

Message #33

Proverbs 11:9-13

Solomon wanted people to understand that God takes speech very serious. He closely listens to what is being spoken.

OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, WISDOM AND INTELLIGENCE IS DETERMINED BY OUR SPEECH.

SPEECH FACTOR #1 – Our speech destroys or delivers. **11:9**

The word “neighbor” refers to one very close, a companion or close friend. The antithetic picture implied in the context is that the wicked person runs something down with his words and tries to bring it into something bound, whereas the righteous person communicates the true things of God in order to build-up a person that he might be free.

SPEECH FACTOR #2 – Our speech and life affects many people. **11:10-11**

Verse 10 is a picture of an entire city rejoicing when things are going well for the righteous, and an entire city shouting for joy, when the wicked are being destroyed or cut off. Drs. Keil and Delitzsch point out that **verse 11** is closely connected to **verse 10**. It gives more of the detailed information as to how the society is affected by a righteous person (Vol. 6, p. 236). The “blessing” of the upright” means that a city becomes more exalted, more lofty, more powerful if godly, wise people are praying for it and leading it. By the same token, the verbal assaults of the wicked can tear down a city.

SPEECH FACTOR #3 – Our speech control determines our wisdom or wickedness. **11:12**

A person who does not have wisdom “despises” his neighbor for no reason. The word “despise” means to trample down with the feet. A foolish person with no intelligent life in the mind tramples all over his neighbor with verbal assaults for no reason. On the other hand, a person of understanding “holds his peace.” Instead of verbal outbursts, a wise person knows “silence is golden.”

SPEECH FACTOR #4 – Our silence determines our faithfulness or wickedness. **11:13**

Our wisdom or wickedness is determined by our ability to keep quiet. The word “secret” is a Hebrew word that means something was told to a person in a very intimate, private setting (Gesenius, p. 580). The word “talebearer” is a word which was used of a person who went around slandering people. One who peddled gossip as a merchant would peddle merchandise (*Ibid.*, p. 769). The word “reveal” is one that means to uncover, make bare or naked. A “talebearer” is a wicked gossip. In contrast is one who is “faithful,” which means one who may be leaned on for support. There are people who can be trusted to share intimate things—these are faithful people of God. Faithful people conceal intimate details. There are times when secrets must be revealed, when it is Biblically right—but do not make friends with one who is a talebearer for that kind of person will ruin you. **Wise people guard their speech!**