

Discipleship Group Weekly Resources

Week 3 Passage: Proverbs 26:18-28

Big Thought: (Read Proverbs 26:18-28 first)

We've all heard the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." We also know the falseness of that statement. Years later we can still remember words said that haunt our hearts, or words we uttered we wish we could wipe. Words are powerful and change lives, change history, and shape the course of eternity. The tongue holds the power of life and death (18:21).

Proverbs has some wisdom about harmful words. He warns us about:

- Quarrelsome speech (26:21). This is speech that loves to stir up conflict, argue and disagree—regardless of the topic.
- Perverse speech (2:12; 4:24; 15:4; 24:24; 30:20). Perverse speech distorts reality and truth itself. The one who speaks perversely may even think what they are saying is true. It's inclusive of calling sin a good thing and can seek to justify sin.
- Flattery (26:28). Flattery is smooth talk used to manipulate someone to get a desired response. The desire for admiration, self-advancement, and ego are often the emotions we stroke using flattery. It can be seductive (7:21). How do you tell a genuine compliment from flattery?
- Deception (26:18-19). Deception may be embellishment, exaggeration, half-truths, intentional misrepresentation, cutting remarks in jest. We've all done it often with the intent to manipulate an outcome. It reveals idolatry because it shows we are looking for affirmation and approval from people rather than in The Lord.
- Gossip & Slander (26:22; 11:13). Difference between gossip and slander? Gossip is revealing a secret, while slander defames reputationally. We do it out of revenge, jealousy, pride or just wanting to impress.
- Bragging (27:2). Don't do it, Proverbs warns. While culture often lauds self-exaltation, it is the humble to whom grace is shown. There's no lifting yourself up like when God does it (Psalm 147:6). Self-exaltation is antithetical to Christlike humility.

Each of these types of speech sows ruin in relationships and casts a shadow for eternity (10:31; 19:9). The wisdom of Jesus has power to change hearts and speech (15:7). We can THINK before we speak ("Is what I'm about to say TTrue, Helpful, Inspirational, Necessary, Kind?").

4 Questions:

1. What harmful words said to you do you still remember?
2. Which of the six types of speech do you struggle with most?
3. How does social media impact our speech?
4. How does the gospel help free us from using our speech in sinful ways?