

# Words: Their Power, Weakness And Right Use

**Proverbs 6:16** [New King James] *“These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:”*

**Three of the seven abominations listed in God’s Word, the Christian Bible, are the misuse of words.**

**Matthew 12:36-37** [New King James] *“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”*

The Greek word translated “idle” is “argōs” meaning inactive, unemployed by implication, useless, unfruitful.

The same Greek word is translated “barren” in **2 Peter 1:8**.

The aim of this article is to help you avoid uttering “idle” words, by showing you three things about words.

## The Power of Words –

**Proverbs 18:21** [New King James] *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”*

The Hebrew word translated “life” is “chay” meaning to nourish, revive, and save.

The Hebrew word translated “death” is “mâveth” meaning to destroy or ruin.

The Hebrew word translated “love” is “âhab” meaning to have affection for, an intimate desire for or lusting after.

The Hebrew word translated “fruit” is “perîy” meaning the end result or reward.

The power of words is **not** all negative, it is all a matter of direction. Our words will “catch up on us” and we have to take the consequences of our words.

**Words have this power of life and death largely because of two qualities.**

### a) Power of penetration –

What is done **to** us, our bodies, is of far less account compared with what is done **in** us and this is where words build up or destroy. **They influence our feelings and wellbeing.**

**Proverbs 12:18** [New King James] *“There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health.”*

Cruel or clumsy words can wound a person. The Hebrew word translated “speaks” is “bata” meaning to babble, that is **to speak unadvisably or uncontrolled.**

Hebrew word translated “piercings” is “madqârâh” meaning to thrust through to reach the innermost parts.

In complete contrast, the same tongue can promote health if used with Godly wisdom, see verse seventeen for context referring to the wisdom found in God's Word, the Christian Bible, [John 17:17].

**Words are far more than a vibration of the air.**

**Proverbs 12:25** [New King James] *“Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad.”*

**The same penetrating effect of words can be for the good of those receiving them.**

**For the penetrating power of words to be positive they must be the result of forethought, we have to put our mind in gear before we open our mouth.**

**Proverbs 16:23-24** [New King James] *“The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips. Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.”*

The Hebrew word translated “pleasant” is “nâêm” meaning agreeable and suitable that will involve forethought.

**The penetrative effect of gossip –**

**Proverbs 18:8** [New King James] *“The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body.”*

**Our attitude towards a person can be deeply affected by what we hear said by a third person, even if afterward we prove that what was said was a lie.**

The Hebrew word translated “tale-bearing” is “nirgân” meaning slanderer or whisperer.

We may ask why some people lower their voices and whisper when saying something about another person.

If this happens when someone is talking to you the alarm bells should be ringing.

**The penetrating effect of flattery –**

**Proverbs 29:5** [New King James] *“A man who flatters his neighbour spreads a net for his feet.”*

The Hebrew word translated “flatters” is “châlaq” meaning to be smooth referring to the smooth stones that were used as lots, so by implication it means to apportion or to separate.

“A net” is from a root word meaning **to occupy by driving out the previous tenants**, by implication to impoverish by expelling.

**Used also in the context of the effect of new wine as it expels reason from the mind.**

**This is exactly what flattery does to a person.**

How does this happen?

**Self-esteem is ruinously inflated.**

**Flattery induces craving for what is beyond the person's ability.**

**Flattery invites ill-judged actions into venture beyond the person's aptitude.**

**Proverbs 11:9** [New King James] *“The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbour, but through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.”*

By subversive talk as indicated by the second part of the verse.

The Hebrew word translated “*hypocrite*” is “*chânêph*” meaning to soil or pollute, thus influences our beliefs and convictions.

Satan knows that he can be more effective in his attack if he influences our enemies to spread his knowledge about us.

### **The spreading effect of words is powerful –**

**Proverbs 16:27** [New King James] “*An ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a burning fire.*”

**A person, influenced by Satan, will dig up things in our past that we have repented of and been forgiven by God.**

Such small facts can end up like a destroying conflagration that destroys everything in its path.

**Proverbs 16:28** [New King James] “*A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends.*”

“*Sows strife*” the Hebrew words refer to the broadcasting of words without any control of where they will germinate into strife, [**Proverbs 6:14**].

This spreading effect doesn’t have to be always causing evil and strife.

**Proverbs 12:14** [New King James] “*A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth, and the recompense of a man’s hands will be rendered to him.*”

The Hebrew word translated “*satisfied*” is “*sâbêa*” meaning to be completely satisfied in every way.

Solomon shows us in Ecclesiastes that this satisfaction is **not** physical.

For all the physical accomplishments and possessions Solomon had, he never said he was satisfied, [**Ecclesiastes 1:8-10**].

**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** [New King James] “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.*”

**Solomon’s final conclusion was that complete satisfaction is spiritual in nature.**

**Proverbs 12:14** shows that it is our words that are going to bring fulfilment to our lives.

Our words that are the product of our mind that is in harmony with the mind of the Creator God, [**Philippians 2:5**].

How can we know this to be true?

**Proverbs 10:11** [New King James] “*The mouth of the righteous is a well of life ...*”

The Hebrew word translated “*well*” is “*mâqôr*” meaning source of water, natural flowing of happiness, wisdom is also included.

Ultimately life, directly referring to the tree of life, [**Genesis 3:22-24**] the same Hebrew word “*chay*” is used to refer to this source of eternal life.

**The effect of our words spreads not only in area, or among people, but also in time.** For the words we utter, that are direct product of our mind and character.

For our words to be the source of eternal life we have to take certain actions in our life.

**Romans 12:1** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

Surrender our whole life, [Greek word translated “bodies” is “soma” that means whole body, mind and human spirit], to our Creator God as a “*living sacrifice.*”

That is seeking God’s will for our lives **not** our own will.

**Romans 12:2** [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

**The Holy Spirit will then re-educate our minds so that the words we utter will be directed by the Holy Spirit and not our human nature.**

**1 Corinthians 2:12-13** [NIV] *“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.”*

**The words we then speak are those directed by God’s Word, the Christian Bible, as the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth, [John 16:13] and brings the words of Jesus Christ to remembrance when needed, [John 14:26].**

## **The Weakness of Words –**

### **a) Words must lead to action –**

**Proverbs 25:14** [New King James] *“Whoever falsely boasts of giving is like clouds and wind without rain.”*

**We can use words to boast about what we may do but unless such words result in action, they are like clouds that promise rain but fail to produce life-giving rain.**

**Proverbs 14:23** [New King James] *“In all labour there is profit, but idle chatter leads only to poverty.”*

**Only action will produce what is of value.** Hebrew word translated “profit” is “*môwthar*” meaning superiority or pre-eminence or plenteousness.

**Understanding this weakness in words gives balance to the use of words in our day-to-day life.**

**But understanding the power of words is the natural starting point of any action for they express the very nature of the mind that is involved in any action.**

**Proverbs 29:19** [New King James] *“A servant will not be corrected by mere words; for though he understands, he will not respond.”*

**Words alone cannot compel any response. All this Proverb tells us that our words can make an appeal to the hearer or reader to make their own search for godly wisdom.**

**This is what I am doing in this article seeking to “prime the proverbial pump,” unless you as a reader personally study Proverbs to seek how to control the use of words, all that I have written will be of no value to you.**

All I know is that the preparation of this article has been of immense value to me.

**Proverbs 2:1-6** [New King James] *“My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding;”*

**Proverbs appeal to us to receive the very wisdom of the Creator God that is found in the words within this part of God’s Word, the Christian Bible.**

## **The Best Use of Words –**

**Correctly used words will carry certain distinguishing marks.**

### **a) Honest –**

**Proverbs 16:13** [New King James] *“Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and they love him who speaks what is right.”*

All of us wield some authority in some direction so this is **not** just a Proverb for kings or leaders of the nation.

The Hebrew word translated “righteous” is “*tsedeq*” meaning just, equity and straight, or upright.

One thing the powerful and rich **cannot** buy by bribes, nor afford to be without is loyalty, as expressed in this response.

### **b) Few –**

**Proverbs 17:28** [New King James] *“Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.”*

The Hebrew word translated “fool” is “*ĕvîyl*” meaning perverse, that includes the notion of being stubborn, in the wrong.

Even such a person, if they control the outpouring of words, may be considered wise.

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

**It is all too easy when we are excited about a subject or situation for our lips to overtake the pondering in our minds and unconsidered words to be spoken.**

Remember that the Creator God has given us two eyes and two ears but only one tongue!!

Could the Creator God be trying to tell us something?

### **c) Calm –**

**Proverbs 17:27** [New King James] *“He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.”*

The Hebrew word translated “*knowledge*” is “*da’ath*” meaning awareness, and “*understanding*” is “*tâbûwn*” meaning discretion.

#### **Reasons for a calm spirit –**

Allows for a fair hearing, [**Proverbs 18:13, 17**].

Allows for a temper to cool, [**Proverbs 15:1**].

The best way to influence those in authority, [**Proverbs 25:15**].

Refusal to be provoked is an unassuming weapon that wins many surprising victories.

“*Breaks a bone*” overcomes stiffened resistance.

#### **d) Appropriate –**

**Proverbs 15:23** [New King James] “*A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!*”

“*Due season*” at **just the right time or situation.**

A true statement will have little impression on a person when given as a generalisation, but it may be indelibly fixed in that person’s mind when it is matched to the occasion or shaped to the task in hand.

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** [New King James] “*To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*”

**Within these life situations there are many “*due seasons.*”**

## **How Do We Obtain Wise Words and Know How To Use Them?**

#### **Study God’s Word the Christian Bible –**

**Proverbs 15:28** [New King James] “*The heart of the righteous studies how to answer ...*”

**Three things are involved in this short statement**, the “*heart*,” Hebrew “*lêb*” meaning willingness to the extent of being the driving force of our life.

“*Righteous*,” Hebrew “*tsâdaq*” one who is made right, justified by accepting the sacrifice of our Saviour, Jesus Christ as a substitute for our own deserved death, [**Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23**].

“*Studies*,” Hebrew “*hâgâh*” meaning to meditate.

Add to the above the implications of **Proverbs 2:6** “*from his mouth*,” implies we should also be listening to the Creator God’s words as spoken by faithful ministers [servants] of His who are always true to His words, as recorded in the Christian Bible, and **not** the “*traditions*” of human beings.

**Proverbs 16:1** [New King James] “*The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.*”

We as human beings can plan how to find and use wise words, but the wise outcome is only in the mind of the Creator God, and given to us at His discretion and His chosen time, through the Holy Spirit, [John 16:13; John 14:26; Luke 12:11-12].

**Character –**

**Proverbs 10:20** [New King James] *“The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is worth little.”*

The tongue and the mind [or character] are compared, that is weighed against one another.

**Matthew 12:34-35** [New King James] *“Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.”*

**The words we speak reflects what is in our mind and heart.**

**Proverbs 4:23** [New King James] *“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”*

“Keep” is the Hebrew word “nâtsar” meaning to guard and protect.

**Matthew 12:35-37** [New King James] *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”*

I hope you now see just how important it is that we allow the Creator God to re-educate us, for our words express exactly what our character really is, the real us.

**Words are the means whereby the Creator God is judging us for they are the expression of our real selves.**

We should be learning how to use this powerful instrument to the mutual good of all humanity.

**2 Corinthians 5:18-19** [New King James] *“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”*

It is through God’s Word, Jesus Christ that God the Father is reconciling all humanity to Himself.

We as true Christians are to serve under Jesus Christ in the future to reconcile all humanity to God the Father.

**Revelation 1:4-6** [New King James] *“John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

**Our job as kings and rulers will involve the right use of words, [Revelation 20:4-6; Revelation 20:11-12].**

**This is just how important it is that we learn and practice now just how to use words.**