

Restraining Our Lips

Proverbs 10:19-21

- 1) The book of Proverbs is one of the five wisdom books of the Bible. The other four are Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. How often do you pray for wisdom? How much time do you spend reading these books of wisdom?
- 2) What is wisdom? How is Biblical wisdom different than worldly wisdom? (Hint: Proverbs 1:7)
- 3) The wisdom books often associate wisdom with the words that we use. Proverbs 10:19-21 are examples of this. Can you think of any other Proverbs which refer to our lips or speech? (Hint: Proverbs 17:27, 18:2).
- 4) Why do you think we are more likely to sin when we speak a lot?
- 5) A possible situation when we might have to restrain our lips and be prudent with what we say is when either ourselves or the person we are speaking to are feeling hungry, angry, lonely or tired (H.A.L.T!). What are some other situations in our daily lives when we have to take care to restrain our lips instead of giving full vent to how we feel?
- 6) Read Proverbs 10:20 and Luke 6:45. Notice how Solomon doesn't contrast the tongue of the righteous with the tongue of the wicked, but with the *heart* of the wicked. He makes this link because 'the mouth speaks what the heart is full of' (Luke 6:45). Our words are outward evidence of our inner character, of the inner, refining work that God is doing in us. How might this link to what David asks for in Psalm 51:17?
- 7) There is a great need to restrain our lips, to be slow to speak, and practise the discipline of listening. Discuss your thoughts on this quote from David Augsburger: "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable."
- 8) Jesus is the master listener. He listened to the two disciples on the Emmaus Road and to the woman at the well. And then he spoke the words of eternal life to them. How might we learn to practise the discipline of listening to each other? How can we be active listeners?