



# FOOLPROOF

## THE WISDOM OF PROVERBS

### CONNECT

Do you let what others say to you affect you? Discuss a time where either someone's positive or negative remarks impacted you in some way.

### WORD

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

Proverbs 18:21 (NIV)

### THOUGHT

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue. This may apply to all men. Many have lost their lives by their tongue, and some have saved their lives by it: but it applies most forcibly to public pleaders; on many of their tongues hangs life or death." - Adam Clarke, Theologian

Living with integrity means living with the full weight of every word we speak. Knowing when to speak and when to hold our tongue is vital to our relationships with others. Our words are powerful! We can build up or put down friends, family, even our co-workers.

Every day we have a choice: to speak death or to speak life over others.

#### Words of Death

Have you ever said something harmful out of frustration or anger to a friend or family member and immediately regretted it? Sometimes it only takes one word to undermine a healthy relationship. Proverbs 12:18 compares careless words to "sword thrusts". Over time, these words of death can lead to the death of marriages, families, friendships, churches, careers, hopes, understanding, reputations, missionary efforts, and

## THOUGHTS CONTINUED...

governments. Perhaps this is why James 1:19 commands us to be “quick to listen and slow to speak.”

### Words of Life

In the same way, our words can give life to others. The tongue can be “a tree of life” (Proverbs 15:4) when we speak words of love, kindness, encouragement, or wisdom to another person. The tongue can also be an instrument of peace, reconciling people and mending relationships, whether it be familial, friendships, or marriages. Remember, “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Proverbs 15:1)

So what will come out of your mouth today, death or life? Sword thrusts or healing?

## DISCUSSION

1.) Why is it important to think before we speak?

2.) Do you choose your words carefully?

3.) What do you fill your heart with: God's Word or things that are fruitless?

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

What does it look like for you to fear the Lord? Spend time this week reading the Bible and learning about how all the people that God used to make His name known, feared Him. What did it look like for Moses, Joseph, Abraham, David, and John the Baptist, or Paul?

Identify one person you can speak life to this week.

## PRAYER

- Lord, give us wisdom to choose words of life and not words of death in our relationships with others. Forgive us for the times we've used our tongue to hurt others and help us speak life in every situation.