

**WORDS**  
Psalms 141:3  
By Raymond White

This is a collection of Bible verses about words. We are responsible to God not only for the things we do but also the words we say. Our constant conversations matter.

**[1] PSALMS**

***Psalms 17:3** I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*

***Psalms 34:13** Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*

***Psalms 39:1** I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. :2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.*

Controlling our mouths, bridling our tongue, restricting our words to what's right is necessary part of living a right life. In some situations it's best to say nothing at all, bad or good. When you're angry, just remain quiet and compose yourself before engaging conversation.

***Psalms 50:23** Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.*

Sometimes the kindest thing you can do for someone is praise, to encourage with a compliment, to make them feel good about themselves. And when you do that, you are glorifying God.

***Psalms 52:2** The tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. :3 Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.*

It's hard to enumerate all the many ways that our tongue can devise mischief. Men lie to seduce, salesmen misrepresent products, and politicians make promises they don't intend to keep.

***Psalms 56:5** Every day they wrest my words...*

They *twist* my words, to make me say what I did not say. This has to do with the law, making God's words say something other than what he did say. Today, this would include legislating from the bench. Judges are fond of creating new law by "discovering" unenumerated rights; rights that judges claim are in the constitution but are not.

***Psalms 62:4** ...they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.*

Good words are actual evil words when they are lies. People will often flatter only to ingratiate themselves when in fact they mean to harm. Words don't stand alone, intent matters.

***Psalms 101:5** Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off...*

This is the sin of gossip. Gossip can do incalculable damage, not only to its victim, but to the one who originated the gossip who, later realizing the extent of the damage, is racked with guilt and no way of repairing the damage.

***Psalms 116:11** ...All men are liars.*

Even the author of Psalms 116? Sort of paradoxical. But be that as it may, it is very practical to just assume that when a salesman is talking to you, he is lying. And proceed from there to untangle the truth. It's not that what he is saying isn't valuable to you, it's just that he's hiding something and you have to find out what it is. Caveat Emptor, let the buyer beware.

☛ ***Psalms 141:3** Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*

To really be a man of integrity, you need God's help. In a moment of rage or fear or temptation it is easy to say things you later regret. So enlisting God's help to control your mouth makes sense. That, and daily practice at self control.

## [2] PROVERBS

***Proverbs 2:16** To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words.*

It is not necessarily the lure of sex or a woman's beauty that draws the man to her, but the flattery of her words — she makes him feel good about himself. His ego is the bait.

This is true regardless of the rightness or wrongness of the woman's (or man's) intention. Certainly it is evil for a prostitute to flatter a customer into bed. But a woman in love who stokes her intended's ego with flattery to elicit a marriage proposal, that's a very good thing, so long as once they are married, they continue to support and shield each other's egos with some flattery now and then. Continued ego attention is the first line defense against the wiles of a seducer.

There's an old Loretta Lynn song that says it well: "You Ain't Woman Enough to Take My Man". Well, words have as much to do with marriage longevity as does sex.

***Proverbs 5:2** That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge. :3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil. :4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. :5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.*

Discreet words from knowledgeable lips keep a marriage together. Notice how much sin the author attributes to the woman's seductive words rather than to her seductive body.

***Proverbs 13:3** He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.*

Keep your mouth shut for your own safety's sake. There are words that can get you killed. 200 years ago, certain words could get you called to the field of honor and shot. In the early history of the American navy, more seamen died from duels than from warfare which is not only sad but stupid when you consider that sailors had better ways to die than killing each other.

***Proverbs 14:3** In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.*

Wise people say wise things that keep them out of trouble. But foolish people say things that get them into trouble, and quickly, like being hit with a rod.

***Proverbs 14:15** The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.*

You can say all sorts of nonsense and they'll be some fool who will believe you. P.T. Barnum said, "You can fool all the people so of the time, and some of the people all the time." It does seem though that some politicians are adept at fooling all the people all the time. How else are we to understand congress continually spending our country into bankruptcy, other than we are dumb enough to allow it, even demand it.

***Proverbs 15:4** A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.*

This can be closer to literal than figurative. Saying right things makes your life better and better like eating delicious and healthy fruit. But saying wrong things wounds your own spirit.

***Proverbs 15:23** A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!*

Face it. We all want to be smart, the witty genius whose words everyone else applauds. Well then, learn! Apply yourself to education and *make* yourself smart. Then when you say things that are actually smart, you begin to feel pretty good about yourself.

***Proverbs 15:28** The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.*

Think before you speak. Don't speak faster than you think.

***Proverbs 16:24*** Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

Not all flattery is bad, some is very good, especially when spoken to someone who really needs to hear kind words. Sometimes a kind word at the right moment is the difference between a ruined life and a successful life. Sometimes a kind word averts suicide.

***Proverbs 16:27*** An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. ***:28*** ...a whisperer separateth chief friends. ***:30*** ...moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.

Gossip can destroy just as surely as a runaway fire. A lifelong friendship can be destroyed by a lying gossip.

***Proverbs 17:27*** He that hath knowledge spareth his words...***:28*** Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

Wise words that are said economically are wiser still. And unwise words are wisely not said at all. The smartest thing that a fool can say is nothing.

***Proverbs 18:4*** The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters...

The old adage "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me" is simple not true. Words do more damage than you think. Words, like deep waters, can drown a man who is unable to escape.

***Proverbs 18:7*** A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.

This is true in so many ways, you could write a book on this one verse. For just one point: men think they've got their evil pretty well hidden, but they're always found out because, as Jesus said, your words are where your heart is; that is, evil people can't help but say what is in their heart. And why is that? Because they honestly think they are right, and so they have no hesitation but to say what they feel thus exposing their evil.

***Proverbs 18:8*** The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

Gossip cuts, and harms like poison in the belly. Gossip hurts two ways: externally like a sword wound and internally like poison. It can hurt you by turning people against you, a surface injury, and can also make you feel horrible about yourself, a deep injury.

***Proverbs 18:13*** *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.*

Get your facts straight before you open your mouth. We can paraphrase the carpenter's maxim "measure twice, cut one" to get "think twice, speak once."

The applications are many. Here are a few.

A person looks like a fool when he joins a conversation and offers opinions before he even knows what the conversation is about.

A person looks like a fool when he answers a question before he knows what the question is.

A suspect looks guilty when he reflexively and vehemently denies an accusation. For example, when a suspect under interrogation starts swearing to God that he didn't do it, he almost certainly did do it. We get a feeling of this from Queen Gertrude's words (Shakespeare's Hamlet): "The lady doth protest too much, methinks."

***Proverbs 18:20*** *A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.*

The *fruit of his mouth* certainly means words. Politicians, salesmen, attorneys, writers, and others make their living by words. Choose your words carefully and you'll eat well. Good words are a good way to make a living.

***Proverbs 18:21*** *Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it [life] shall eat the fruit thereof.*

If you love life enough to discipline your mouth and speak only wise words, you'll live longer and be happy.

***Proverbs 21:23*** *Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.*

*Keepeth his mouth* may mean to shut up or it may mean to keep control of what you say. Sometimes the shutting up is the better choice.

***Proverbs 22:11*** *He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.*

This is talking about a true gentleman with natural courtesy, not out of a desire to impress, but his genuine concern for the feelings of others guides his mouth.

***Proverbs 22:14*** *The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.*

This describes the power of words; specifically, flattery. The man is seduced not by the whore's beauty but by her words. It is his male ego that lays the trap. He wants to feel good about himself and she provides the words.

Wives should understand this. And husbands too. This works just as well the other way around. Husbands should note that wives also have egos that need protecting. And if you constantly shatter her ego, there's some guy out there who has the right flattering words she wants to hear.

***Proverbs 25:11*** *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. :12*  
*As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprovener upon an obedient ear.*

Successful instruction takes two: a wise reprovener who is skilled at saying exactly what must be said, and a wise listener. It matters that you make yourself good at what you say so you really do make an impact of the right kind. If you can't teach, sit down and let somebody else teach.

***Proverbs 26:4*** *Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like unto him.*

This verse points out the uselessness of arguing with a fool. A fool may say something so outlandishly stupid (liberals do it all the time) that there's no point arguing with him. No amount of facts, logic, or reasoning will convince him of the truth. If you let him engage you in a debate, you will only end up looking like a fool. So it's better to just leave him be, although you can't always as the next verse says.

***Proverbs 26:5*** *Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.*

This verse says exactly the opposite. You *must* answer a fool or he will think he's won by default. So, which is it? Engage his stupidity or not? It's not always clear. Jesus sometimes engaged his enemies in conversation and sometimes he avoided confrontation.

***Proverbs 29:11*** *A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. :20* *Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him.*

When a conversation is on a role, the momentum of it can sometimes cause an "oops!" moment where you say something you really wish you hadn't. We call that a faux pas. Just slow the pace of your words so that your thoughts can run ahead of your words.

### [3] ECCLESIASTES

***Ecclesiastes 3:7*** *...a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*

Sometimes silence is a virtue, sometimes it's just cowardice. When should you speak and when should you not? Knowing the difference is the real skill, and the real virtue.

***Ecclesiastes 5:2** Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. :3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is know by multitude of words.*

It's the doing that matters, not the saying. Fools generally have a lot to say, but deliver on very little of it.

***Ecclesiastes 5:6** Suffer not thy mouth to cause they flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?*

How many ways can your mouth sin? The list is long. Bad language (profanity, vulgarity, cursing, etc.), lying, deceit, seduction, fraud, anger, gossip, false witness, and many others. Any of that can destroy your best efforts and set God against you.

***Ecclesiastes 7:22** For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.*

When your words injure others, you know you're guilty. You feel the pain of the pain you caused others. And that's really a good thing.

#### [4] ISAIAH

***Isaiah 6:5** Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

What were the unclean words that Isaiah was speaking? He doesn't say. God leaves it to our imagination. Profanity? Anger? Flirtation? There are many possibilities. But now Isaiah is called to cease speaking unholy words and to speak holy words from the mouth of God. Such, too, is our calling.