

Word Count

Proverbs 15:4; Matthew 15:18;

Matthew 12:36-37; Ephesians 4:29-30

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A. Our Words (Proverbs 15:4 Matthew 15:18):

1. Soothing tongue – A tongue that is influenced by a peaceful, content emotional attitude so that there is no harsh word or deed.
2. Tree of Life - The "Tree of Life" is the tree that gives one eternal, everlasting "life." Words should stimulate spiritual growth, like fruit on a tree, in another person's life.

I. Tree of Life – The “Tree of Life” was found in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9), and again when the Lord creates the new heavens and the new earth (Revelation 22:2,14). It represents the continual experience of an abundant life that lasts forever.

II. The “tree of life” (3:18; cf. Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7) is a metaphor for a “source of life.” Wisdom played a dynamic part in the creation of the universe (3:19–20), so it can have a significant part in ordering the affairs of each person's life.^[1]

3. Perversion – A person listening to the words of another can damage relationships when they take what a person says, don't ask them what they mean or follow the scriptures when someone offends them, and distort what they may have meant. The word means to twist.
4. Perversion – Relationships are damaged when, during a conversation with someone, we purposefully distort the truth and, worse, take a bribe to do so in an effort to get them to believe or do what we would like them to do.
 5. Crushes – A perverse tongue is a military coming into a city to totally destroy it. It is like completely breaking a solid object into pieces.
6. Crushes - A person can be totally destroyed when we speak in this manner. Crushed is a word that describes a city that has been totally demolished and placed into ruins. *“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”* (Proverbs 18:21; NIV)
7. Spirit – This manner of communication can cause a person to live without purpose and become useless.
8. Spirit – A perverse tongue can take the life out of a person so that they become useless. *“A lying tongue hates those it crushes, And a flattering mouth works ruin.”* (Proverbs 26:28; NASU)
9. But the things that proceed out of the mouth – This is when a person, on their own initiative, repeatedly, not one time, speaks so those around them can hear what they are saying. This person speaks in a manner that has become the signature of their life.
10. From the heart—This manner of speaking describes a person's deepest emotional state, who they are, their mindset, and what they intend to do.11. Those defile the man – Repeatedly functioning in this manner, the person defines their inner nature. This is being said to the disciples in the midst of a conversation with the Jewish leaders, whom Christ later defines as hypocrites, blind guides, whitewashed tombs, etc. (Matthew 23).

12. Those defile the man—People can be persuaded by individuals' religious status, power, the manner in which they dress, smooth and flattering speeches (Proverbs 26:24-28; Job 32:21-22; Romans 16:17-18), and the status they hold in society, but God says listen to the words they repeatedly say and that this describes their heart. This is the difference we see between Saul and David (1 Samuel 9:1-2,8; 10:19, 23-24; 16:1-11).

B. Words Matter (Matthew 12:36-37):

1. I tell you – Jesus is repeatedly verbalizing the importance of words.

2. Careless words that people speak – Careless words apply to anyone who speaks without a careful evaluation of knowledge on the issue, facts in a case, or any conversation that is useless to the persons involved.

3. Gives account – Every useless word a person speaks is recorded. The total number of words will be tallied and addressed upon the day of judgment. This is why a wise person manages their words and practices true religion (James 1:26).
 - a) The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly (Proverbs 15:2; NASU).

 - b) The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord (Proverbs 16:1; NASU).

c) He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is considered prudent. (Proverbs 17:27-28; NASU).

4. Judgment – The day of judgment refers to the Rapture of the Church and the judgment seat of Christ ((1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10). These individuals will remain in a state of judgment.

5. By your words - Everyone has a free will to say what they choose to say even if they are saved.

6. Justified - God will act on all these words to determine righteousness. On the day of judgment, we will learn who submitted to the Lord's way of being good stewards of our words.

7. Condemned – The words that had no careful evaluation of facts, not committed to the true, useless words God will pronounce His sentence on them (Proverbs 6:19; Revelation 22:15).

C. Speak Life (Ephesians 4:29-30):

1. Unwholesome words – In the literal sense it represents 'decayed' trees which produce 'rotten' fruit (Matthew 7:17-18) or in the case of fish 'rotten' fish (Matthew 12:33-34).

- a) Here the word is employed figuratively to denote language that is 'harmful' or 'unwholesome'. What is prohibited, then, is harmful speech of any kind (cf. Col. 3:8; Eph. 5:4), whether it be abusive language, vulgar speech, or slander and contemptuous talk. Lips given to this kind of utterance not only defile the speaker (Matt. 15:11) but are also destructive of communal life. Our Lord had already warned that people would have to render account on the final day for every careless word they speak (Matt. 12:36).^[2]
2. Unwholesome words – To purposefully use words to hurt someone. Functioning in the flesh leads to words that tear others down (Galatians 5:20).
3. Unwholesome words – We must not use foul language because it does not represent the nature of the Holy Spirit who lives within us (Ephesians 5:4,6).
5. Proceed – We must be committed to continuously not allowing unwholesome words to come from within us so we remain under the Spirit's control (Ephesians 3:16-19).
6. What is good – Whatever we are about to say should be profitable, useful, and pleasing to God.

a) For edification – Any type of building or structure that encloses an area, but the area may be open to the sky, as in the case of amphitheaters - 'building, structure.'

- I. Unwholesome talk (Ephesians 5:4).
- II. Do what leads to peace (Rom. 14:19).
- III. Conversation filled with grace (Colossians 4:6).

IV. Speech seasoned with salt (Colossians 3:16).

- b) For edification – ‘God’s construction’ in the life of a believer (4:13).
- c) For edification – Strengthening someone’s life through teaching.
- d) For edification – Building up a person’s life so that God can continue to work in and through them.
- e) It gives grace – What we say becomes spiritually beneficial to all those who have a heart to grow (heard; 4:20-21).

7. Do not grieve - We are commanded not to persistently sadden or distress the work of the Holy Spirit by using unwholesome words.

- a) The utterance of evil or worthless words is repugnant to the holiness of the Spirit and is to be refrained from as calculated to grieve Him. The injunction is made more solemn by the designation as the ‘the Holy Spirit’ and ‘the Spirit of God.’
- b) The verb translated “to make sad” can have the less specific meaning “to irritate.” The use of this verb with the object *God’s Holy Spirit* is rather striking; an offense against a fellow believer is an offense against the Holy Spirit, who gives unity and peace to the body (compare 4:3). In some languages the equivalent of making someone sad is “to cause them to cry,” and therefore the first part of verse 30 may be translated as “do not make God’s Holy Spirit cry.”^[3]

8. Sealed for the day of redemption – The Holy Spirit is God’s mark of ownership on our lives, and He secures us for the day when Christ returns.

a) It may be difficult to speak of God’s Spirit as a *mark of ownership*, indicating that the believer belongs to God. A *mark of ownership* may mean only something which is stamped upon some material possession.

b) Sealed for the day of redemption – The Holy Spirit works for us until Christ returns.

9. Sealed for the day of redemption – We must keep the faith no matter how emotional our interactions may become. When we do, we function like the tree of life.

^[1] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (p. 233). Tyndale House Publishers.

^[2] O’Brien, P. T. (1999). *The letter to the Ephesians* (pp. 344–345). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

^[3] Bratcher, R. G., & Nida, E. A. (1993). *A handbook on Paul’s letter to the Ephesians* (p. 119). New York: United Bible Societies.