

Smart Tongue

Lesson 02 of the series "Smart Life"

A. God wants us to live smart lives.

"These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel. Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise. Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair. These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young. Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. Let those with understanding receive guidance by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables, the words of the wise and their riddles." Proverbs 1:1-6 (NLT)

Life Application: To live smart lives we must seek God's wisdom.

"Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God. For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest... Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy." Proverbs 2:1-10 (NLT)

B. Smart people realize they need God's wisdom to control their tongues.

"The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences."

Proverbs 18:21 (NLT)

"...if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself. People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!"

James 3:2-10 (NLT)

Note: A tongue problem is really a heart problem.

"The heart of the godly thinks carefully before speaking; the mouth of the wicked overflows with evil words."

Proverbs 15:28 (NLT)

C. Five ways I can have a smart tongue.

1. I can talk less.

"Too much talk leads to sin. Be sensible and keep your mouth shut." Proverbs 10:19 (NLT)

"Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth can ruin everything."

Proverbs 13:3 (NLT)

"A truly wise person uses few words... Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent." Proverbs 17:27-28 (NLT)

2. I can stay away from gossip.

"A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends." Proverbs 16:28 (NLT)

"A gossip goes around telling secrets, but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence."

Proverbs 11:13 (NLT)

"The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts."

Proverbs 18:8 (NIV)

3. I can use kind words.

"The wise are known for their understanding, and pleasant words are persuasive... From a wise mind comes wise speech; the words of the wise are persuasive. Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body." Proverbs 16:21-24 (NLT)

“A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.” Proverbs 15:1 (NLT)

“Patience can persuade a prince, and soft speech can break bones.” Proverbs 25:15 (NLT)

Note: Gracious speech is especially important around our unbelieving friends/neighbors.

“Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.”

Colossians 4:5-6 (NLT)

“If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are just fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.” James 1:26 (NLT)

4. I can tell the truth.

“The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth.” Proverbs 12:22 (NLT)

“He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue.”

Proverbs 28:23 (NIV)

“Truthful words stand the test of time, but lies are soon exposed.” Proverbs 12:19 (NLT)

5. I can confess my sins.

“People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.” Proverbs 28:13 (NLT)

“But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.” 1 John 1:9 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. What is the kindest thing anyone has ever said about you? How did it make you feel?
2. Can you recall a time you said something that you immediately regretted? How did you feel in that moment? What did you learn from that experience?
3. Read James 1:26. Why does James say that if we can't control our tongues our religion is worthless? Do you agree? Why / why not?
4. Read Proverbs 10:19, 13:3, and 17:28. Why do most of us struggle with saying too much rather than too little? Do you know someone who is very good at not saying too much? If so, what is their secret?
5. Read Colossians 4:5-6. Why does it matter what we say? Have you ever lost the opportunity to have a relationship with an unbeliever because of what you have said? How can we be wiser in our daily conversations?
6. Spend some time as a group praying for each other. Ask God for the following:
 - Encouraging speech with no foul or abusive language. (Ephesians 4:29)
 - Truthful speech that avoid flattery & half-truth. (Proverbs 12:22, 28:23)
 - The ability to talk less and stay far from gossip. (Proverbs 11:13, 13:3)
 - Kind and gentle speech. (Proverbs 15:1,16:21-24)
7. React to the following quotations:

"Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and to remove all doubt." Abraham Lincoln.

"These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young. Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser." King Solomon

"We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak." Epictetus, Greek Philosopher

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry..." James 1:19 (NIV)

"Each word we utter should have to pass through three gates before we say it. At the first gate we must ask, 'Is it true?' At the second gate, 'Is it necessary?' and at the third gate, 'Is it kind?'" Unknown