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THE TONGUE: BUILDING AND DESTRUCTION; BIBLICAL PROPER WAYS TO USE THE TONGUE

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Abstract

The tongue is the smallest part of the body but it will be very destructive if not well controlled. Consider the position of the tongue in the man's body: (a) the ligaments (rope) that held it to the floor of the mouth. (b) The soldiers (**32 teeth**) that are guarding it. (c) The walls (**lips**) with which it was sealed, yet the Bible enjoins us to get more (**padlock**) to bridle it. "If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (**James 1: 26 KJV**). Notwithstanding all these, the tongue will still come out to release poisons that are capable of causing irrecoverable dangers from time to time. This shows the power of the tongue. This study will help us to know how to put our tongues under control.

Introduction

Words are powerful; they can bring healing, curse, blessing and condemnation and can inflict injury on the heart. One cannot recover any word he released from his mouth. That is why one should be careful the way he releases words. One may be able to control the tongue for years, yet only one uncontrollable word he released, has the potential or ability of damaging relationship that will never be the same again.

The tongue is a weapon that can bring anguish into the life of every human being on earth. Tongue could produce scars that lasts for a life time, scars that may never heal properly. The bible teaches us that our tongue has great power to heal or to destroy, to bless or to curse. Nebuchadnezzar boasted with words on how wonderful and strong he was and he became like an animal for 7 years from such boastful words.

History is full of the realities of the power of tongue. Most of the great events of history are connected to the speech of small and great men and women. The point is that our speech affects every part of our being. If we control what we say and how we say it, it will control the rest of us positively. A single word can have a devastating effect on our lives. We can hurt with our tongue; we can heal with our tongue. Word is powerful. Word is seed. If planted well, no matter the years, it must bear fruit.

Definition

The tongue is a fleshy muscular organ in the mouth of a mammal, used for tasting, licking, swallowing, and articulating as in human. The tongue is a muscular organ in the mouth of vertebrates that manipulates food for mastication and is used in the act of swallowing.

The tongue's upper surface (dorsum) is covered by taste buds housed in numerous lingual papillae. It is sensitive and kept moist by saliva and is richly supplied with nerves and blood vessels.

The tongue serves as a natural means of cleaning the teeth. The major function of the tongue is the enabling of speech in human and vocalization in other animals.

Power of the Tongue

Our tongues have a lot of power. In the book of Proverb 18:21, it is written "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits." In the book of Matthew 18:18, it is written: "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth is loosed in heaven"

The tongue has buried and denied many people great opportunities. Many people have used different means like accusation, fault finding, and blackmailing to discredit others. For example, in the book of Jeremiah 18:18b the people conspired and decided to use tongues to discredit Jeremiah "Come let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words" some of the factors that can generate back biting from an enemy are; over familiarity, offences and envy. However, you are not the first neither will you be the last that will be offended through the power of the tongue.

In the book of Psalm 140:3, King David used serpent to describe how deep the word of an evil person is and it says "They sharpen their tongues like a serpent, the poison of asps is under their lips." The bites of a serpent do not kill its victim immediately, rather it dries its victim's blood after some time. Jesus was also accused of using the spirit of Beelzebub. Based on this, do not yield to what your enemies are saying about you.

God values his word more than His name. God magnifies His words above His name because God's integrity is behind His words. So, man as the image of God, should think before he talks. Rebecca knew the power of a spoken word and she encouraged his son Jacob to pretend to be Esau in order to get the blessings of Esau from his father.

The Wrong and Right Way to Use the Tongue

The tongue can be used as a weapon to harm and destroy. It can be a tool to build and heal. Tongues may be used helpfully, for the glory of God and for the blessing of others. It can be misused, bringing sorrow and fear to others. The right and wrong use of the tongue are:

1. The tongue has power to destroy:

Critical words judge and find fault. They tear down, beat up, and focus on defects and inadequacies. "With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbour, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered" (**Proverbs 11:9 ESV**).

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, but that it may benefit those who listen" (**Ephesians 4:29 NIV**).

The tongue has power to destroy. In the book of **James 3:5-8** it is written

... even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things, behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth, And the tongue among our members, that of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole-body, and setteth on fire the curse of nature, and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts and of birds; and of serpents and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind. But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison (KJV).

Here, James emphasizes the fact that the tongue is a small member of the body, but it can cause great destruction. What the mouth says comes from the heart as written in the book of **Matthew 12:34-35**

You brood of vipers, how can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil (ESV).

“An ungodly man diggeth up evil; and in his lips, there is as a burning fire” **Proverbs 16:27 KJV**. **Proverbs 12:18** states “... there is that speaketh like piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health. This indicates that an evil tongue can also destroy. Sharp words cut and slice like a chef’s knife. Sharp words include insults, curse, words usually spoken in anger and bitterness etc. “you who practice deceit, your tongue plots destruction; it is like a sharpened razor” (**Psalms 52:2 NIV**).

2. The tongue has power to direct:

Our words can direct others into the right or the wrong path. In the book of **Proverbs 18:21** it is written “death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof” (KJV). Beware of the idle word, the questionable story, the half-truth, the deliberate lie. All these could change the course of a life and lead it to destruction, and on the other hand, the right word may direct someone out of sin and into right path.

3. The tongue has power to build:

Love is the perfect regulator of the tongue. Love seeks a person’s eternal best and tells the truth in a constructive way. It never flatters, but warns, confronts and protects. **John 13:35** says “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (ESV). Always speak the truth in love as it is written in the book of **Ephesians 4:15** “rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (ESV). Check the motive behind what you want to say. Sincere love blesses people.

4. The tongue has power to heal:

Sincere compliments and words of affirmation strengthened people’s positive traits. Spiritual tongue is a medicine; it will heal and not hurt. See **Proverbs 12: 18^b** “... but the tongue of the wise is health.” Soothing words heal. “The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit” (**Proverbs 15:4 NIV**). “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (**Proverbs 15:1 ESV**).

Sins of the Tongue

Most of the sins we commit are related to speech such as; chattering, murmuring, filthy talk, falsehood, flattering, backbiting, strife, slander etc. The tongue is a small part of the body that

makes boasts. The tongue is described as a fire, a world of evil among the parts of body. William Beacon Steves stated thus: “It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.” All kinds of animals have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. The book of James described the tongue as “a restless evil, full of deadly poison.” James compares the tongue to ‘rudder’ of a ship. The largest vessels, in the fiercest gales, and on the most boisterous seas- are steered by a small rudder; a little and almost insignificant piece of wood, in comparison with the gigantic ship which it controls. Yet, as small as it is, by it, the helmsman steers the rolling and toppling vessel, and guides it through storm and billows to the haven where he would be. Just so, the tongue as little and as like the rudder, kept always out of sight, controls the whole body. The tongue is to the life of man what the rudder is to the ship. It steers all his movement and guides him into the part of peace or into the pit of woe. According to William Bacon Stevens, James compares the power of the tongue to a fire. “Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles”, and the tongue is a fire; a spark lighting on the dry wood of a forest, may spread to the trunk, it may catch the next tree, and thus progress, until the whole forest shall be burned by one little spark. So a spark-like word dropped from a tongue burning with anger or with envy may fall into a family, a church, a community, a town, a whole country and set them in a blaze of consuming burning rage.

Does not all history confirm this statement of the bible that ‘life and death are in the power of the tongue’? Has not strife of tongues been the fruitful cause of nearly all the wars which have saturated the ground with blood? Has not an evil tongue been that which has broken up the peace of families, churches, communities and nations? Slander and back-biting issue forth from the tongue? Based on this, some sins of the tongue are:

♦ The sin of meaningless and unimportant talk

Meaningless and unimportant talk means chattering. “Whoever winks maliciously causes grief, and a chattering fool comes to ruin” (**Proverbs 10:10NIV**). St Paul speaks of such chatterers as ‘busybodies’ who out of idleness roam about from house to house retailing the talk which they have heard. The chatterer is never happy as when talking. He must speak, it matters little what he says, and hence he rattles away, telling what he says, telling everything and anything that comes into his mind. A chatterer is a talebearer. Social misery is found in his tongue. He scatters, fire arrows and death and then pretends to be joking’ **Proverbs 26:19** says “is one who deceives their neighbour and says, ‘I am only joking’ (NIV). These chatterers with their tongues can set in a flame a whole town and community. It is impossible to estimate the evils of this unrestrained chattering of an unbridled tongue. It is the fruitful source of strife, anger, and heart-burning, dissensions in families, deformation and malice.

The bible says that a chattering fool comes to ruin. It was commanded in the Law of Moses ‘you shall not go up and down as a talebearer among your people’. And the bible says ‘the words of a talebearer are as wounds. And Solomon declares, ‘when words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise’. **Proverbs 6:16-19 says:**

“there are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: a haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devise wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers” (**ESV**)

All these attributes are in the character of a chatterer.

♦The sin of malicious statement

A false malicious injured statement known as slander is a spoken word against a person's reputation. Under malicious statement are backbiting which is speaking evil of one behind his back, every abusive word applied to a man is designed to brand the character of that person, and render it odious in the sight of others. Such a tongue is like a viper's tongue lurking in secret and suddenly shooting out its fatal venom.

Malicious statement can also be done by impute false motives to good actions. Malicious statement is also a way of distort and pervert views, words and actions by giving them a false construction, suppressing what might appear good, magnifying what might seem to be evil. According to William Bacon Stevens "... slander is like taking a man's words and deeds, and like Romish inquisitors, stretching them upon the rack until they become disjointed, and the once symmetrical form is all distorted and wrapped, by reason of the unjust treatment to which slander subjects it." Another way of slandering is by insinuation, expression of doubt, lack of confidence. In this way, according to William Bacon Stevens, "... without any downright assertions but by skewed remarks and masked calumnies is the character of your neighbour made to suffer, distrust of him is spread abroad, and he is pierced through by the narrow of malevolence, which the tongue of the slanderer, like a bow bent and charged with lies, has shot against him." A good character is one of the richest estates man can own. 'A good name says the wise man, is better than precious ointment' yet a slanderer steals away this good name, and seeks to ruin this goodly possession.

God utters fierce denunciation, 'whosoever slanders his neighbour in secret, him will I cut off'. He who utters slander is a fool; because while he is attempting to kill the character of his neighbour, he is slaying his own.

♦ The sin of murmuring and complaining

This is another sin of the tongue. There are those who are never content with what they have. They never give full credit for goodness, but always overestimate bad things. Peevishness is the habited tone of their talk. They make the air around them pestilent with the poisonous exhalations of their complaining tongue. No character escapes their trap. The more polish the luster a character has, the more they delight to tarnish it, by the breath of slander. Such persons are engaged in detraction. They glory in their shame. God is against this sin of murmuring and complaining as there are strong threatening and God's deserving punishment of the murmurings of the children of Israel, and is frequently mentioned in the bible. Even in our families, such people cause problems.

♦The sin of misleading witnesses or falsehood

This is a situation where somebody will be saying that a person did things which he did not do. Example was the case of Naboth where some people were asked to testify against Naboth whose vine yard Ahab coveted. False witness is sometimes spoken openly, sometimes in secret but always with malicious intent. This falsehood includes; all sorts of lying both positive and negative lie, direct lie, implication lie, malignant lie, and sportive lie. Every departure from truth is falsehood, and every falsehood is a sin against one's own soul, a sin against your fellow men, and a sin against God which He will punish severely and fearfully. God says, 'no one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence'. God detests

lying lips but delights in people who are trustworthy. Lying lips are abomination to the Lord as it is written in it the book of **Proverbs 12:22** “Lying lips are abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight” (ESV). ‘... all liars their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphurs’ as it is written in the book of **Revelation 21:8** “... but the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and **all liars**, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (KJV). In the book of **Proverbs 25:18** it is written “A man who bears false witness against his neighbour is like a war club, or a sword, or a sharp arrow” (ESV). In other words, a lying tongue is like a deadly weapon which can be used to harm others near or far. Satan is described as a father of all lies as it is written in the book of **John 8:44** “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (ESV).

♦ The sin of unpleasant words

This is a sin of filthy talking. That is to say, saying unpleasant words. God says “do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths; nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place”. He declares that nothing that defiles shall enter the gate of heaven, that only he who has pure hands and a clean heart shall enter into the kingdom of God. Every impure word is not acceptable to God. Every impure word is a sin. It is alarming that even in this our polite and modest society, there is too much of this sin of filthy talk. The unclean word is an evidence of unclean heart, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The unclean heart like volcano is always releasing unclean words over the fairest aspect of our society. Emilie Ann Taylor (2012) stated “although some tongues love the taste of gossip and dirty words but those who are decent and love God don’t use dirty words.”

♦ The sin of undeserved praise

Undeserved praise means flattering. It also means exaggerating the good qualities of others in order to gain from them. The motive behind the sin of this tongue is the desire to please the person we are speaking to in order to secure his favour, or elevate us in his regards, or desire to have him reciprocate the compliment and flatter us. Flattering is used in all ranks and classes, such as in the family, society, business, church, in politics and professional life. One can now ask how true it is. King Solomon says; ‘he who flatters his neighbour spreads a net for his feet’. God says; ‘a flattering mouth works ruin’, the Lord shall cut off all flattering lips. “May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts” (**Psalms 12:3** ESV). The bible speaks of the flattering as a characteristic of the wicked and not the righteous; “for there is no faithfulness in their mouth, their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulcher; they flatter with their tongue” (**Psalms 5:9** KJV).

♦ The sin of taking God’s name in vain

This is the sin of profaning God’s name. It is written in the book of **Exodus 20:7** “... you shall not take the name of Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain” (ESV). This sin is similar to blasphemy, which means to use God’s name in a dishonest way. Many shift blames to God after they must have made mistakes as a result of their selfish desire. Many swore with the name of God knowing full well that they swore falsely. In

the book of **Ezekiel 13:7** it is written “... have you not seen false visions and uttered lying divinations when you say, ‘the Lord declares’ though I have not spoken? (NIV).

♦ The sin of proud

A proud tongue is a boastful tongue and it does not discern what it says. People with boastful tongues find it difficult to distinguish their words as they should. **Psalm 12:4** says “... those who say, ‘with our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?’” (ESV). This type of tongue is condemned and it indicates that God hates a boastful tongue. In **verse 3 of Psalm 12**, it is written “May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boast” (ESV).

♦ The sin of backbiting

According to MSGR Charles Pope (2017), backbiting means “talking about others behind their backs, the secretive injury of a person’s good name.” This is also paying unnecessary attention to the fault of others so as to harm their reputations. A backbiter is someone who uses his tongue against another when the person is not present but cannot face the person with his charges when the person is present. “A false witness who breathes out lies, and who sows discord among brothers” (**Proverbs 6:19** ESV).

♦ The sin of overused tongue

The book of Ecclesiastes described this type of tongue as hasty to utter words. “Do not rash with thy mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore, let your words be few. For a dream comes with much business, and a fool’s voice with many words” (**Ecclesiastes 5:2-3** ESV).

♦ Sin of spreading rumour or tale bearing

James L. Melton (2001) stated that “tale bearing (carrying and telling tales) spreads all sorts of hurtful information around, and Satan uses such information to hinder and tear down God’s work.” **Proverbs 18:8** says “The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly” (KJV).

Ways to Tame and Control the Tongue

James 1:26 says “if any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (KJV). **James 3:8-10** and it says: “but no human being can tame the tongue. It is restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, **these ought not to be so**” (ESV).

According to Kegan Mosier

Some words bring darkness and despair, and are rooted in fear. Some words bring light and hope, and are rooted in love. We have words that are never released and words that should never have been released. We have words that build up, and ones that tear down. I believe that when we speak something out of a place of fear, fear is “manifested” into our environment that is fear spoken into existence. The same goes with love... these things are made manifest. (2015)

Based on this, the tongue can be tamed through the following ways:

♦ **Speak edify words**

Avoid unwholesome and perverse talk. Speak life in others. Do not gossip for gossip is like an addiction that feels good at the moment but afterwards, it leaves one empty and drained. “whoso keepeth his mouth and tongue keepeth his soul from troubles” **Proverbs 21:23 KJV**). In other words, without a gossip, a quarrel dies down. Speak words that edify, that encourage and that are filled with love and truth. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that may minister grace unto the hearers” (**Ephesians 4:29 KJV**).

For more clarification, to encourage means to give support, confidence, or hope. To comfort means to soothe, counsel, or bring freedom from pain. To edify means to cultivate, develop, and build up. Ask God to guide you to speak words that will honour Him and accomplish His purposes. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. **James 3:13** says, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (**KJV**). Your words indicate what is in your heart as it is written in the book of **Luke 6:45** “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (**KJV**). When the thoughts in your heart are focused on what is good and true, your words will reflect it, bringing honour to God and to others.

♦ **Be silent often**

Silence is golden; you do not always have to speak. Too much talk leads to sin. Be sensible and keep your mouth shut. “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise” (**Proverbs 10:19 KJV**). “Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent” (**Proverbs 17:27-28 ESV**).

♦ **Avoid hurtful words and ask for forgiveness at every offence**

When you speak words that you should not have spoken, seek forgiveness. “For in many things we offend all. If any man offends not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (**Proverbs 3:2 KJV**). “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (**Ephesians 4:31-32 KJV**).

♦ **Be quick to listen and slow to speak**

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (**James 1:19 KJV**). One reason why people talk more is that they want to impress their conversational counterpart, showing them how smart they are. Another reason while people talk more may be because they are nervous, proud and excited. Talking too much can lead us to say more than we should say and begin to exaggerating truths, lying etc. It can also antagonize those listening to us. To avoid regrets after you must have spoken, take two or more seconds to consider your words before you speak or before you make a reply.

♦ Speak the right word at the right time

“The lips of the wise spread knowledge, but the hearts of the fools are not upright” (**Proverbs 15:7 NIV**). There is time for everything including when to speak and what to speak. Often times, we say the right thing at the wrong time and the wrong thing at the right time.

♦ Avoid complaints

Nobody enjoys hearing complaining, and the people that seem to enjoy hearing complaining do not have your interests in mind. If people do not engage you or agree with you when you complain about yourself and others, it is because you are making them uncomfortable. When you are expressing something to someone, and the person seems not to understand and still continue to debate making you to talk more, you need not to continue. “When words are many, transgression is not lacking; but whosoever restrains his lips is prudent” (**Proverbs 10:19 ESV**). “Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words” (**Proverbs 23:9 KJV**). Be sensible and keep your mouth shut. There is something to be said for saying nothing.

♦ Be kind and soft in your words

To avoid conflict and confrontation, you need to speak words that are seasoned with grace so as not to stir up anger. “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (**Proverbs 15:1 ESV**). Do not use flattering words, mean your word. We are often being encouraged to tell people what they want to hear, even when it is not true. But honesty is the best. “A man who flatters his neighbour spreads a net for his own feet” (**Proverbs 29:5 AMP**). “A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin” (**Proverbs 26:28 ESV**). Always say what you mean. Seek the truth and speak the truth. “Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right” (**Proverbs 16:13 KJV**). Be conscious of your words. Taste your words before you spit them out. Be silent when you are supposed to and speak up when you are supposed to do so. Consider the consequences of your word. Think about the effect your words could have on the other person or on the situation in general before you say it. Put yourself in the position of the person you want to release the words to. Think on how you will feel if someone else said such to you. Remember that words can hurt. Even if the person seems to forgive you, they will always remember how they felt when you used such words on them. The person may not react, but it could damage your relationship with him or her. Even if someone hurts you with words, do not hurt him with rash words. Negative words breeds negativity and it can tear someone down. Say only what is appropriate. Control your tongue by thinking what you want, but saying only what is appropriate. If you do not have anything good to say, do not say anything at all. Just be polite, smile and change the topic.

♦ Depend on God to help you

With human efforts alone, no one can be able to tame his tongue. “But no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison” (**Proverbs 3:8 ESV**). Only by the grace of God in your life can you seek to control your speech. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (**Philippians 4:13 KJV**).

♦ Choose and use your words carefully

When you run into someone who tells how great you are or someone who hurts you with wicked comment, just remember to choose your words carefully. “A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit” (**Proverbs 15:4 ESV**). “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence” (**Proverbs 10:11 ESV**). “The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” (**Proverbs 12:18 NIV**). “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits” (**Proverbs 18:21 ESV**).

What the Bible Says About the Tongue

“For he who would love life and see many good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit” (**1Peter 3:10 NKJV**).

♦ Guard your tongue

The bible says that he who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction (**Proverbs 13:3**). Also **Proverbs 21:23** says that whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from trouble. Ade (Gboyega) ESAN (2018) stated: “Using the tongue wisely will protect our integrity, reputation, relationships, dreams and aspirations, resources, health, life etc. on the contrary, a misused tongue will expose us to several attacks and much havoc”

♦ Guide your tongue

Just as the rudder our tongue is the steering wheel of our lives. It determines the direction of our life goes. The bible says in the book of **Proverbs 18:21** that death and life are in the power of the tongue and those who love it will eat its fruit and bear the consequences of their words. The truth is that our words have consequences and shape the direction of our lives.

♦ Gird your tongue

To gird means to prepare oneself for battle or for what is ahead. We must prepare our tongues to face greater challenges and opportunities. For instance, David’s tongue was prepared and ready for battle when he stood before Goliath at the valley of Elah. When Goliath cursed him with his gods, David retorted and began to address Goliath in warfare rhetoric and in the name of our Lord. We should always use our tongue to neutralize every negative tongue rising against us. (**Isaiah 54:17**).

♦ Gauge your tongue

A gauge is a measuring device. Our tongues also serve as a measuring device to evaluate our words and our lives. The bible says; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. We do not know intents and thoughts of people but we it by what is coming out of their mouths. Wise people guard their tongues because they are judged by their words. Our words are to be seasoned with salt.

Conclusion

The tongue can be the most destructive weapon on earth; its misuse has damaged more lives than all the weapons of war or disease on earth. The tongue can bring some of life’s greatest joys or greatest pain.

Controlling the tongue is one of the keys to a successful life. **Proverbs 21:23** says “whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles” (**KJV**). Also, **1Peter 3:10** says “for he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile” (**KJV**). Every responsible person is expected to keep his tongue under control by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that he can bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”... and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (**2 Corinthians 10: 5^b KJV**).

The tongue is small but powerful. Unbridled it dispenses deadly poison. Bridled by the Holy Spirit it blesses, refreshes, and gives life. Many have lost opportunities because they do not guard their tongue properly.

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