

# The Book of Proverbs

Godly Wisdom for Everyday Life

## SSBC Proverbs Bible Study # 22

*Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passage that next Sunday's sermon will be focused on.*

### **A Portrait of the Wise**

Key Passage: Proverbs 18:21

Related Passages: Proverbs 10:11; 14:3;  
18:7; and 21:23

Sermon Date: March 2, 2008

**The tongue holds the power of life and death.** Did you ever stop to think about how you go about trying to get someone to do what you want? Generally, it is done with words, either written or spoken. We get others to agree with us, do what we ask or buy what we are selling.

The meaning of words and how they are used have enormous power over our emotions. Words can even be used to persuade, to manipulate and to control others without their knowledge. So powerful are the words we use that we find in Proverbs 6:16-19 three of the seven abominations the Lord hates have to do with the misuse of our words:

Prov.6:16 There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him:

Prov.6:17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,

Prov.6:18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil,

Prov.6:19 a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

Let us all carefully think about how we use our words to hurt and heal as we study the power of the tongue over the next several lessons in Proverbs. May God teach us self-control and wisdom over this powerful member of our bodies.

1. Read this week's Bible passage and use the following charts to note your observations and any questions you have.  
 The first verse below is the key verse for this study. Keeping this verse in mind, read each of the subsequent verses and note how each provides further insight into the meaning of this key verse.

Scripture	Your Observation & Questions
<p><b>Key Verse Proverbs 18:21</b> (NIV)</p> <p>18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death,  and those who love it will eat its fruit.</p> <hr/> <p>10:11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,  but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.</p> <hr/> <p>14:3 A fool's talk brings a rod to his back,  but the lips of the wise protect them.</p>	

Scripture	Your Observation & Questions
<p>18:7 A fool's mouth is his undoing,       and his lips are a snare to his soul.</p> <hr/> <p>21:23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue       keeps himself from calamity.</p>	

2. Next, use this chart to interpret some key observations.

a. From the chart on the previous pages, select a few of your observations & questions that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and then interpret and apply each of them using the columns to the right.

b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What does it mean?
- Why is this important?
- What does this tell me about the Father? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
- Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

Observation What does it Say?	Interpretation What does it mean?

3. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- ◆ **S**ins to avoid
- ◆ **P**romises to believe
- ◆ **E**xamples to follow (remember "SPECK")
- ◆ **C**ommands to obey
- ◆ **K**nowledge to share

Don't just write things to write them — listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

Application How do I apply what it means?



Do you have trouble keeping your words from hurting others, perhaps those that you love most? Would you like to develop more control over your tongue and the words you say?

If you haven't done so already, use your words to turn your life over to God and ask him to fill your heart with God's Word.

“.....if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.? (Romans 10:9)

Then you will begin to bear a new kind of “fruit.” Recall Matthew 12:33-37:

“A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.” (New Living Translation)

Our words express what we have stored up in our heart. Giving our hearts totally over to Jesus allows us to rid our hearts of evil and store up in them the goodness of God. Once you have accepted Jesus into your heart and completely turned over your life to God, then begin filling your heart with God's Word. Your heart will become the wellspring of good thoughts for you and help you gain control over your deadly tongue and to use it more lovingly. Proverbs 4:23 says: “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

*These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon as inserts in the church bulletin and are also posted at <http://sermonhouse.com/SSBC>.*

*Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website.*

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