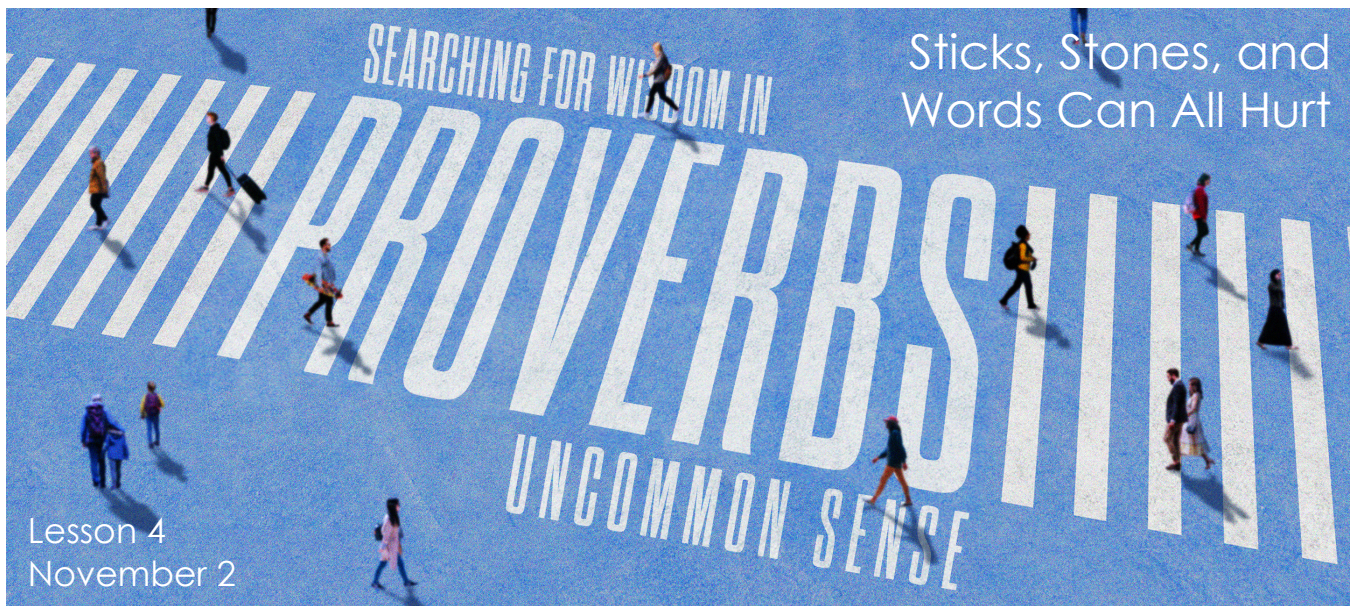




You've heard the old expression before: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me!" Is that really true? Our words to each other really *can* hurt, can't they? There is wisdom to be gained in *Proverbs* about **the power (for good or bad) of our mouths**.

From the _____ of his mouth a man is satisfied with good,
and the work of a man's hand comes back to him. (Prov 12:14)

Whoever _____ his mouth preserves his life;
he who opens _____ his lips comes to ruin. (13:3)

Death and life are in the _____ of the tongue,
and those who love it will eat its fruits. (18:21)

Take a moment to think about that first verse: "From the fruit of his mouth..." Why would Solomon compare what comes out of our mouths to fruit?

How would you rephrase the wisdom of 13:3 in your own words? In everyday terms, how can we "guard" our mouths?

Is 18:21 an over-exaggeration? Are "death and life" really "in the power of the tongue"? If so, in what ways?

Isn't that why **wisdom encourages us to use "brakes" when it comes to our mouths**?

A _____ takes no pleasure in understanding,
but only in expressing his _____. (18:2)

If one gives an answer _____ he hears,
it is his folly and shame. (18:13)

Why is it so easy and tempting to speak before listening?

What do you think? Is it important to make an effort to really listen to others? If so, how can we grow in our listening skills and practice listening before we open our mouths?

One of the dangers wisdom frequently warns us about is **the dishonesty of gossip**.

The words of a _____ are like delicious morsels;
they go down into the inner parts of the body. (18:8)

A dishonest man spreads strife,
and a whisperer _____ close friends. (16:28)

Whoever goes about _____ reveals secrets,
but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered. (11:13)

In your own words, what is gossip? What makes spreading it so satisfying (18:8)?

Here's the truth: **sticks, stones, and words can all hurt**.

There is one whose _____ words are like sword thrusts,
but the tongue of the wise brings _____. (12:18)

A man who _____ his neighbor
spreads a net for his feet. (29:5)

What's the big deal with flattery (28:23)? In what ways can it be hurtful and dangerous?

In what ways can "the tongue of the wise" bring healing (12:18)?

Wisdom's call: guard your mouth and you'll keep yourself out of a lot of trouble (21:23).

Proverbs Made Personal

Warning: a message of caution I needed to hear...

Insight: a point I need to remember...

Strength: I was helped and encouraged to walk in wisdom by...

Exalt: God is worthy of honor and praise because...

For next week: read Proverbs 22-25