

17. Would you agree with the assessment of James 3.8 that no-one can tame the tongue? Why is it so difficult?

18. Do you think you have an awareness of the damage that can be done by the unguarded tongue such that it can be described as being full of deadly poison (v8)?

19. Regardless of verse 8 self-control is one of the Fruit of the Spirit (see Gal 5.22-23). What have we seen in these passages that can help us to cultivate the particular variety of this fruit, that is tongue self-control?

Pray

Use David's words as your own prayer : *"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer."* (Psalm 19.14)

Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble. (Prov 21.23)

- Pray for the ability to bridle the tongue.
- For those seeking to bring resolution to conflict in families.
- For the wise use of social media, those harmed by misuse, and wisdom regarding possible greater regulation.

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Get Wisdom

Week 4



The piercing tongue

1. What do we mean by gossip and by slander and how do they differ?

2. What situations can you think of in which an unguarded tongue can do damage? (Think either from your own experience, or perhaps, films, books or TV programmes.)

Gossip

Read Prov 26.20-22

The word whisperer could be translated as talebearer or gossip.

3. These verses imply that gossip is destructive like a fire. Is this how you think of gossip?

4. In what ways can gossip cause harm?

5. Why is it that we find gossip so tasty? (v22)

6. Are there practical ways in which we can bridle our tongues to ensure that we do not feed fires through gossip?

Reckless Words

Read Prov 12.17-22

7. These verses are mostly about speaking the truth rather than lies, but the saying in verse 18 has a different focus. In what ways can rash words be like sword thrusts (v18)?

8. Can you think of occasions when things have been said to you, or about you, such that it felt like you were being pierced with a sword?

9. The nursery rhyme “sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never harm me” (original 1862 version) was intended to help children not punch someone who called them a name. But regardless of this worthy aim, is it really true?

Read Eph 4.29.

10. What instruction are we given here about our words? How might we do this in practice?



Hasty fingers

11. Do you use social media, internet discussion groups or the like?

12. Is it fair to say that the advent of these forms of communication have made the problem of the rash word and gossip worse? If so, why is this?

13. Suppose you were angry with someone. Is it more likely you would clobber them, stab them with a piercing word (Prov 12.18) or shoot off a hard hitting e-mail? What might restrain us in these different situations and where do we have to exercise most self-control?

14. Can you think of instances where you have written something too hastily and then regretted it?

15. How can we make sure that when we use such forms of communication we exercise self-control? Do you have any particular tips?

Self-control

Read Prov 21.23 & James 3.1-10

16. What parallels do you see between what James writes and what we have seen in the various passages in Proverbs?