

From the Pastor



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As a priest and a pastor I often experience the power of words. They truly can either give life or destruction. Our tongue is perhaps our most powerful tool of influence. It is like the tiny rudder that steers a great ship, or the small spark that ignites a massive forest fire.

The way we use our tongue exposes something important about our heart. Jesus once said to a group of Pharisees: “You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. (Matt. 12:34-35).

Let me share with you some reflections about appropriate use of our tongue, based on some passages from book of Proverbs - great advices for both me and you.

1. Our words should be carefully chosen. “When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise” (Pr. 10:19). “He who guards his mouth and his tongue guards his soul from troubles” (Pr. 13:3). “He who restrains his words has knowledge” (Pr. 17:27). “Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him” (Pr. 29:20). *Think carefully before you speak, and say less rather than more.*

2. Your words should bring comfort and joy to others. “There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” (Pr. 12:18). “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones” (Pr. 16:24). “A soothing tongue is a tree of life” (Pr. 15:4). “A man has joy in an apt answer, and how delightful is a timely word” (Pr. 15:23). “Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances” (Pr. 25:11). *Make your words memorable in positive ways.*

3. Your words should promote truth and instruct others. “The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of understanding” (Pr. 10:21). “He who speaks truth tells what is right” (Pr. 12:17). “Truthful lips will be established forever” (Pr. 12:19). “The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable” (Pr. 15:2). “The lips of the wise spread knowledge” (Pr. 15:7). *Speak truth in every circumstance, and to patiently instruct even the most resistant person. “By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue breaks the bone” (Pr. 25:15).*

4. Your words should be pure. “The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverted” (Pr. 10:32). “Pleasant words are pure” (Pr. 15:26). “He who is perverted in his language falls into evil” (Pr. 17:20). “He who loves purity of heart and whose speech is gracious, the king is his friend” (Pr. 22:11). “Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than he who is perverted in his speech and is a fool” (Pr. 19:1). *Be pure in speech always, never allowing vulgarity, profanity, deceit, slander, gossip, bitterness, or hatred to flow from your tongue.*

Words can be pleasant or painful, soothing or scorching, righteous or revolting, truthful or treacherous, delightful or destructive. So how is it with you? Are the people around you pleased when you open your mouth, or do they often wish you had kept it shut? Let us remember Jesus’ words from Matt. 12:36-37 “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

+ *Father Roger*