

Our Words of Power

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. What is humankind's greatest power?
 - 1. Engineering marvels? Military weapons of mass destruction? Economic prowess? Intellectual excellence?
- B. Prov. 25:8-15
 - 1. "WHO AM I? I am more deadly than the screaming shells from the howitzer. I win without killing. I tear down homes, break hearts, and wreck lives. I travel on the wings of the wind. No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me, no purity pure enough to daunt me. I have no regard for truth, no respect for justice, no mercy for the defenseless. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea, and often as innocent. I never forget and never forgive. My name is ... gossip." (Morgan Blake, Atlanta Journal)
 - 2. "The tongue is mightier than the blade." (Euripides, 406 B.C.)
 - 3. Joseph Goebbels became famous for propaganda during WW II.
 - 4. Japanese used radio voices like U.S. born Iva Toguri D'Aquino as "Tokyo Rose."
 - 5. "Hanoi Jane" was believed instrumental in Vietnam's victory over U.S.
 - 6. Politicians repeat things they know to be false, because some voters will believe it anyway. That is why campaign ads work.
 - 7. Good men can be destroyed by words, and evil men empowered.
 - 8. God changed the whole world at Babel without the loss of a single life, just by confusing human speech - Gen. 11:6-9
 - 9. God disheartened the will of the people of Jericho with reports of Israel's success - Joshua 2:9-11
 - 10. Words have power - James 3:6
- C. Our words have the potential to do more good than harm, if we use them for good. Eternal salvation is communicated by words - Acts 11:14; Rom. 10:15
- D. Proverbs 25:11-15 speaks of four words of power:
 - 1. Words fitly spoken
 - 2. Words of fitting reproof
 - 3. Words of faithful messengers
 - 4. Words of forbearing gentleness

I. WORDS FITLY SPOKEN

- A. Prov. 25:11
 - 1. This is not merely knowing what to say; it is knowing when to say it, how much to say, and when to stop saying it.
 - 2. A Christian's speech is limited; we speak only that which builds up and strengthens - Prov. 10:32; Eph. 4:29
 - 3. "Just because it is true" or "because they deserve it" are not the criteria of edifying speech. We do not have the scriptural right to say everything we have a legal right to say.

- B. We need wisdom to use appropriate words and timing for every situation.
 - 1. John 16:12
- C. Even though truth cannot be changed, fitting words make the truth more readily accepted by hearers - Matt. 10:16

II. WORDS OF FITTING REPROOF

- A. Prov. 25:12
- B. Sometimes love requires that a brother be rescued from the snare of sin.
 - 1. Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20
- C. We are not helping erring Christians by saying nothing when they stray.
 - 1. We must maintain relationships that permit us to approach one another
 - 2. Eph. 4:15; Gal. 6:2
- D. We must speak words of caring reproof words when it is painful - 2Tim. 2:2
 - 1. Notice the word of reproof is to be given "to an obedient ear." The loving relationship between the reprover and reprovee must be two way - John 13:34-35

III. WORDS OF FAITHFUL MESSENGERS

- A. Prov. 25:13
 - 1. A trustworthy messenger can be counted on to deliver a message accurately without procrastination, editing, or inserting opinions
 - 2. Notice that it is refreshing to the sender, not the receiver. The sender has confidence that the message will be faithfully delivered.
 - 3. Moses who stood up and spoke out versus Jonah who sought to run away from his responsibility as a messenger
- B. God's people have a duty to accurately, faithfully communicate the gospel.
 - 1. John 3:16; 1Cor. 15:1-4
 - 2. We're not at liberty to add to it to make it more appealing. We dare not leave out parts that might make it harder to accept - Acts 20:26-27
 - 3. Christians are stewards of the Gospel - 1Cor. 4:1-2
 - 4. We deliver it faithfully, not only out of love for the lost, but even more so to honor the sender, God.

IV. WORDS OF FORBEARING GENTLENESS

- A. Prov. 25:15
 - 1. We must speak in a calm reasoned manner.
 - 2. Persuasive does not mean the use of pressure tactics, reactionary language, and emotional appeals
 - 3. We must create an atmosphere conducive to reasoning
- B. Consider the example of Jesus - 1Peter 2:23
 - 1. The conduct of the messenger reflects on the sender of the message
 - 2. 2Cor. 5:20; 1Peter 3:14-15; Rom. 15:14-15; Prov. 16:32

Conclusion:

- A. Col. 4:5-6