

YOUR WORDS

Ecclesiastes 5:2-3 ... “Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes through much activity, and a fool’s voice is known by his many words.”

I have known several people who I would call men or women of few words. I used to be one of them. However, with expanded responsibilities I have become a person with more words than are probably necessary. I am trying to throttle back my willingness to talk, listen more and process what I hear more carefully, so that when I do speak my words will have meaning. Today’s verses speak not just about the many words we say, but the words we say that are not good.

One of the worst habits you can have is to speak without thinking. We all do it. The results of speaking rashly and hastily is that we often hurt others, diminish our positive contribution, and train others to ignore us. If you want to feel useless, just talk without purpose and watch people ignore you. And, this is exactly what happens on social media – such as FaceBook – every minute of the day. Many people carry their phones and tablets around so they can fire-off a comment for the world to see at any moment. More often than not, their comments are in anger or frustration about something that has happened to them (or someone who offended them). They also comment on every little thing they are doing: “Just walked into Seven-Eleven,” or “I’m so tired,” or “customer was mean.” They display their emotions: “I’m not paid enough to do this job,” or “no one wants to spend time with me,” or “I’m in tears.”

When you put into words your feelings of sadness, frustration, anger or loneliness and blindly launch them via social media, those words reinforce your feelings and drag you down further into those emotions. Shooting your words out into cyberspace does not have the same benefit as sitting with and confiding to a trusted friend for the purpose of receiving godly counsel and advice. In fact, there is a very real possibility that social media fuels suicides because people with feelings of desperation, read the desperate words of others and agree there is no hope. You might call that “anti-social media.”

It is vitally important that we all learn to withhold our words until we have carefully considered how they will be interpreted by others, or how they might offend or hurt someone. Sometimes the truth hurts. However, it can usually be expressed in such a way that it hurts less than necessary. Verse 3 of today’s passage is especially valuable for us. It says that our dreams happen through our activities, not our words. Your ideas may be good, your plans may be nice, and your dreams may be admirable. But they will seldom be accomplished by just talking. You must be engaged literally and physically to see them come to fruition. So, speak less and do more.

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