

Our Words of Power

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. What is humankind's greatest power?

1. Engineering marvels? Military weapons of mass destruction? Economic prowess? Intellectual excellence?

B. Prov. 25:8-15

1. "WHO AM I? I am more deadly than the screaming shells from the howitzer. I win without killing. I tear down homes, break hearts, and wreck lives. I travel on the wings of the wind. No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me, no purity pure enough to daunt me. I have no regard for truth, no respect for justice, no mercy for the defenseless. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea, and often as innocent. I never forget and never forgive. My name is ... gossip." (Morgan Blake, Atlanta Journal)

2. "The tongue is mightier than the blade." (Euripides, 406 B.C.)

3. Joseph Goebbels became famous for propaganda during WW II.

4. Japanese used radio voices like U.S. born Iva Toguri D'Aquino as "Tokyo Rose."

5. "Hanoi Jane" was believed instrumental in Vietnam's victory over U.S.

6. Politicians repeat things they know to be false, because some voters will believe it anyway. That is why campaign ads work.

7. Good men can be destroyed by words, and evil men empowered.

8. God changed the whole world at Babel without the loss of a single life, just by confusing human speech - Gen. 11:6-9

9. God disheartened the will of the people of Jericho with reports of Israel's success - Joshua 2:9-11

10. Words have power - James 3:6

C. Our words have the potential to do more good than harm, if we use them for good. Eternal salvation is communicated by words - Acts 11:14; Rom. 10:15

D. Proverbs 25:11-15 speaks of four words of power:

1. Words fitly spoken
2. Words of fitting reproof
3. Words of faithful messengers
4. Words of forbearing gentleness

I. WORDS FITLY SPOKEN

A. Prov. 25:11

1. This is not merely knowing what to say; it is knowing when to say it, how much to say, and when to stop saying it.
2. A Christian's speech is limited; we speak only that which builds up and strengthens - Prov. 10:32; Eph. 4:29
3. "Just because it is true" or "because they deserve it" are not the criteria of edifying speech. We do not have the scriptural right to say everything we have a legal right to say.

- B. We need wisdom to use appropriate words and timing for every situation.
 - 1. John 16:12
- C. Even though truth cannot be changed, fitting words make the truth more readily accepted by hearers - Matt. 10:16

II. WORDS OF FITTING REPROOF

- A. Prov. 25:12
- B. Sometimes love requires that a brother be rescued from the snare of sin.
 - 1. Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20
- C. We are not helping erring Christians by saying nothing when they stray.
 - 1. We must maintain relationships that permit us to approach one another
 - 2. Eph. 4:15; Gal. 6:2
- D. We must speak words of caring reproof words when it is painful - 2Tim. 2:2
 - 1. Notice the word of reproof is to be given "to an obedient ear." The loving relationship between the reprover and reprovee must be two way - John 13:34-35

III. WORDS OF FAITHFUL MESSENGERS

- A. Prov. 25:13
 - 1. A trustworthy messenger can be counted on to deliver a message accurately without procrastination, editing, or inserting opinions
 - 2. Notice that it is refreshing to the sender, not the receiver. The sender has confidence that the message will be faithfully delivered.
 - 3. Moses who stood up and spoke out versus Jonah who sought to run away from his responsibility as a messenger
- B. God's people have a duty to accurately, faithfully communicate the gospel.
 - 1. John 3:16; 1Cor. 15:1-4
 - 2. We're not at liberty to add to it to make it more appealing. We dare not leave out parts that might make it harder to accept - Acts 20:26-27
 - 3. Christians are stewards of the gospel - 1Cor. 4:1-2
 - 4. We deliver it faithfully, not only out of love for the lost, but even more so to honor the sender, God.

IV. WORDS OF FORBEARING GENTLENESS

- A. Prov. 25:15
 - 1. We must speak in a calm reasoned manner.
 - 2. Persuasive does not mean the use of pressure tactics, reactionary language, and emotional appeals
 - 3. We must create an atmosphere conducive to reasoning
- B. Consider the example of Jesus - 1Peter 2:23
 - 1. The conduct of the messenger reflects on the sender of the message
 - 2. 2Cor. 5:20; 1Peter 3:14-15; Rom. 15:14-15; Prov. 16:32

Conclusion:

- A. Col. 4:5-6