

## **A: Introduction:**

### **1. Words reveal our character**

“The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the speech of the upright rescues them” (12:6)

“Evildoers are trapped by their sinful talk” (12:13)

“The talk of fools brings a rod to their backs, but the lips of the wise protect them” (14:3)

### **2. Words result in consequences**

“Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone” (25:15)

“Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is one who gives false testimony against a neighbour” (25:18)

“The tongue has the power of life and death” (18:21)

## **B: Using our words to bring life rather than death:**

### **1. Be Restrained with Words**

“When words are many, sin is not absent, but the wise hold their tongues” (10:19)

“Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” (12:18)

“A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and those who have insight are even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue” (17:27-28)

“The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgement” (10:21)

“A person finds joy in giving an apt reply – and how good is a timely word!” (15:23)

**BUZZ GROUPS:** In groups, share a time when you have said something that you wished you hadn't said, and explain the consequences and how it got you in to hot water.

### **2. Be Honest with Words**

“A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin” (26:28)

“An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips” (24:26)

“Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses” (27:5-6)

**BUZZ GROUPS:** Discuss when you find it hardest to be honest in what you say?

### **3. Be Loving with Words**

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (15:1)

“The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value” (10:20)

“Anxiety weights down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up” (12:25)

**BUZZ GROUPS:** Discuss whether you feel you are known to be someone who speaks loving words. Is this in all contexts – at work as well as amongst friends?

## C: Conclusion:

### 1. Why are words so important?

### 2. How can we be more wise in our words?

“Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:33)

“Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless” (James 1:26)

## MINISTRY TIME:

# Living a Wise Life

*Six sessions applying Old Testament Wisdom Literature to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Living*

## Week 2: Wisdom about Words (Proverbs 26)

<sup>4</sup>Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself.

<sup>5</sup>Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.

<sup>6</sup>Like cutting off one's feet or drinking violence is the sending of a message by the hand of a fool.

<sup>7</sup>Like a lame man's legs that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

<sup>8</sup>Like tying a stone in a sling is the giving of honour to a fool.

<sup>9</sup>Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

<sup>17</sup>Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own.

<sup>18</sup>Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows

<sup>19</sup>is a man who deceives his neighbour and says, I was only joking! <sup>20</sup>Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.

<sup>21</sup>As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.

<sup>22</sup>The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.

<sup>23</sup>Like a coating of glaze over earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart.

<sup>24</sup>A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbours deceit.

<sup>25</sup>Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart.

<sup>26</sup>His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.

<sup>27</sup>If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.

<sup>28</sup>A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.  
(Proverbs 26:4-9, 17-28)