

The Wise and Foolish Use of the Tongue (Go To Meeting)

Norbert Bohnert—July 30, 2022

What is one of our worst, personal worst enemies, that we have to deal with on a personal note. The use of our tongue and basically what we say in our conversation and what we blurt out sometimes without thinking!

How many times have you said something and then kick yourselves and say, ‘Why did I say that?’ That’s what I’m going to speak about today. It’s a very broad topic and you know where I’m going to lead and that is Proverbs.

We’re going to review the book of Proverbs and just one of the many, many things that you find in this book. Prov. 1 tells us purpose of Proverbs.

Proverbs 1:1: “The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, righteousness, and judgment, and equity” (vs 1-3).

That’s the basis of what Solomon was writing and telling us about. Solomon tells us that the book of Proverbs is about learning, wisdom and discipline, which are really two sides of the same coin.

He explains that the powers are for understanding deep thoughts, securing the good, fulfilling and ordered life, by doing what is right, just and fair according to God’s standards.

The second thing that Solomon tells us is that the Proverbs are written for a particular audience.

Verse 4: “To give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion **to the young man**. A wise man will hear and will increase learning, and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsel to understand a proverb and its interpretation, the words of the wise, and their dark sayings” (vs 4-6).

It’s for those who don’t think, and Solomon doesn’t tell us who they are. They could be young or old but in v 4 he tells us it’s for the young man. For those who don’t think and are really misled or seduce easily. It’s to give them caution, prudence and to think wisely.

That applies to all of us! For those who are younger so they can gain that knowledge, discretion and have a plan for life. It’s an instruction book that’s written particularly focusing, at times, on the young. Teaching them to the principles and so forth and how to conduct themselves and lead their lives in he future.

It’s for those who are already wise, as well. They will hear and not just listen, but learn even more from the words that are being spoken.

Lastly, it’s for those who already understand because they will gain the skill to council with the Hebrew connotation. You’re going to steer through the course of life, and by implication to teach others.

That’s part of our role, too! Let’s keep Solomon’s purpose and audience in mind as we look at just one aspect of the Proverbs: *the wise and foolish use of the tongue!*

More sin is probably committed by the misuse of the tongue than by any other means. Let’s see how the wise and foolish use and misuse of the tongue so we can learn and increase in the wisdom and discipline. That’s what we should all be striving for.

Proverbs 15:2: “The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness.”

There’s a stark difference between those who are wise and those who are foolish. Yet, both use the same tongue to speak. They both believe that whatever they say is true. They are deceived, but they still believe it’s true.

Even those who lie, only because they know what the actual truth is. How do we tell the difference? After all, everyone has an opinion. We know that only too well, everyone has an opinion. Society claims that a real opinion has some value and must be listened to. Everyone must be heard in today’s society; listened to and paid attention to.

Knowledge about a topic isn’t necessary! Today, facts, knowledge and opinions are all the same. That’s the attitude of the general world around us today. There was an article I came across:

[Are Facts and Opinion Really that Different?](https://medium.com/arc-digital/are-facts-and-opinions-really-so-different-44609188ddec) By Bernie Belvedere; 2018
{<https://medium.com/arc-digital/are-facts-and-opinions-really-so-different-44609188ddec>}

Everywhere you look, facts and opinions are contrasted with each other. This is a mistake.

But is there a line—a distinction, a dichotomy, a division—between opinion and fact in the first place?

Not in the way the study, and society at large, thinks there is. Let me put it more diplomatically: It's reasonable to conclude that certain differences exist between the two, but they're far less pronounced, and far less consequential, than society tends to assume.

In a nutshell, what he's saying is, whether you know anything or not, if you have an opinion and you believe something, that's the same thing—almost—as a fact. It doesn't really matter if it's a fact if you believe what you're saying. That has become a general consensus in the world today by many, many people—*unfortunately!*

What does Solomon say? He's telling us that ***if you're wise you will use your tongue rightly!*** A wise person has his tongue under control. He doesn't runoff at the mouth, and he just doesn't spew things out. He can rightly or correctly divide the Word of the Truth. He does not lean on his own understanding or wisdom that he claims to have. He knows that he does not have it in him to know everything and must look elsewhere to get that knowledge. So, where does he get that knowledge?

Proverbs 1:7—we've heard this many times: "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge, *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction."

"The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning... [or the foundation] ...of... [ALL] ...knowledge..." Why should it be so?

Since God created everything; He is the Source of all knowledge! What knowledge there is, is because God has determined that these are the facts.

What we need to do is to learn that and grasp that thought! It is critical for us to learn that major principle! A wise man fears, when means he *reverences, or humbles himself before God!* He knows that he doesn't know it all! He has the Spirit to lead him into all knowledge with what's given to him by God and His Word!

John 14:26: "But *when* the Comforter comes, *even* the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name, **that One shall teach you all things, and shall bring to your remembrance everything that I have told you.**"

It's just not enough just to start; you must continue and keep growing in grace and knowledge. That's the basis of our conversion process.

2-Peter 3:18: "Rather, be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory both now and into *the*

day of eternity. Amen."

A wise person is always willing and eager to learn from God. Even Christ said that He only said those things that He was taught by His Father. Remember the temptation in the wilderness when Satan tempted Christ He referred to the Bible and gave Satan responses not out of His own thoughts, but that out of the Scriptures, the Word of God

The wise search the Scriptures. That's what we are to do, search the Scriptures. We know that the Bereans were very noble. Another word for noble is *wise*, because they did search out the Scriptures. That's a process that needs to be instituted into our lives, to search out the Scriptures.

2-Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

The fool doesn't do that! You will notice that the wise man uses his tongue, but when referring to the fool, Solomon refers to the mouth! It's the mouth that spews forth or belches out foolishness. The wise have control over their tongue. The fool basically have not control and continuously belches up nothing but nonsense at times.

We must be careful that we don't get into that pattern. It's very easily done, as we read in Prov. 1:7. There's no reason to point out the many instances of nonsense that all of us have been surrounded by and have been a part of us. Many fools surround us! *Many!* It's not name-calling! If that was what God refers to these actions as, then that's what we have here!

We must also be very careful, we must be careful and wise in what we say, what we do and control our tongue! Wise men aren't guaranteed to be wise at all times, and fools are not always fools.

Let us look at a good example, probably a very good example of Peter.

Matthew 16:13: "Now, after coming into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus questioned His disciples, saying, 'Whom do men declare Me, the Son of man, to be?' And they said, 'Some *say* John the Baptist; and others Elijah; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But you, whom do you declare Me to be?' Then Simon Peter answered *and* said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered *and* said to him, '**Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father, Who is in heaven**'" (vs 13-17).

Here we see an example. Peter had this revealed to him by the Father, and he was able to

answer Christ! That, of course, was a wise thing to do.

Verse 21: “From that time Jesus began to explain to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem, and to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised the third day. But after taking *Him* aside, Peter personally began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘*God will be favorable to You, Lord. In no way shall this happen to You*’” (vs 21-22).

Peter came out and said that to Christ! Think about it! If you were Peter and Christ were to say that He’s going to die, humanly speaking you wouldn’t want this to happen, of course, you would want to intervene and say, ‘No, this is not going to happen to You.’

What was Christ’s response?

Verse 23: “Then He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, because your thoughts are not *in accord* with the things of God, but the things of men.’”

Here was Peter being praised for his wise saying, and now being called ‘Satan,’ because he did not follow God’s way!

We very easily can get entrapped in that. You can say something wise, and all of a sudden in the same conversation something unwise can come out of your mouth!

Proverbs 12:15: “The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes, but he who listens to advice *is* wise.”

Peter thought he was *wise in his own eyes!* We can’t depend on the speaker to know whether he is wise or not. Peter depended on the understanding of Christ’s purpose of coming to this earth. Peter thought he was righteous in protecting Christ. In this, he was actually foolish. He was think from a human perspective, not from a Godly perspective.

Christ said he was thinking of human things; the things of man and not the things of God. Peter, of course, thought he understood, but he clearly missed Christ’s purpose for coming. He didn’t ask for clarification or explanation from Christ, he thought he stood. But at the same time, instead of standing, he fell!

The wise always seek and listen to council! We have some examples in the Scriptures that we can go to.

- Moses listening to Jethro, for instance
- Nicodemus who met with Christ and asked Him questions

We also must step back and say that pagans can make wise decisions, too. We can actually say that at times.

Do you remember Naaman, commander of the army, a man of great valor and also a leper! Naaman served the king, and he was told by his servant girl that he ought to go to Israel and see a great prophet that would be able to heal him.

2-Kings 5:9: “And Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. Then Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, ‘Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean’” (vs 9-10).

Here’s a great man coming all this distance to see this prophet, and what does the prophet do? *He just sends a messenger!* If you’re Naaman, would you be upset? ‘You’re not giving me the respect I deserve! Don’t you know who I am?’ Of course, that’s exactly what happened.

Verse 11: “But Naaman was angry, and went away. And he said, ‘Behold, I said within myself, “He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God and strike his hand over the place and heal the leper.” *Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean?*’ And he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near and spoke to him and said, ‘My father, *if* the prophet had told you *to do* a great thing, would you not have done *it*? How much rather then, when he says to you, “Wash and be clean?”’” (vs 11-13).

Naaman thought that at least he would ask to go on some great adventure, or do something very spectacular to get clean. But to take a bath seven times? *Not really!*

He changes his mind; v 14: “Then he went down and dipped seven times in Jordan, **according to the saying of the man of God.** And his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little boy, and he was clean.”

It’s a good illustration! Naaman was a great man and he expected great deeds. He was a man of pride and also one who could listen to council. As a result of listening and obeying, he was cured; and that was a wise thing to do. This is a little bit of what Naaman was saying.

Proverbs 10:19: “In the multitude of words, sin is not lacking, **but he who restrains his lips is wise.**”

Naaman did say many silly things. They are not necessarily a sin, but this principle holds that

when there are many words spoken, sin is usually not far behind! If you can control your words, then you are wise!

How many times have you, personally, just blurted something out prior to thinking about what you were going to say? *All of us have done at some time!*

If we look around us now, we can find this so easily in written form on social media. Remember when the cell phone first came out, they were supposed increase and ease communication. You could talk with just about anyone anywhere at anytime. If you listen and really think about it, most of that talk was just that, talk! It's mostly mundane! I'm not saying that all of it is, but a good percentage of it does end up just being that, just talk!

Solomon is not necessarily warning us against many words. What he's warning us against is speaking many *vain* words. Just mumbling and bumbling along and just talking about everything and anything, just to talk!

Do you know individuals that just do that at times, just ramble on? *Out of politeness you just sort of listen or half-listen!* Vain words, many words, is a sign of egotism at times. Many people love to hear their own voice. They're being very foolish!

Sin is inevitable when words are many. We'll take one specific example. Since we're to learn from the Scriptures, let's see and look at this example where the words are many and sin is not lacking. We're going to see an example where not only the many words spoken here affect the person who speaks to them, but the entire nation!

2-Kings 20:12: "At that time Berodach-Baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah welcomed them, and showed them all the house of his precious things, the silver and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and the house of his armor, and all that was found in his treasures. **There was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion, which Hezekiah did not show them**" (vs 12-13).

So, Hezekiah revealed everything that he had to the enemies of Israel! I can just imagine them walking along and their secretaries behind them jotting everything down, one chandelier, three cups, gold and so forth; taking inventory of everything that he had.

Verse 14: "And Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, 'What did these men say? And from where did they come to you?' And Hezekiah said, 'They have come from a far country,

from Babylon.' And he said, 'What have they seen in your house?' And Hezekiah answered, '**They have seen all that is in my house. There is nothing among my treasures which I have not shown to them**'" (vs 14-15).

Verse 16: "And Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'Hear the Word of the Lord: "Behold, the days come when all that *is* in your house, and which your fathers have laid up in store until today, shall be carried into Babylon. Nothing shall be left," says the LORD. "And of your sons which shall issue from you, which you shall beget, they shall be taken away. And they shall be officers in the palace of the king of Babylon'" (vs 16-18).

Hezekiah boasted of all his treasures! He ran at the mouth! Not only his own personal treasures, but also the things that pertained to God and the entire kingdom.

He was proud of his possessions, but he was also vain! He took time to show everything, and you can't do that all in an hour. He didn't just give them a peak, he said that he *revealed everything in detail!* It was not a wise thing to do. **Out of the abundance of the mouth, the heart speaks!**

Let's go back and look at social media as another example. There are others, too. Do they reveal too much? *We can see what the result was for Hezekiah!* That everything that he had would be taken away to Babylon. Even his own family would suffer and therefore all of Israel, *because he spoke too many words!*

Brethren, the principle is ***wise control of your speech!*** We have a bad example here, but how about a good example of controlling your speech.

Nehemiah knew he was surrounded by enemies. When he first arrived in Jerusalem, he kept his plan to himself until he had investigated the entire situation. Once he did that, he did speak to the elders there. The word got out as to what his plan was.

Nehemiah 2:19: "But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us. And they said, 'What *is* this that you do? Will you rebel against the king?' And I [Nehemiah] answered them and said to them, 'The God of heaven, He will prosper us, and we, His servants, will arise and build. But you have no portion or right or memorial in Jerusalem'" (vs 19-20).

Unlike Hezekiah, Nehemiah didn't reveal everything when he arrived. He began by praying to God! While it was taxes that allowed him to return and do what he was going to do, it was God who

directed his steps.

Nehemiah didn't depend on the letters that he had received from more taxes or the power of the king. He depended on God and answered his enemies wisely.

That in itself tell us what we should be doing. We should go to God and answer accordingly as instructed by the Word of God. In v 20, Nehemiah was depending on God, and that's what we must also do.

Sometimes think and say nothing! Think and depend on God that the right things be said and limit it to what should only be said. It's better to keep silent and thoughtful than to speak and remove all doubt.

That's all I will say about this topic, ***but how true it is***—and I've experienced it and probably have been part of the problem at times, as well—***that all of us can relate to this one way or the other in many circumstances that have come our way over the many years!***

The fool has no delight in understanding, and fools despise Godly wisdom! They always rely on their own understanding and communicate such: 'Don't confuse me with facts!'

Proverbs 18:2: "A fool has no delight in understanding, but only that his heart may discover itself."

A fool's response exposes his heart! It's like growing up as a young child and talking to your mother and being caught taking a cupcake and being in trouble for doing that! You can hear the mother scolding the child and the child responds to the mother in a pleading way: 'Listen mom, listen!'

He wants to explain as he has an excuse for doing it. He actually is exposing his heart to his mother, but to no avail. Where does a child get this type of reaction? We all do it! Look at the example of Adam and Eve at the beginning.

When God asked Adam, 'Did you eat of the Tree, Adam was quick to answer:

The woman that You gave me, God, it's her fault! Listen, God, listen to me; let me explain!
The woman that You gave me, it was her fault!

That's very similar to the analogy that was given of a little child taking a cupcake.

We see that is the nature of mankind; we all have it. It's also used when we're in trouble. We use this when we're hurt and we don't want to lash out. We don't want to hurt the other person, but we want the other person to clearly understand that they hurt us.

It may be real, and sometimes it may just be imagined. We say that 'the person doesn't understand my feelings. How I felt' when they said that or did that. Fools go around trying to explain themselves and trying to explain their heart. That, brethren, can lead to self-justification!

That also is foolish and not a wise response! So, what is a wise response? We've seen lot's of negative. So far the Proverbs contrasted the wise with the foolish. Solomon leaves this up to us to discover this wisely.

Let's take a look at some possible responses; 2-Sam. 16 is the story about Shimei cursing David:

2-Samuel 16:9: "And Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, 'Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please let me go over and take off his head.' Then the king said, 'What have I to do with you, sons of Zeruiah? Let him curse because the LORD has said to him, "Curse David." Who then shall say, "Why have you done so?"' And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, 'Behold, my son, who came forth from my loins, seeks my life; and how much more now *this* Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has spoken to him. It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day'" (vs 9-12).

Some other verses to consider would be Matt. 18; we all know this when brethren have difficulties amongst themselves. If your brother sins against you Prov. 10 points to hate and love.

Proverbs 10:12: "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins."

1-Corinthians 6:6: "Instead, brother goes to a *court of law* with brother, and this before unbelievers. Now therefore, there is altogether an utter fault among you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?" (vs 6-7)—*take the hit!*

That's basically what Paul is saying to them. There is so much to consider, so much to understand. Remember what we read in Prov. 1:6. *Solomon did tell us the wise answer on purpose!* It is left to us to figure out! If you're interested, this might be a good place to take a look and see what you can determine what would be a wise answer in this situation. We can all possibly give an answer, but let's read on:

Proverbs 29:20: "Do you see a man hasty in his words? *There is more hope for a fool than for him.*"

This is someone who is quick to speak! Do you know people like that? This is someone who right there, *he is right; he has something to say right away!*

He speaks before hearing the whole matter! Have you ever experienced that? *He makes a snap decision! He doesn't consider the consequences!* That can be a deadly thing, and I know that we can all get entrapped in doing that sometime in our lives.

Let's look at the example represented by Jephthah, who vows to sacrifice if God gives him victory. *God did!* The person he saw first was his own daughter coming out! (Judges 11).

An imprudent commitment is also made before men! Naboth's rejection of David's decision to share Naboth goods; he refuses to feed David's group. Abigail was described as being wise saved Naboth from destruction.

James tells us to be quick to listen and slow to speak. Sometimes it's just sit back listen and be slow to speak. Naboth was fast to speak and never listened to those who were around him.

Why is it worse for him than someone who is a fool? *Because a fool can be saved from his foolishness!* Hasty words often bind a person to his troubles. Hasty words are prideful words, and 'pride comes before the fall!'

The wise are like those born with a silver spoon in their mouth; they have terrific value. They have a great privilege and responsibility.

Proverbs 10:20: "The tongue of the righteous *is as* choice silver; the heart of the wicked *is* worth little." ***Pretty plain!***

Psalms 37:10: "It is but a little while, and the wicked shall be no more; yea, you shall diligently consider his place, *but* he shall not be *there*."

The value is not only for us if we are wise, but for all those who are around us, for their benefit. It's someone you can rely on. The mind or heart of the wicked can't be relied on!

'The heart is deceitful above all things,' as we know! When he speaks from the heart the wicked speaks foolishness and destruction. The wicked are selfish and foolish. It is hard to find any wisdom in a fool because of all the dross that he carries.

The words of the wicked are like a punch in the mouth, it's not expected. It's not just because they are mean, but because they are destructive at the same time. Remember Satan's words to Eve; the words were very smooth, smoother than butter! But war was in his heart. Softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. We all know what happened to Adam

and Eve. The words of the wise are like giving a kiss.

Proverbs 24:6: "For by wise counsel you shall make your war; and in a multitude of *wise* counselors *there is* safety."

Wise counselors are supposed to be soft, gentle and of course, truthful! There must be truth in love! The words are righteous, they are neither false nor crooked.

Proverbs 8:9: "They *are* all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge.

It's very straight forward and easy to understand, because the words are based on God's wisdom. Someone will always give an honest answer when asked about something or when we judge about something.

We can be relied on; we should be relied on! Someone you like to be around. That's how it should be! Isn't a kiss on the lips better than a punch on the mouth?

I only skimmed a few important, but pertinent ideas here today. There are many, many verses in the Bible that you can study for the wise use of the tongue. Unfortunately, many examples of foolish misuse of the tongue.

Solomon's Proverbs is an excellent book to go through. Words of wisdom are meant for wisdom, understanding and with the understanding, discipline for living God's way! They were recorded for the young and old to learn from. It's an instruction booklet!

As God's people we are to think Godly thoughts after Him. Not our own thoughts! *Not relying upon:*

- ourselves
- our emotions
- our feelings
- our opinions
- our own understanding

but on God's words as revealed to us through the Scriptures!

If we continue to grow in grace and knowledge, then ***the words that we speak will be God's words!*** That is our goal. They will be right, just, and fair! ***Then they will be like a kiss on the lips!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 1:1-6
- 2) Proverbs 15:2

- 3) Proverbs 1:7
- 4) John 14:26
- 5) 2 Peter 3:18
- 6) 2 Timothy 3:16
- 7) Matthew 16:13-19, 21-23
- 8) Proverbs 12:15
- 9) 2 Kings 5:9-14
- 10) Proverbs 10:19
- 11) 2 Kings 20:12-18
- 12) Nehemiah 2:19-20
- 13) Proverbs 18:2
- 14) 2 Samuel 16:9-12
- 15) Proverbs 10:12
- 16) 1 Corinthians 6:6-7
- 17) Proverbs 29:20
- 18) Proverbs 10:20
- 19) Psalm 37:10
- 20) Proverbs 24:6
- 21) Proverbs 8:9

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 18
- Judges 11

Also referenced: Article:

[Are Facts and Opinion Really that Different?](https://medium.com/arc-digital/are-facts-and-opinions-really-so-different-44609188ddec)

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{<https://medium.com/arc-digital/are-facts-and-opinions-really-so-different-44609188ddec>}

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