

Becoming a Woman of Proverbs

THE SOURCE
OF HER WORDS





Proverbs

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Bubbles, those rainbow iridescent floating objects of a child's delight, can be an excellent instrument to teach the importance of our words. Give a group of children bottles of bubbles and tell them to blow to their heart's content. After a few minutes, ask the children to gather the bubbles and put them back into the bottles—quite an impossible task. Just like the bubbles, our words (good or bad), once spoken, cannot be taken back.

All of us have been the recipient of hurtful words at some time in our lives and probably if we are honest, the perpetrator of some of those words. Yes, I said perpetrator (killer, murderess, assassin, butcher, executioner). I could go on with the synonyms, but you get the idea. Ouch and double ouch! Where do those hurtful words come from? Why do they flow from our lips so easily at times?

Let's study the Proverbs again this week to see what God's Word says about the source of our words.

Several versions of the verses and passages of scripture have been provided to aid our study.

OBSERVATION

Proverbs 4:23 NKJV: *“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”*

1. Underline who the passage is about.
2. What are you to do?
3. Why are you to do it?
4. According to the verse, where do your words come from? Please circle it.

INTERPRETATION

When we endeavor to interpret scripture, we use other scripture to help. Let's back up a few verses to help us interpret our verse.

Proverbs 4:20-23 NKJV *“My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”*

We also use trusted commentary to aid our understanding of scripture. Here are a few trusted commentators from David Guzik's online commentary at www.blueletterbible.org.

“A neglected Bible is the melancholy proof of a heart that is alienated from God. For how can we have a spark of love for him if that Book that is full of His revealed glory is despised? (Bridges)



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“It is ‘the wellspring of life’ in that the capacity to live with joy and vigor ultimately comes from within and not from circumstances. The corrupt heart draws one down to the grave, but Wisdom protects the heart from that corruption.” (Garrett)

“If we pollute that wellspring, the infection will spread; before long, hidden appetites will become open sins and public shame.” (Wiersbe)

“As Satan keeps special watch here, so must we keep special watch as well. If the citadel is taken, the whole town must surrender. If the heart is captured, the whole man—affections, desires, motives, pursuits—will be handed over.” (Bridges)

The Hebrew word for **guard** is *natsar* (naw-tsar). *To watch, guard, keep*

The Hebrew word for **heart** is *leb* (labe). *Inner man, mind, will, heart*

5. Look up any words from Proverbs 4:23 that you think you know the definition of, but maybe you really don't, and write them here. (Example: **diligence**)

6. What does it mean to keep your heart with all diligence and/or vigilance?

7. What is the spring of life?

APPLICATION

8. Are you diligently or vigilantly guarding your heart?

9. Give an example of a time when you didn't guard your heart, and the wrong words flowed.

10. Give an example of a time when you did guard your heart, and the right words flowed.



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Spend some time with Jesus today and work through some of your answers. Ask for His help in your struggles. Praise Him for the victories.

We have studied our Proverbs passage for the source of our words. Now we'll learn what Jesus has to say.

Read Matthew 12:22-37.

Focus on verses 33-35 ESV: *“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.”*

OBSERVATION

11. Circle the word **good**. How many times did you circle the word?
12. Underline the word **bad**. How many times did you underline the word?
13. What does the mouth speak?
14. What is stored in a good man?
15. What is stored in an evil man?
16. What is the source of our words?

INTERPRETATION

David Guzik's commentary:

- a. A tree is known by its fruit: The bad fruit of their words (when they condemned Jesus) betrayed the bad root growing in their hearts. If they got their hearts right with God, their words about Jesus would also be right.
- b. Brood of vipers! With these words, Jesus essentially called the religious leaders “sons of Satan.” They were a generation associated with the serpent, not with God. It was this evil nature that made them speak evil of Jesus.
- c. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks: Our words reveal our heart. If there were a good treasure in the heart of the religious leaders, it would show in good things.

17. Write a definition for **abundance**.



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18. What does “*a tree is known by its fruit*” mean?

APPLICATION

19. Are you a “good tree” or a “bad tree”? How do you know?

20. What kinds of words come out of the abundance of your heart?

21. What do you plan to do about the words coming from your heart?

22. Jesus’ rebuke of the religious leaders of the day was very harsh. What would Jesus say about you?

If evil words come from our mouths, we need a new heart. A new heart can only come from one source: “*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh*” (Ezekiel 36:26 NIV).

23. Write a prayer of repentance and then thankfulness for the work Holy Spirit will do for you if you humble yourself before Him.

We have discussed that the source of our words is our heart. So, for the rest of our study, we will discuss a few heart attitudes and how these attitudes affect what we say.



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RIGHTEOUS

“The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked” (Proverbs 10:11 NKJV).

“The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut out” (Proverbs 10:31 NKJV).

“The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverse” (Proverbs 10:32 NKJV).

“The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice. The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide” (Psalm 37:30-31 NKJV).

OBSERVATION

24. According to these four verses, what four things come from the mouth/heart of a righteous person?

25. What two things come from the mouth/heart of a wicked person?

26. What is in the heart of a righteous person?

27. What is a reward of being a righteous person?

INTERPRETATION

David Guzik’s commentary:

Proverbs 10:11—A righteous man or woman speaks life-giving words, most often to others and sometimes to oneself. The wicked man or woman brings harm and hurt with their words. They take away life.

Proverbs 10:31—God’s righteous men and women are known for the wisdom they speak. Their words often reveal a person’s heart. Those who speak crooked or twistedly can only expect to be left without a word. They misused their ability to speak; God will ensure they can no longer use it.

“This probably alludes to the punishment of cutting out the tongue for blasphemy, treasonable speeches, profane swearing, or such like. . . Were the tongue of every shrew or scold to be extracted, we should soon have much less noise in the world.” (Clarke)

Proverbs 10:32—God’s righteous men and women have a sense of discernment in what they say. As righteous men and women are skilled in saying what is acceptable, so the wicked have a talent to speak what is crooked or perverse.



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“The wicked man knows as well what is perverse, and that he speaketh forth. As the love of God is not in his heart, so the law of kindness is not on his lips.” (Clarke)

Psalm 37:-30-31: The righteous man (or woman) is also noted by his possession and love for God’s Word. In a way that the New Covenant would truly fulfill, he has the Word of God in his heart (Jeremiah 31:33). Because of this knowledge of and reliance upon God’s Word, none of his steps shall slide.

“He hath a Bible in his head and another in his heart.” (Trapp)

Righteous in Hebrew is *tsaddiq* (tsad-deek’). It means *blameless, innocent, just, right*.

Violence in Hebrew is *chamas* (khaw-mawce’). *To treat violently or wrong, malicious*.

Perverse in Hebrew is *tahpukah* (tah-poo-kaw’). From the word *haphak* (haw-fak’), *to turn, overturn*.

A perverse person is willfully determined or disposed to go counter to what is expected or desired. They are wayward or cantankerous, persistent or obstinate in what is wrong, and have turned away from or rejected what is right, good, or proper. They are wicked or corrupt.

A righteous person is virtuous, honorable, morally right, obedient, free from guilt or sin, and justifiable.

28. What does it mean that the righteous speaks wisdom?

29. What is a “well of life”?

30. What does it mean to know what is acceptable?

APPLICATION

31. Are you a wellspring of life?

32. How do you know?

33. What can you do to improve your “well”?



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HATEFUL

Proverbs 26:24-26 NKJV *“He who hates, disguises it with his lips, and lays up deceit within himself; when he speaks kindly, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart; though his hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.”*

OBSERVATION

34. What body parts are listed?

35. What things does a hateful heart do?

36. What will eventually happen to one who hates?

INTERPRETATION

David Guzik’s commentary:

“It is common for those who hate others – God or men – to disguise it with their words. They don’t want to give up their hate, but they don’t want to be known as a hater. The secret hater deceives others, but he also deceives himself. He imagines himself to be a better man than he really is. The secret hater should not be trusted. Even if he speaks kindly, his words do not reflect the true thoughts of his heart – his hatred is covered by deceit. Whether this assembly is in the world or the world to come, the wickedness and evil heart of the secret hater will be revealed.”

“‘Seven abominations’ is an abstraction for the full panoply of his wicked thoughts and deeds that utterly offend the moral sensibilities of the righteous.” (Waltke)

37. Why do haters disguise themselves?

38. What does it mean to harbor deceit?

39. What are the seven abominations?

40. In what assembly will the hater’s wickedness be revealed?

Proverbs 26:27-28 NIV *“Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them. A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.”*



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“Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him. A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, and a flattering mouth works ruin” (Proverbs 26:7 NKJV).

OBSERVATION

41. What does a lying tongue do?

42. What does a flattering mouth do?

43. What is a consequence for lying?

INTERPRETATION

David Guzik’s commentary:

“In His judgments, God often appoints that people reap what they sow; that He will treat them the same way they have treated others. They will fall into the pit they dug for others; the stone they rolled against someone else will roll back on them. The liar does his destruction without sympathy for others. He does not feel sorry for the ones he crushes; he actively hates them. Flattery is another way the lying tongue brings ruin. Their flattering mouth builds pride and manipulates others for deceptive goals.”

“Lying is an act of hatred. In one way or another, lies destroy those whom they deceive. Therefore the liar despises not only the truth but his victims as well.” (Garrett)

“Pray for wisdom to discover the snare, for gracious principles to raise us up above vain praises, for self-denial, for the capacity to be content and even thankful without such flatteries. This will be our security.” (Bridges)

44. Why is lying an act of hatred?

45. What does it mean that whoever digs a pit will fall into it?

46. What does it mean that a flattering mouth works ruin?

APPLICATION

47. In the last few days, have the majority of your words been righteous or hateful and wicked?



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48. Do you have trouble with lying?

49. Do you have trouble with hatred?

50. How can the following verses help you change your ways?

“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11 ESV).

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday” (Psalm 37:3-6 NKJV).

Don't give up if you have had a difficult time with your heart and words this week. *“Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore, I hope in Him!’”* (Lamentations 3:22-24 NKJV).

If you have had success this week, rejoice but be careful. *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall”* (Proverbs 16:18 NKJV).

PRIDE

“Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice” (Proverbs 13:10 NIV).

OBSERVATION

51. Where is pride found?

52. Where is wisdom found?

INTERPRETATION

David Guzik's commentary:

“Pride—excessive self-focus and self-regard—constantly generates strife. When people are focused on their own exaltation, they will always attempt to advance themselves at the expense of others.”

“Perhaps there is not a quarrel among individuals in private life, nor a war among nations, that does not proceed from pride and ambition.... It was to destroy this spirit of pride, that Jesus was manifested in the extreme of humility and humiliation among men. The salvation of Christ is a deliverance from pride, and a being clothed with humility. As far as we are humble, so far we are saved.” (Clarke)



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53. Why is there pride where there is strife?

54. Why is there wisdom with the well-advised?

APPLICATION

55. How proud are you?

56. What has resulted in your life due to pride?

The opposite of pride is humility. James 4:10 NKJV says, *“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”*

57. How can you humble yourself in the sight of God?

“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9 NKJV).

58. Spend some time with Jesus today. Here is some space to write your prayer and record His answer to you.

What develops in our hearts sets our path. Proverbs 23:7a says, *“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”* Let’s focus on some positive help we can have as we walk in this life.

HER COMPANIONS

“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed” (Proverbs 13:20 NKJV).

“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17 NKJV).



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OBSERVATION

59. If you walk with the wise, what will you become?

60. If you are a companion of fools, what will happen?

INTERPRETATION

Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Proverbs 13:20: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, . . . Who is a companion of them that fear the Lord, converses frequently with them in private about spiritual and experimental things, and walks with them in public in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; he by those means grows wiser and wiser, gains a large stock of spiritual knowledge and experience; for this holds good both in natural and spiritual wisdom, a man of any capacity at all will improve by keeping wise company; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed; the Vulgate Latin version renders it 'shall become like them'; be a fool as they are, and grow still more and more foolish."

Matthew Poole's Commentary Proverbs 27:17: "Iron cutting tools are made bright, and sharp, and fit for use by rubbing them against the file, or some other iron. So a man, who being alone is sad, and dull, and unactive, by the company and conversation of his friend is greatly refreshed, his very wits are sharpened, and his spirit revived, and he is both fitted for and provoked to action."

61. What does it mean "iron sharpens iron"?

62. What kind of companions should we surround ourselves with?

63. What do we gain by associating with wise people?

64. What do we lose when we associate with foolish people?

APPLICATION

65. With what kinds of friends do you spend time with?



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66. How much time do you spend with them in a week? (In person, on the phone, and on social media)

67. Do you need to adjust anything?

68. How will you do that?

69. If you don't have many godly friends, what can you do to acquire them?

REFLECTIONS

"The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil" (Proverbs 15:28 NKJV).

OBSERVATION

70. What does the heart of the righteous do?

71. What does the mouth of the wicked do?

INTERPRETATION

David Guzik's commentary:

The idea behind the phrase "how to answer" is simply what one says in response. God's righteous ones – men and women of wisdom – think beforehand what they should and will say. Their words are not based only on impulse and reaction.

There is little self-control when it comes to the mouth of the wicked. Evil words and ideas simply pour out of their mouth, with no wise thought beforehand.

"Is it true; is it kind, or is it necessary?" Socrates (I would add, does it bring life or death?)

"If you can't say something nice, don't say nothing at all." Thumper

72. What does it mean that the heart of the righteous weighs its answer?

73. What does it mean that the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil?



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APPLICATION

74. Do you think before you speak, or are you more apt to say what comes across your mind?

75. How can you do better in the future?

We studied primarily the negative side of our hearts this week, and I don't want you to leave this year's study on a negative note. Let's go back to the mental picture of the bubbles in the beginning of our lesson. As much as we can't put those "bubbles" of wicked, prideful, hateful words back into the bottle, we can let "bubbles" of beautiful, holy, uplifting, righteous words float and land on the people around us. As we guard our "bottle of words"/heart, let's bring delight to others.

If you can, buy a bottle of bubbles (or make your own with the recipe below). Go outside and blow to your heart's content. First, think about putting them back into the bottle, and then think about how they lightly pop as they land on things. May your heart be full of God, and your words be light and beautiful!

Basic Homemade Bubble Solution

www.verywellfamily.com

Ingredients:

- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons light Karo syrup or 2 tablespoons of glycerin
- 4 tablespoons dishwashing liquid

Directions:

Stir together until everything is dissolved.

You can make a wand with things around the house:

- A cookie cutter
- Plastic slotted spoon
- Straws
- Pipe Cleaners