me control my tongue, and let the words that come out of my mouth glorify you. Let me be slow to speak and quick to listen throughout my day. Amen."