

**SERIES TITLE:** HOW NOT TO RUIN YOUR LIFE  
**Week 4:** Watch Your Words: The Power That Builds or Breaks  
**Text:** Proverbs 18:21

**Big Idea:** Your words are not neutral—they are seeds, swords, or snares. What you speak shapes your soul, your relationships, and your legacy.

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. **Proverbs 18:21<sup>1</sup> (NIV)**

**I. Words Shape Your World:** Every word you speak is an architect—building or tearing down.

From the **fruit** of their lips people are **filled with** good things... **Proverbs 12:14 (NIV)**

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will **give account for every careless [idle or barren] word they speak**, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. **Matthew 12:36–37 (ESV)**

See how we put bits in the mouths of horses that they may obey us, and we control their whole bodies. And observe ships. Though they are so great and are driven by fierce winds, yet they are directed with a very small rudder wherever the captain pleases. Even so, the tongue is a little part of the body and boasts great things. **James 3:3-5 (MEV)**

By the **word** of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them [*the stars*] by the **breath** of his mouth... For he **spake**, and it was done; he **commanded**, and it stood fast. **Psalms 33:6, 9 (KJV)**

### **Application**

- What are your words building and planting?
- What kind of world are you shaping with your tongue?

**II. Reckless Words Wreck Relationships:** A single sentence can start a war—or bring peace.

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture is NIV unless otherwise stated.

The words of the reckless pierce like swords... **Proverbs 12:18 (NIV)**

See how great a forest a little fire kindles. The tongue is a fire, a world of evil. The tongue is among the parts of the body, defiling the whole body, and setting the course of nature on fire, and it is set on fire by hell. **James 3:5-6 (MEV)**

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.  
**Proverbs 15:1 (NIV)**

### **Application**

What fires have your words started? What relationships have been scorched—not because you meant harm, but because you didn't guard your tongue?

Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. **Matthew 12:34 (NIV)**

**III. Wisdom Weighs Every Word:** You don't have to say everything you think.

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.  
**James 1:19 (NIV)**

After God had finished addressing Job, he turned to [his friends] and said, "I've had it with you and your two friends. I'm fed up... My friend Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer. He will ask me not to treat you as you deserve **for talking nonsense about me**, and for not being honest with me, as he has.  
**Job 42:7-8 (MSG)**

Those who guard their lips preserve their lives... **Proverbs 13:3 (NIV)**

Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.  
**Psalms 141:3 (NIV)**

### **The Door Test**

- **Is it true (honest)?** Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.  
**Ephesians 4:25 (NIV)**

- **Is it necessary?** Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues. **Proverbs 10:19 (NIV)**
- **Is it kind – motivated out of love?** "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." **1 Corinthians 13:1 (NIV)**
- **Is it time?** *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.* **Proverbs 25:11 (ESV)**

### CALL TO ACTION

1. Repent where your words have wounded.
2. Speak blessing where there's been bitterness.
3. Dedicate your mouth to God and the Holy Spirit's control every morning, and before every cortical conversation.

Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.

**Proverbs 21:23 (ESV)**