

## Speech in Proverbs

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## Speech in general

Importance of what we say

- 10:11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, / But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.  
10:20 The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver, / The heart of the wicked is worth little.  
10:21 The lips of the righteous feed many, / But fools die for lack of understanding.  
11:11 By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, / But by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.  
12:13 An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, / But the righteous will escape from trouble.  
12:14 A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth, / And the deeds of a man's hands will return to him.  
13:2a From the fruit of a man's mouth he eats good ...  
18:6 A fool's lips bring strife, / And his mouth calls for blows.  
18:7 A fool's mouth is his ruin, / And his lips are the snare of his soul.  
18:20 With the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach will be satisfied, / He will be satisfied with the product of his lips.  
18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, / And those who love it will eat its fruit.  
21:23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue, / Guards his soul from troubles.

Wisdom

- 10:14 Wise men store up knowledge, / But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.  
15:7 The lips of the wise spread knowledge, / But the hearts of fools are not so.  
22:17-21 Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, / And apply your mind to my knowledge;  
For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, / That they may be ready on your lips ...  
Have I not written to you excellent things ... / That you may correctly answer him who sent you?  
24:7 Wisdom is too exalted for a fool, / He does not open his mouth in the gate.  
26:7 Like the legs which are useless to the lame, / So is a proverb in the mouth of fools.  
26:9 Like a thorn which falls into the hand of a drunkard, / So is a proverb in the mouth of fools.  
30:5-6 Every word of God is tested ... / Do not add to his words / Or he will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.

Truth

- 12:19 Truthful lips will be established forever, / But a lying tongue is only for a moment.  
12:22 Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, / But those who deal faithfully are his delight.  
14:5 A trustworthy witness will not lie, / But a false witness utters lies.  
14:25 A truthful witness saves lives, / But he who utters lies is treacherous.  
17:4 An evildoer listens to wicked lips; / A liar pays attention to a destructive tongue.  
17:7b A lip of abundance is not fitting for a fool, / Much less are lying lips to a prince.  
19:5 A false witness will not go unpunished, / And he who tells lies will not escape.  
19:9 A false witness will not go unpunished, / And he who tells lies will perish.  
21:6 The acquisition of treasures by a lying tongue / Is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.  
21:28 A false witness will perish, / But the man who listens to the truth will speak forever.  
29:12 If a ruler pays attention to falsehood, / All his ministers become wicked.

## Righteousness

- 10:20 The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver, / The heart of the wicked is worth little.  
10:31 The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom, / But the perverted tongue will be cut out.  
10:32 The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable, / But the mouth of the wicked what is perverted.  
16:10 A divine decision is in the lips of the king, / His mouth should not err in judgment.  
16:13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings, / And he who speaks right is loved.  
17:20 He who has a crooked heart finds no good, / And he who is perverted in his language falls into evil.  
19:1 Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity / Than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool.  
31:8-9 Open your mouth for the mute, / For the rights of all the unfortunate.  
Open your mouth, judge righteously, / And defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.

## Healing

- 12:18 There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, / But the tongue of the wise brings healing.  
12:25 Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, / But a good word makes it glad.  
15:4 A healing tongue is a tree of life, / But perversion in it is the crushing of the spirit.  
15:26 Evil plans are an abomination to the LORD, / But pleasant words are pure.  
16:24 Pleasant words are a honeycomb, / Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.  
27:9 Oil and perfume make the heart glad, / So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend.  
31:26 She opens her mouth in wisdom, / And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.  
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13:17 A wicked messenger falls into adversity, / But a faithful envoy *brings* healing.  
25:13 Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest / Is a faithful messenger to those who send him, /  
For he refreshes the soul of his masters.  
26:6 He cuts off *his own* feet *and* drinks violence / Who sends a message by the hand of a fool.

## Characteristics of wise speech

### Persuasiveness

- 15:2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, / But the mouth of fools spouts folly.  
16:21 The wise in heart will be called understanding, / And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.  
16:23 The heart of the wise instructs his mouth, / And adds persuasiveness to his lips.  
22:11 He who loves purity of heart / And has grace on his lips, the king is his friend.  
25:15 By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, / And a soft tongue breaks the bone.  
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18:4 The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; / A bubbling brook, a fountain of wisdom.  
20:5 A plan in the heart of a man is *like* deep water, / But a man of understanding draws it out.

### Restraint

- 10:19 When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, / But he who restrains his lips is wise.  
12:18 There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, / But the tongue of the wise brings healing.  
12:23 A prudent man conceals knowledge, / But the heart of fools proclaims folly.  
13:3 The one who guards his mouth preserves his life, / The one who opens wide his lips, ruin is his.  
14:33 Wisdom rests in the heart of one who has understanding, / But in the hearts of fools it is made known.  
15:28 The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, / But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.  
17:27 He who restrains his words knows, / and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.  
17:28 Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; / When he closes his lips, he is prudent.

18:2 A fool does not delight in understanding, / But only in revealing his own mind.  
18:13 He who gives an answer before he hears, / It is folly and shame to him.  
25:8-10 Do not go out hastily to argue your case; / Otherwise, what will you do in the end, / When your neighbor humiliates you?  
29:20 Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? / There is more hope for a fool than for him.

#### Aptness

15:23 A man has joy in an apt answer, / And how delightful is a timely word!  
24:26 He kisses the lips / Who gives a right answer.  
25:11-12 Like apples of gold in settings of silver / Is a word spoken in right circumstances.  
Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold / Is a wise reprove to a listening ear.  
25:20 Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar on soda, / Is he who sings songs to a troubled heart.  
27:14 He who blesses his friend with a loud voice early in the morning, / It will be reckoned a curse to him.

#### Reproof vs. flattery

9:7-8 He who corrects a scoffer gets dishonor for himself, /  
And he who reproves a wicked man *gets* insults for himself.  
Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, / Reprove a wise man and he will love you.  
19:25 Strike a scoffer and the naïve may become shrewd, /  
But reprove one who has understanding and he will gain knowledge.  
24:24-25 He who says to the wicked, 'You are righteous,' / Peoples will curse him, nations will abhor him; But  
to those who rebuke the wicked will be delight, / And a good blessing will come upon them.  
26:4-5 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, / Or you will also be like him. Answer a  
fool as his folly *deserves*, / That he not be wise in his own eyes.  
27:5-6 Better is open rebuke / Than love that is concealed.  
Faithful are the wounds of a friend, / But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.  
28:4 Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, / But those who keep the law strive with them.  
28:23 He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor / Than he who flatters with the tongue.  
29:5 A man who flatters his neighbor / Is spreading a net for his steps.  
29:9 When a wise man has a controversy with a foolish man, /  
The foolish man either rages or laughs, and there is no rest.

#### Characteristics of unwise speech

##### Idle talk, boasting

10:8,10 The wise of heart will receive commands, / But a babbling fool will be ruined.  
He who winks the eye causes trouble, / And a babbling fool will be ruined.  
14:23 In all labor there is profit, / But mere talk *leads* only to poverty.  
17:7a A lip of abundance is not fitting for a fool, / Much less are lying lips to a prince.  
25:14 *Like* clouds and wind without rain / Is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely.  
27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, / For you do not know what a day may bring forth.  
27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; / A stranger, and not your own lips.

##### Anger and quarreling

12:16 A fool's anger is known at once, / But a prudent man conceals dishonor.

15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, / But a harsh word stirs up anger.  
 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, / But the slow to anger calms a dispute.  
 17:14 The beginning of strife is *like* letting out water, / So abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.  
 19:11 A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, / And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.  
 20:3 Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, / But any fool will quarrel.  
 27:3 A stone is heavy and the sand weighty, / But the provocation of a fool is heavier than both of them.  
 29:11 A fool always loses his temper, / But a wise man holds it back.  
 30:32-33 If you have been foolish in exalting yourself / Or if you have plotted evil, put your hand on your mouth  
 For the churning of milk produces butter, / And pressing the nose brings forth blood; / So the churning of anger  
 produces strife.  
 (Some other verses on temper: 14:17, 14:29, 16:32, 19:19, 22:24-25, 25:28, 29:22)

#### Malice

10:11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, / But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.  
 10:18 He who conceals hatred has lying lips, / And he who spreads slander is a fool.  
 11:9 With his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor, /  
 But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.  
 12:6 The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, / But the mouth of the upright will deliver them.  
 12:20 Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, / But counselors of peace have joy.  
 13:2 From the fruit of a man's mouth he eats good, / But the desire of the treacherous is violence.  
 20:20 He who curses his father or his mother, / His lamp will go out in time of darkness.  
 24:28 Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, / And do not deceive with your lips.  
 26:23-28 Like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross / Are burning lips and a wicked heart.  
 He who hates disguises it with his lips, / But he lays up deceit in his heart.  
 When his voice is gracious, do not believe him, / For there are seven abominations in his heart.  
 Though his hatred covers itself with guile, / His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.  
 He who digs a pit will fall into it, / And he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him. A  
 lying tongue hates those it crushes, / And a flattering mouth works ruin.  
 29:8 Scorners set a city aflame, / But wise men turn away anger.  
 30:17 The eye that mocks a father / And scorns a mother, / The ravens of the valley will pick it out, /  
 And the young eagles will eat it.

#### Gossip and slander

11:12-13 He who despises his neighbor lacks heart, / But a man of understanding keeps silent.  
 He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, / But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.  
 16:27,28 A worthless man digs up evil, / While his words are like scorching fire.  
 A perverse man spreads strife, / And a slanderer separates intimate friends.  
 17:9 He who conceals a transgression seeks love, / But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.  
 18:8 The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, / And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.  
 20:19 He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, / Therefore do not associate with a gossip.  
 25:9-10 Argue your case with your neighbor, / And do not reveal the secret of another,  
 Or he who hears *it* will reproach you, / And the evil report about you will not pass away.  
 25:23 The north wind brings forth rain, / And a backbiting tongue, an angry countenance.  
 26:17-22 *Like* one who takes a dog by the ears / Is he who passes by {and} meddles with strife not belonging to him.  
 Like a madman who throws / Firebrands, arrows and death,

So is the man who deceives his neighbor, / And says, "Was I not joking?"

For lack of wood the fire goes out, / And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down.

*Like* charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, / So is a contentious man to kindle strife.

The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, / And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.

30:10 Do not slander a slave to his master, / Or he will curse you and you will be found guilty.