

Pondering Proverbs #1

Proverbs 14-15

MEMORY VERSE

PROVERBS 15:2

“The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Chalk or dry erase markers and a chalk/dry erase board.

A sheet of construction paper for each child (or poster board 9”x 12”), markers, scissors and tape.

Small prizes.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Comparisons

For this activity, you will need chalk or dry erase markers and a chalk/dry erase board. At the beginning of your lesson, draw the following things on your board:

1. A horse’s bridle.
2. A spark.
3. A ship’s rudder.
4. A tongue

Ask the children what these four things have to do with each other. Next, draw the next four items:

1. A horse.
2. A forest
3. A ship
4. A mouth

Ask the children to match the items on the first list with the items on the second list. Have a volunteer come to board to connect them.

Read the passage from James 3 that deals with the tongue. Explain that like a bridle that controls a horse, a spark that starts a forest fire, and a small rudder that controls a big ship, our tongues are very important parts of our bodies. They may be small, but they are very powerful. They can be used for good, and they can be used for bad.

LESSON TIME!

What do you think is the most powerful part of your body? Perhaps you said your arms or even your legs? The Bible seems to say our tongue is the most powerful part of our body (James 3). It is certainly the part that can do the most damage or good. Why is that so? Because, we can either tear someone down or build them up with the use of our tongue.

In James 3:8-9 we are told, "...It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God." The powerful tongue can "bless" and it can "curse." It is God's desire that we use this little member of our body with wisdom, for the good of others. **Let us use our tongue wisely.**

PROVERBS 14:3

In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride, but the lips of the wise will preserve them.

What is it to be prideful? It is to think highly of oneself, placing oneself on a throne to be exalted. If we are following the Lord, we know that God is the only one who is to be exalted on high. Pride can be revealed in the way that we speak: "In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride...."

During the time that this proverb was written, a rod was used for several purposes. It was used as a sign of authority. It was a tool capable of bringing much affliction or pain. Shepherds used the rod to keep the sheep together; and if a sheep strayed, the shepherd would oftentimes need to strike the sheep to get it with the rest of the fold.

Our tongues can be used like rods. When we are filled with pride, we will speak as though we have authority, yet bring affliction and problems upon others and ourselves. **Let us use our tongue wisely.**

PROVERBS 14:5, 7, 25

A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness will utter lies.

Go from the presence of a foolish man, when you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.

A true witness delivers souls, but a deceitful witness speaks lies.

What happens when we tell a lie? If we lie about another person, it could destroy his life. Our poor conduct will bring injury upon ourselves also.

We are admonished, “Go from the presence of a foolish man....” Jesus taught us wisdom as He remained silent in the presence of those who accused Him wrongfully. In Mark 14:61 we read, “But He kept silent and answered nothing.”

In verse 25, we read that a true witness will *deliver* souls. We can use our tongues, our words, to speak honestly to others when we see them make harmful and destructive choices. Truth spoken in wisdom and love can save them from harming themselves and others. **Let us use our tongue wisely.**

PROVERBS 15:1-2

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

Have you ever said something to someone that was not kind? What happens when someone speaks to you in harsh tones (a mean voice), saying cruel things to you? We have a choice when someone speaks rudely to us; we can either answer back in the same manner or say something gentle and kind. When we answer softly, we will bring peace to a situation that may otherwise turn to an angry conflict. When we do answer back in a rude way, we are being foolish, for we are stirring up more anger. **Let us use our tongue wisely.**

PROVERBS 15:4

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

Again, when we use wisdom in our speech, it brings forth blessings to others and us. But when we are foolish in our speech, our words have the power to break someone's spirit--that is a lot of power.

So, the powerful tongue, when used to build up, is like a tree of life. Our kind words and encouragement can bring healing and life to others. Just the opposite can happen when we do not pray or think before we speak, "Our words are powerful enough to bring destruction to a person's spirit."

Bad language and name-calling are hurtful words that break a person's spirit. When one has a broken spirit, he is sorrowful and feels empty of life. How important to remember, there is good or evil in words spoken. **Let us use our tongue wisely.**

Megaphones

Making a megaphone will help us remember how important our words are. You will need a sheet of construction paper for each child (or poster board 9"x 12"), markers, scissors, and tape.

Give each child a sheet of construction paper. Have them roll the paper to make a cone shape. Leave a small opening at one end of about 1." At the other end, leave the opening 3 to 4 inches. Cut off any excess paper from the ends to make it round. Tape the seam on the inside of the cone shape.

Next, write the first part of today's theme, "Let us use our tongue wisely" on the outside of the megaphone. Explain to the children that megaphones are used to amplify their voices as they speak. Words, good and bad, can be amplified (have a big effect) on a person's spirit, bringing healing or bringing destruction.

PROVERBS 15:7, 12, 14

The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the fool does not do so.

A scoffer does not love one who corrects him, nor will he go to the wise.

The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.

The lips of the wise disperse knowledge! Our powerful tongue can be used in an awesome way when placed in the hand of our Creator. We can share the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ; and in so doing, "heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and restore sight to the blind (Luke 4:18)." In Romans 10:15 we read, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

We read, “A scoffer does not love one who corrects him, nor will he go to the wise.” Hearing the truth about ourselves hurts, especially if we really thought we were doing okay. But if we want to grow, if we want our lives to become all that God intended, we will love correction and pursue the counsel of the wise. The heart that loves knowledge is a wise heart.

PROVERBS 15:23, 26, 28, 30

A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!

The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, but the words of the pure are pleasant.

The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.

The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and a good report makes the bones healthy.

Are there benefits that will come as a result of using our tongue wisely? One benefit is joy! Blessing others will always bring us joy. Verse 23 declares, “How good it is” when we speak a word to someone at the right time, when it will meet a need.

“The heart of the righteous studies how to answer...” If you are unsure what to say, “stay quiet.” God knows how difficult it is for us to use our tongue wisely; for this reason He did not leave us without instruction and help. Again, God will freely give wisdom to all those who ask. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5). Let us yield control of this tiny, powerful part of our body to God to be governed by His wisdom and love. May it become an instrument in His hands to bless and build up all those around us! **Let us use our tongue wisely.**

Relay Verse Writing

For this game, you will need chalk or dry erase markers, a chalk/dry erase board, and small prizes. Split the class into two teams. Line up the two teams a good distance from the board. When you say, “go,” one member from each team should run to the board and write the first word of the memory verse. Once done, he/she runs back to the line and the next person runs up to write the second word. Keep going until the complete verse is written.

It is okay to refer to their Bible, but that will take more time. This game will encourage the children to memorize their verse. Whichever team completes their verse first is the winner. You may wish to reward them by giving them a small prize.

PRAYER

Pray with the children for the strength and commitment to use their tongues wisely—to say the right things to others. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.