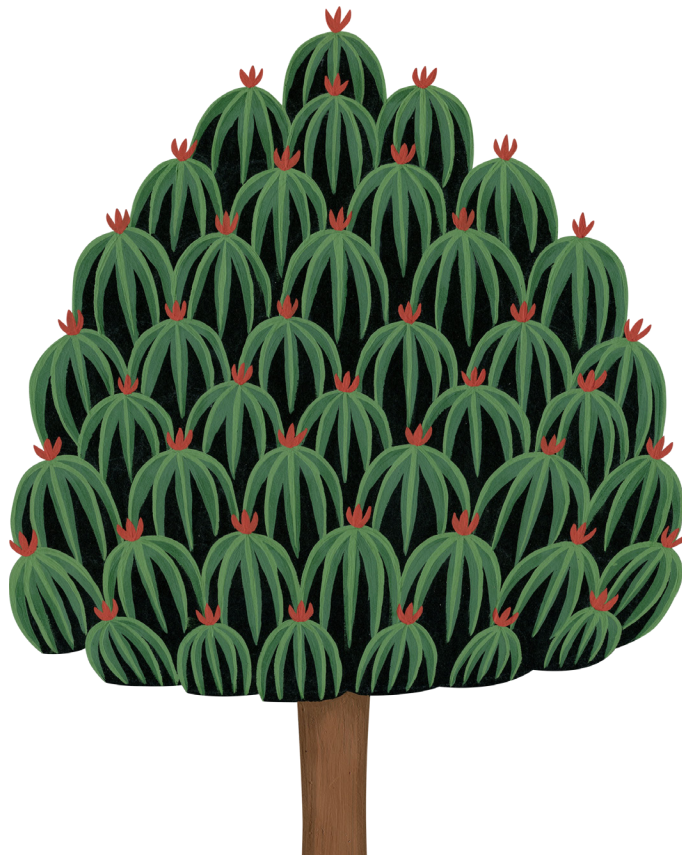
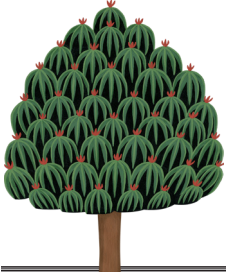


Becoming a Woman of Proverbs

THE CHARACTER
OF HER WORDS





Proverbs

The Character of Her Words

God has continually wanted me to learn more about the power of the spoken word. I know that the more I know, the more accountable I am. So, as I think back in time, I am reminded of being in the working place where the prime topic of conversation was gossip. Even though I worked in a close, caring group, who were eager to support and defend each other, gossip was primarily the subject of our conversations. I would give myself permission to listen and even repeat gossip. I would come home feeling like I needed a shower to wash away “the dirt.” Most days, I would beg forgiveness from God and have a heart-to-heart talk with the Holy Spirit. Finally, I turned to the Bible to place His words in my heart and on my lips. As I tried to obey, I began to walk away, refused to listen, and remained silent. Only then could peace return to my spirit.

Since the beginning of time, words have had real power. God spoke the world into existence. Jesus came to speak truth into our lives through His words. Solomon has a great deal to relate to what we say. The almost 150 references to the tongue, lips, and mouth indicate that proper speech is one of his top priorities. Research reveals that an average male uses between 2,000 and 3,000 words daily, while a female uses between 5,000 and 10,000. As humans, we have a wealth of words available to us, but what instruction and warning has God given us regarding our spoken words?

Write out the words from Matthew 12:36.

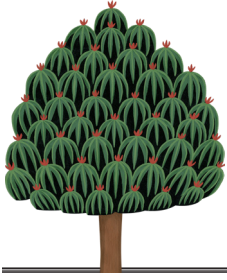
1. What are some advantages of holding one’s peace according to Proverbs 17:27, 28? Can you give an example of when talking too much may have caused a problem for yourself, your siblings, or your children?

“Whosoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from trouble.”

“In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:19). The more you say, the more opportunities you have to say the wrong thing. There is much more chance for potential sin in talking than in listening. We are familiar with the old saying, “It is better to keep your mouth shut and let men suspect you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.”

Scripture reminds us, *“Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger”* (James 1:19). In most cases, it would be better to speak less. We desire to be godly women who choose our words carefully. We have learned that we will be judged for our words, and those words should be few, not many.

“Be careful with your words. Once they are said, they can only be forgiven, not forgotten.”



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2. Match up the problem areas with the appropriate Proverb.

Argumentative	Proverb 11:13a
Slander	Proverb 17:14
Gossip	Proverb 13:10
Contentious	Proverb 18:1
Boastful/Pride	Proverb 10:18b
False flattering	Proverb 20:19b

“Words are free. It is how we use them that costs.”

“Kind words do not cost much, but they accomplish much.”

GOSSIP

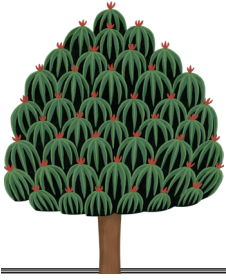
3. Define the term **gossip**.

4. What is the relationship between a righteous person’s heart and words? (Proverbs 15:28 and 16:23?)

Gossip is the act of divulging information about another without their consent or permission. That information can be trivial and non-threatening or malicious and damaging, but it is rarely productive in either case. Too often, gossip involves a juicy detail, which means the information is shocking or personal. Gossip is usually spread behind a person’s back and can be very harmful. We can forget that the story is not ours to tell. Unfortunately, our human nature delights in being “in the know.” Sadly, research shows that the average person spends 52 minutes daily gossiping.

5. In Proverbs 18:8, what is the verse saying? Why is gossip so damaging?

6. In what context are you the most likely to engage in gossip (at work, with family, with friends)? Why do you think that is the case?



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7. What characterizes ungodly people according to these Proverbs?

Proverbs 11:13a

Proverbs 16:27

Proverbs 17:9a

8. What might you say to someone who tends to want to gossip?

“Gossip is nature’s telephone.” - Sholom Aleichem

“Gossip is putting two and two together and making it five.” – Ivan Pain

“Gossip has been defined as halitosis of the mind.” – Croft M. Pentz

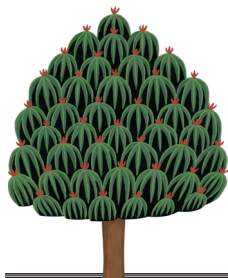
SLANDER

The adage, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me,” is false. Words can do a great deal of damage to those who have been slandered. Slander is defined as making a false statement that can destroy someone’s reputation. God so despises slander that it is mentioned in the Ten Commandments, saying, “*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*” Anything untrue is in opposition to God’s nature and is repulsive to Him. Plus, it denies people the opportunity to defend themselves, while others may pass judgment without knowing the complete truth. Gossip collects someone’s secrets and passes them on to others. Slander makes up its own secrets and broadcasts them wherever they will do the most harm.

9. What label does Solomon give to those who slander? (Proverbs 10:18)

God’s solution regarding slander is to love one another. We don’t slander people we love. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). When we focus on obeying the Lord by loving as He loves us, slander will not be part of our lives.

10. How do mature people exemplify Proverb 16:21?



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“You are never persuasive when you are abrasive.”

BOASTFULNESS

We all know people we find “difficult” in one way or another. One of my previous Bible study leaders used to refer to these individuals as MGRs– More Grace Required. Dealing with difficult people becomes an exercise in patience, love, and grace.

Scripture shows us that God disapproves of boasters. God commands us to humble ourselves before Him. Showing off and praising yourself never gives God glory. If you are going to boast, then boast in the Lord. Boast to everyone what Christ did for us on the cross.

11. Explain what a boaster is like from Proverbs 25:14 and your experiences.

12. If we receive praise, from where should it come? Proverbs 27:2? Even then, what should we guard against?

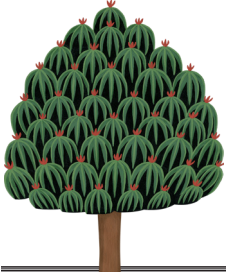
13. What consequences will we suffer when pride exists in our lives?

14. What advice can you apply to your life from Proverbs 11:2?

“It has been my experience that folks who have no vices have very few virtues.”
- Abraham Lincoln

“Confidence is silent. Insecurities are loud.”

“The man who must brag for himself knows no one else will.”



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FLATTERY

Flattery can be related to slander in that it can be false manipulation. The Hebrew word for flattery is *cheleg* which means smoothness and seductiveness. In most cases, flattery is manipulative. On the other hand, encouragement and flattery are opposite in their intention, integrity, and heart issues.

15. How does the dictionary define **flattery**? If possible, use the Merriam–Webster definition.
16. What is the difference between flattery and an honest compliment?
17. By what means will a person prone to gossip gain your secrets? How does that work? (Proverbs 20:19)

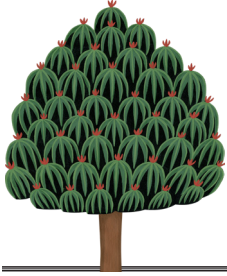
“Flattery is like chewing gum. Enjoy it but don’t swallow it.” - Hank Ketcham

*“Flattery is like counterfeit money. Passing it around will only result in problems.”
- Dale Carnegie*

ARGUMENTATIVE

Scripture tells us that we should not argue with each other primarily over meaningless matters. Instead, Christians must be kind, loving, humble, and respectful toward each other. But Christians are called to defend the faith. So, if someone is preaching false doctrine, a correction must be done in love, not anger.

18. Why is a soft answer important? (Proverbs 29:22 and 15:1)
19. What is the best time to stop a quarrel? (Proverbs 17:14) How does Solomon illustrate the point?
20. What results when a wise man contends with a foolish man? (Proverbs 29:9) Explain what causes these effects.



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“Arguing isn’t communication. It’s noise.”

“Conflict cannot survive without your participation.” - Wayne Dyer

“An argument is to find out who is right, and a discussion is to find out what is right.”

“True genius admits that they know nothing.” - Albert Einstein

RIGHT WORDS, RIGHT TIME

21. Fill in the blanks with the key factors about our words:

_____, not false (Proverbs 12:22, 16:13)

_____, not many (Proverbs 10:19)

_____, not emotional (Proverbs 26:20-22)

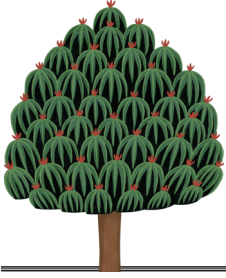
_____, not untimely (Proverbs 15:23)

22. Much of Proverbs 15 is devoted to the subject of the speech. Please read the chapter, then fill in the columns with the impact our speech can have on others.

Positive

Negative





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23. Why do you think Solomon used the illustration in Proverbs 25:11 to illustrate the value of proper speech?

24. What advice is given in Proverbs 25:15 about persuading a ruler? Why is this good advice?

25. **Personal:** After carefully considering the advice Solomon has given us, what areas of your speech do you want to concentrate on improving? What action will you need to take?

“Once upon a time, a wise man said, ‘I have nothing to say.’ Wisdom does not always talk. It talks at the right time, saying the right words.” - Olaotan Fawehinmi

“Perhaps you will forget the kind words you say today, but the recipient may cherish them over a lifetime.”

“Character is how you treat someone who can do nothing for you.”

Dear Lord, You have given us the great gift of the spoken word. We pray that You will guide our speech so that it may be the kindness others deserve and serve the purposes You intend. We want to be women of character who speak words that build up instead of tearing down. So please give us the right words at the right time so we may reflect Your goodness. In Jesus' name. Amen.