

“She opens her mouth
in wisdom, And the
teaching of kindness is
on her tongue.”

Proverbs 31:26

20,000 Chances a Day

Proverbs 31

Women are said to use an average of 20,000 words in a day.¹ This is in contrast to the 7,000 that the average man is estimated to use. Jokes are often made about this dichotomy at the expense of one sex or the other, depending on who is telling the joke.

God made men and women different, and for whatever reason, God seems to have created women with a greater tendency toward verbal expression than men. Now, this does not mean that women are bad for expressing themselves verbally, nor are men wrong for their tendency to be less verbal. What this fact does mean is that we, as women, must be especially careful about how we use our words.

Think about this. Of the 20,000 words a day that you likely use as a woman, how many of those are being spent helping and encouraging others? How many words are spent tearing others down? How many are spent in a selfish or prideful way? How many are spent in anger? How many are spent carelessly and without thought?

How do you use most of your words?

Words are a powerful tool, and we are blessed to have the amazing gift of communication through language. So while women may be the brunt of many jokes about talking too much, it is wise to look at words as a highly useful, but potentially dangerous tool we have been entrusted with.

Huldah, a prophetess who is mentioned in the Bible in only two places which recount the same story, is an example of a woman who used her words for the glory of God as she was committed to sharing the insight He had given her with others, even when it was not likely to be popular. As far as we can see she did not shove what she had to say down peoples' throats, but waited until they came to her to ask for guidance. She was apparently known for her wisdom and closeness with the Lord, because others came to her when they needed wise counsel about God's will. When she was called upon she was bold in sharing the Lord's message, even when it was a hard message that was not likely to be well-received.

During the weekly meeting of a small group I am a part of, we always go around and have each person share what the high point and low point of her week has been. One week I was struggling to think of any events that had been out of the ordinary in my week or that could be considered either a high or low point of the week. Then I realized that the worst part of my week had been when someone had spoken harshly to me and that the highlight had been when someone had verbally expressed their appreciation. I was surprised to find that words had made such an impact on my week, both positive and negative.

Describe a time that someone's words had a significant (either positive or negative) impact upon your own life.

¹Brizendine, L. (2006). *The female brain*. New York : Morgan Road Books.

“But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.”

Matthew 12:36

Name a time that you know of that your own words impacted someone else in either a positive or negative way.

Our words certainly have an impact on those around us. So how can we make a change in how we speak and what words we are using to impact the world around us?

Obviously, our words are usually a good indication of what is happening in our hearts. A heart of encouragement, kindness, and carefulness, developed through an active and growing relationship with the Lord will inevitably be evidenced in our words.

When we are seeking to communicate the Lord through our words, though it may be indirectly and subtly, we will be bringing others closer to Him. So often, though, we are simply incautious with what we say, which can have disastrous results. In Matthew 12:33-37 we are not only warned against using malicious and hurtful words, but we are even told that “every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.” Ouch!


Careless words are easily spoken. What words have you recently spoken carelessly?

A good starting point to determine how you are doing in the area of your speech may be to sit down and review the words you have spoken in the past 24 hours. It is probably difficult to remember most of the many words that you spoke during that time, but you will likely remember a few key conversations or be able to find a theme running throughout your words of that day. It may also help to ask a trusted, loving individual who knows you well or spends a good bit of time with you to help you analyze your use of words.

Spending time with God is essential in altering our hearts, our minds, and what comes from our mouths. When we are letting God alter us in such a way that we are daily becoming more like Him, we will not only have the motivation to use our words in way that glorifies Him, but we will experience conviction when we are not using our words in that manner that glorifies Him and when we ask Him to reveal these areas to us.

Scripture memory can go a long way in altering the type of words that come from our mouths. If we have not first placed truth, wisdom, and kindness within our hearts and minds, those things are very unlikely to come out of our mouths. Also, the more time we spend thinking about something, the more likely it is to direct what we talk about. After sitting down to determine in what areas your speech needs to improve, spend some time searching the Scriptures for verses or passages of Scripture that deal with those issues specifically, and begin by memorizing and meditating upon those.

Accountability can be especially useful as we seek to use our words in a way that glorifies the Lord. As mentioned earlier, other people can be of great assistance in monitoring the words you use. Having another person in our lives that can both observe our use of words, as well as ask us how we have been doing in this area can be an invaluable asset.



What do you need to do in response to this lesson?
