

Effectively Speaking (Proverbs Th.PM)

By Gordon Kirk

Speaker 1:

...already know who, uh, Dr. Gordon Kirk is. He's a pastor at Lake Avenue Congregational Church, which is, uh, nearby. So he's been driving in, uh, as a speaker. Gave a wonderful message this morning on God's character and on what God's character reveals about himself. And, and one of the things that that uh, brought to us was the whole topic of how God is omnipresent. And I must admit that I was a little bit convicted because I believed when I introduced him yesterday, I asked God to be with us, so,

[audience laughs]

I wanted to make sure I didn't make that mistake again today, so. Well we're very fortunate to have him with us and uh, would you guys welcome Dr. Kirk up?

[applause]

Gordon Kirk:

Thank you. Thanks Zeke, I don't remember that you prayed that way, but if you did, God still knows your heart. But now we've hopefully changed some of our vocabulary and thinking and allowed it to be more consistent with what God says to be true. I want to thank you for your great responsiveness, some of the great times of interaction after the sessions and walking from one

building to another. And I just appreciated getting to know you and, and reconnect. As some of you may know, I taught here for ten years from 1973 to 1983. And prior to that I was a student at both Biola and Talbot. So I love Biola and Talbot, and my life has been dramatically changed by different professors and friends and just a unique sense of my own mentoring and growth. And so I have, you know, great memories being here with you. I also want to encourage you whether it's Talbot or Biola, it's amazing how many of your lifetime friends come from your college or university or your graduate programs. I don't have a lot of friendships with some of my high school kids, uh, friends I was with or even junior high. I mean part of that's 'cause I moved away and don't live there anymore. And you may have a whole different experience, but there's something about the roommates, the, you know, the same people in the same major, the emphasis that you have and something about this era of your own life as a young adult, that you do connect on a whole different level with people and it's really, really valuable. I mentioned yesterday, if you weren't with us in this session, that I have several goals in mind, I've been praying about several things as I prepared for these times.

And one of them is I would really like to see you think about the book of Proverbs itself and use that as something that you would read on a regular basis. And hopefully, even as I'm trying to develop a theme from communication or speech, you'd be able to read through that book and pick up some other themes. When I taught here at Biola I taught mainly in biblical studies, but mainly with the upper division theology classes. And I love theology. I love taking, uh, whatever the theme would be or the topic and going from Old to New Testament or pulling together, you know, what does God say about that particular area or that particular idea? And so I just would love to encourage you to keep reading the book of Proverbs. Thirty-one chapters in it, that fits

pretty well a month, and so whatever the day of the month is, read that particular chapter. Uh, enjoy reading the Living Bible. You'd find it really fun, it's a fun reading in that area and very well uh, understood in those pieces. But whether it's NIV or NAS or whatever you like, just enjoy that time. And then as you, after you've read through it a few times, then to be, then think about a topic, think about an issue you're facing in life. And I do that often and it's a very stimulating, refreshing and very applicable, uh, time of daily devotion, personal focus in that area. Say, Lord, here's something I'm struggling with. And you put that in the top of the page and you read through the book of Proverbs, and you'll be amazed how many times he talks about that issue and what it says. I mentioned that again to those of you here last time, but those who do not hear that Billy Graham reads five chapters every day in the Book of Psalms.

And five chapters times thirty days in a month, the basic sense, that's the hundred and fifty chapters. And so he goes through Psalms once a month, done that four years of his life. And his comment is Psalms tells him so much about what God has revealed to be true of himself, a very vertical dimension, where Proverbs, he reads one chapter every day. Again, the thirty-one chapters that tells him so much about the horizontal, how to live, how to act, how to make decisions on the day to day basis. So that way there is that wonderful balance daily. What has God said to be true about himself, what does God help say for us and how we get along with each other, how we make those important decisions. Now for fun, would you just uh, enjoy a little bit, because I find all throughout life there are circumstances, people and places and events that carry a particular characterization. So if I said to you that person has the patience of, you'd say, [chuckles] from scripture, you'd say, what? That person has the patient, yeah, I've heard it. Patience of Job. Yeah. Just in all that Job went through and all the suffering and all the struggle.

And you see a deep sense of patience in Job's life of just wanting to trust God, even with counsellors who weren't too uh, affirming and kind of blamed him for stuff was there. That person is as old as, put in the biblical name. Methuselah. How old was he when he died? Yeah. Nine hundred and sixty-nine years old. Wow. Or that person, you know, was always suspicious. Sort of a doubting Thomas. Yeah, all right. Or, that person is as strong as, no, not an ox. No, no, no, no. No. Person, person. Strong as, Samson. Yeah. You think of that.

I mean you think of Jonah and you think of that great fish, you think of Noah, you think of the flood. But whenever you think of wisdom, usually it's Solomon. Now, do you remember? In First Kings chapter three. God, we have it recorded, God came to Solomon. And he said to Solomon, I'll give you whatever you want. First Kings three. Ask me whatever you wish, and I'll give it to you. Now friends that is an awesome decision. I mean, it's more than just a blank check. And it would be fun for you to take a moment to think about that, because to be able to be asked by God, I'll give you anything that your heart desires, that really will get back to the heart, to the, really get back to the real passions that drive you. Well, I believe that Solomon asked for wisdom. He said it this way, I need to be able to discern right from wrong. He says, I'm young and I'm not sure how to lead this huge group of people. And so I'm asking for discernment to be able to decide between right and wrong. And God says, because you've asked for this and you didn't ask for riches, you didn't ask for the life of your enemies, some kind of revenge. You didn't ask for a whole bunch of other things. I'm going to make you the wisest person who has ever lived. Do you realize that that was an unconditional gift to Solomon? He said you will be the wisest person, no one will ever come before you, no one has ever come before you, no one will ever come after you. You will be the wisest person who has ever lived. Now friends, I put Jesus

Christ in a whole different category of God man, okay. But as far as a pure human being, that's what God gave to him.

But then God also said, because you didn't ask for these other things, if you continue to follow me and if you continue to walk in my ways, I will make you the richest person who's ever lived in your era. He didn't say he would be the richest person who's, who's ever lived, but in his era, and a number of other things that God gave to him. But his wisdom stands completely alone.

And so that's why I'm so drawn to Proverbs, because you've got a guy, if you read Ecclesiastes and if you believe that Solomon is the one who wrote that and those are pages from his journal, I mean, he went through a lot of stuff. And yet he was honest enough to share some of his feelings and the issues and what took place at that time. But I take that Proverbs, I personally believe came at a later period his life, and he was writing it to his sons and sort of, you know, this is what I learned about life, and God inspired him in that way to where he wrote was accurate. Still within his personality and within his literary style. But he's the major contributor to Proverbs.

[unintelligible] You'll, you'll find some other people [unintelligible] but it was mainly written by, by Solomon. Now, I brought along with me again today a, a book by H. Jackson Brown. And we have it, I think, up there for us to see. And this is his volume two of, uh, Life's Little Instruction Book. And last time I read that, the first instruction book came as his son went off to school and to college and he wrote down these things and then gave it to him. Listen to what he says about number two. Several years ago, I jotted down a list of advice for my son Adam, as he drove home, as he left home to begin college.

At that time, I thought the list was pretty complete. But within a few days of presenting him with the thirty-two pages that became Life's Little Instruction Book, I began to think of other entries I wish I'd included. Obviously, there was only one thing to do, start another list. So I promised myself I wouldn't send it to him till I reach at least five hundred and twelve entries, one more than the original list. Took me two years to complete it. The day Adam received it, he called from his apartment, Dad, this new list is terrific. I think it's even more useful than the first one. Does this mean I should look for a new volume of Life's Little Instruction Book every two years? I laughed I said, I don't know. I'll see what I can do. Little does Adam know that I can no more stop writing down these suggestions and observations than I could stop at a donut shop and only order coffee. So here's some more from H. Jackson Brown, And it's his Life's Little Instruction Book two. If you've not read some of Jackson Brown stuff, I really would encourage. It's really fun. He's got another book called P.S. I Love You, and it's a compilation of the P.S.'s that his mother wrote to him when he was in college, and to his sister. And he says, my mom always saved the best for last. And so he puts all those together. Just a really fun one. But this is his Life's Little Instruction Book number two. So here's a really important one to me. Eighty-four, okay, would you help me with this? Don't take eleven items to the ten item express checkout lane. You know what that's like when you're standing behind and you're trying to decide, now does that six pack count as one item or is that, you know, six items in that piece.

That's a, that's a tough one sometimes. Here's a fun one for you business majors and real estate magnets. Before buying a house or renting an apartment, check the water pressure. Turn on all the faucets and the shower and then flush the toilet at the same time, and see what it's like. You know when you're in the shower and somebody else flushes or somebody else turns it on and all

of a sudden the temperature can change and you didn't know that. Now here's a very sensitive one, I'll just leave it up there for you.

[audience laughs]

Never tell a man he is losing his hair. I already know it. [laughs] Five twenty-six. I hope you've learned this, but not the hard way. Never drive while holding a cup of hot coffee between your knees. Then as you travel and maybe in the dorms, take along two big safety pins, so when you travel, you can pin the drapes shut in your motel room. They never quite come shut. I don't know how this fits with the cafeteria, but as you travel elsewhere, eight forty-four, don't eat any meat loaf but your mom's. I mean, you know what they put in that stuff, okay, it's what was left from what you didn't eat or somebody didn't eat the day before, but not mom's. She puts in the fresh good stuff. Here's a very sensitive one. Eight ninety two. Never tell a person who's experiencing deep sorrow, I know how you feel. You don't. None of us goes through the exact same circumstances and situations. So that sense of empathy. 868. Spend your life lifting people up, not putting people down. And so our theme for these two days has been communication. And we started yesterday from Proverbs eighteen in verse twenty-one, where it says life and death are in the power of the tongue. That idea of lifting up or putting down. And what he's saying is how we talk to each other, how we communicate in the broadest sense, will either become life-giving to a relationship, make it more healthy, more safe, more vulnerable, more open, or all of a sudden sort of shuttered up and you walk away, you're a little tenuous. You don't feel comfortable sharing that death dimension. And so the issue of what God says is those words are incredibly powerful.

I'd like to start today as we think about that, to help us with some levels of communication. And I hope this is comfortable to you, but I want you to realize that no matter what level we may be on, God wants us to communicate life. He wants us to, to communicate effectively. But I want to encourage you that there is that first step level we might call small talk. There is that level that you might call cliché. Hi, how are you? How are you doing? You know, and they're passing you so quick as you turned around to tell them how you're doing. I mean, they're already gone. They didn't really mean that. They just sorta say, hi, how are you? You know, off they go. They really don't want to know how you are. But it's something we've kind of gotten into, you know, hey nice day, isn't it? And, you know, pretty fall. But, you know, first, that is a valid level. That's where we start. I mean, I would assume if I asked you right now to number off and one, two, three, four or five, all the ones go here, the twos go there, so you work next to somebody that you came in with, and get together in a circle, say now would you begin to share some of the, the hurts and the struggles and the fears you have if you don't know anybody in that group, that's a little uncomfortable. It takes some time, there are levels to move to intimacy. But I want to be sensitive that we don't think that well, unless we're on that highest level of intimacy, that's, other level of communication isn't valid. No, small talk, that sense of the cliché, that very beginning, you know, nice to see you, how you doing, how are you, that's a valid level, but it's the beginning part.

Now, if you see that person more regularly or you sit next to them in class or, you know, they're there in a particular store you go in or the waitress or the waiter or whatever it may be, or a part of your dorm floor, then you may move to the second level that we might call fact sharing. Now,

again, you call it what you like, but it's that sense to all of a sudden you'll talk a little bit more about the weather, or maybe as the World Series came to an end and California didn't make it through that, man four game sweep, those Yankees yeah they just keep going. But, you know, you begin to talk about that, the score. And it's, you know, that, that whole idea of fact sharing, kind of like the five o'clock news, you know, not the commentary part, but the five o'clock, you know, here's what's happened. Here's what happened. Here's the details. That's more than cliché, but that's a second level. And as you begin to get to know people, you'll move to that dimension, dates and events and news. Third level, if we could put it, would be where then you begin to share some of your values. And that's more like the commentary piece on a newscast, where you're sort of sticking your neck out, you're saying what you think about or what you thought about the World Series or kind of, you know, how they did rather than just the score or just some of the stats or the ideas. But there's a sense to where you begin to give some kind of analysis or some kind of commentary. A fourth level would be, will you share some of your feelings, true personal views, a true sense of, of your emotions. And there's really a sense to where people begin to know your heart, your passion, the real inner part of you.

The highest level, which I hope you have with a few friends and hopefully with some family. For those of you dating or engaged or those of you who are married, I hope with your spouse. But there is that highest level that we would call unconditional openness. Now, I mentioned the other day in the, in the morning session, and this is just a pure Kirkism. So you take it and you work it on your own. But I don't think you can have very many close friends on that level who you could call at anytime. You could share in anger, you could share in fear. You could yell, you could cry, you could laugh. You're there for their birthdays. I mean, you know how to help them if they're

going to move or, you know, you can't have a lot of people like that. And so I believe in that highest level. I'm not sure, at least for me, that there's more than four or five people that I could share that with, and that this very unique sense of candor and openness. But I hope there's a larger group of people that I can share my feelings and we're respected and we enjoy that dimension. And then there was even a larger group that you might call friends and a larger group that you would call acquaintances. But see I believe men and women, no matter where you are, whether it's somebody you just met at a gas station and they're helping you with your ticket or somebody who's towing your car or somebody that you meet in the, you know, cafeteria line or whoever it may be, whatever level you may be on, God wants you to bring life in that level of communication. Let me read to you just a wonderful quote that encourages me on that highest level. It's called acceptance, would you listen to this, and think about that as far as that highest level of friendship?

I hope you have a couple of people like this in your life. Would you listen? Acceptance means you're valuable just as you are. It allows you to be the real you. You aren't forced into somebody else's ideas of who you really are. It means your ideas are taken seriously since they reflect you. You can talk about how you feel inside, why you feel that way, and somebody really cares. Acceptance means you can try out your ideas without being shot down. You can even express heretical thoughts and discuss them with intelligent questioning. You feel safe. No one will pronounce judgment on you even if they don't agree with you. But there's respect. There's trust, there's acceptance. Acceptance doesn't mean that you'll never be corrected. It doesn't mean that you'll never be shown to be wrong. But it simply means it's safe to be yourself. And no one will destroy you out of prejudice. Isn't that well-written? I just love that. And those are kind of the

friends that you want to have, but you can't have that level with everybody. And so I just want us to be honest about the levels of communication and see those particular pieces. But you see the idea of uh, of the power of our words, the awesome influence of our words. Proverbs sixteen in verse twenty-four says this, pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and look at the next phrase, and healing to the bones. If we had another session, I would take it and focus on a number of proverbs and even New Testament pictures that say our words influence a person's emotional well-being. Our words have therapeutic value on even how you feel physically.

God's word says some of those kinds of things, and you can demonstrate that for those of you communication majors, psych majors, med majors you know those whole areas, nursing majors, you begin to see just how words do impact even the healing or the diseasing of a person's bones and person's life in that way. And so he gives us that very unique dimension of that strength that is there. Proverbs fifteen twenty-eight, sort of our thought as we move on through today. Look at this. The wise person thinks before he speaks. Now, you may have heard that for years in your life, but you know what I find? Our culture doesn't value the dimension of silence or thoughtful reflection. I mean, our culture sort of says, well, the person who really gets ahead, you know, is that kind of type A and, you know, they're very driven and they've got a, you know, joke at every moment and a great little story at every party. They're kind of the life of the party, they keep things going, they're the funny person. And, you know, I mean, that's [coughs] excuse me, that's how you get ahead. I mean, you've got to be more aggressive and you got to be more intentional about those areas and, you know, much more aggressive. And friends as I read through the book of Proverbs and especially the rest of scripture, I find that God puts a very high premium on reflection, on quietness, on silence, on thinking before you speak. Another proverb says, The

wise person's words express deep streams of thought. Wow. Now, that doesn't mean that you withdraw. It doesn't mean you don't talk to each other.

But there's a sense in which God says to us, you want to be considered wise, you want to be considered one who God, who is really following God with a real sense of, of passion. He says it's one who thinks about what you say. Now, today, I want to expand for just a moment beyond what we saw yesterday because I was unaware of this. I was not a communications major, and a few years ago, I came across this particular study and those of you comm majors can maybe help me even refine it or do it better. So I'm not here as a communications expert, please. But from what I understand from reading the journals and the other articles, and I want to show you some things from scripture, the overwhelming concept is that only seven percent of how we really communicate is the words that we say. Only seven percent are the words. Thirty-eight percent, the studies share, is the tone. How we say what we say. The kind of words that we use, not just the words. And friends, I was shocked to learn, fifty-five percent of how we communicate is body language. [sighs] Okay, the sigh, you know, the rolling of the eyes, the tapping of the finger. You know, oh okay, oh I'm just waiting, I'm just being patient. You know, there's a whole other language you're giving by what goes on with the non-verbals, can I put it that way? Maybe even broaden it if you're writing it, not just body, but non-verbals, [unintelligible]. But there's that unique sense that we see, what I want us to realize how powerful that is. I mentioned last time to you one of my favorite guys, John Wooden, who coached UCLA basketball. I mean, he made this comment as a coach.

Kindness in words creates confidence. Not just words, but a kindness in the words. And friends, as I find so often about you but even having, you know, a couple of kids that have grown up, I mean, you put your guy in soccer, you put him in tee ball, you put him in whatever might be the sport, and it's amazing the intimidation that goes on. The press of competition that almost becomes an antagonism. And parents yelling from the stands, profanity taking place. And it's, it's amazing. So to have somebody like a John Wooden who is right in the middle of the intense professional, you know, college university sports say, hey, kindness in words creates confidence. See, that's the life that God wants us to have. Our words have the power of life or death. And you want to be the kind of person, you want to have the kind of communication where when people talk to you, you sense they believe in you. They respect you. And there's power in those areas. So yesterday we looked at some of the, of the word dimensions. We saw some of the things that God says about it. Today I'd like us to look at some of the tone and non-verbals for a moment. So for tone, would you go with me to Proverbs chapter fifteen and look with me at verse one? Matter of fact, there's several verses in Proverbs fifteen. So I'd like you to see these. They all basically say the same thing, just in some different dimensions. Again, in verse one of Proverbs fifteen, we have in that beautiful Hebrew poetry, that parallelism. We have a contrastive or antithetical parallelism. And so you've got a positive, and then you've got the negative.

And you've got that wonderful little conjunction 'but,' you know this, 'however.' I mean and it gives the contrast. So look at verse one, Proverbs fifteen. A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger. Now friends, as I said a little bit yesterday, the gentle answer idea doesn't mean something weak, doesn't mean something flimsy or wimpy, doesn't mean something condescending, doesn't mean something patronizing. Isn't this sort of you change your

little tone and you try if you're talking to a little kid or, you know, Big Bird or Barney out there you know and everything's happy and wonderful. No, the idea of a gentle answer has the idea of an answer where there's respect and there's value. And please don't miss it. I mentioned it yesterday. Let me just say it one more time for us. It doesn't say a gentle nothing. It doesn't say don't speak and you'll turn away anger. Now there's some times we shouldn't speak and we can avoid some things. I'm not saying there are not times that we don't say something. But what he's saying to us in a very unique way in this particular verse is that there's something about as we answer people with respect, we answered them with, with value, that all of a sudden that will draw people to you, rather than all of a sudden poison or cause a unique sense of stirring up tension. May I ask you if there's a conflict in a committee that maybe, you're on or, maybe within your dorm or maybe within your family? Are you one who tries to give the kind of respectful words to try to focus on the issue itself rather than putting somebody down or making fun of somebody or bringing somebody's character into question or somehow be [unintelligible] toward somebody?

'Cause friends, as you involve, you, in, in your conversation with this dinner table or board room or sports practice, you've got the, the opportunity either igniting something through harsh words, or diffusing something. Drop on down, would you, to verse four. Look at it with me, verse four same chapter, fifteen. A soothing tongue, NIV says, the tongue that brings healing, NAS says, a soothing tongue, is a tree of life. But perversion in it crushes the spirit. Perversion in the tongue crushes the spirit. But the soothing tongue is a tree of life. Some of you especially who are working with those that may be younger than yourself, maybe it's a student group or a children's group, or maybe a special mentoring program or some kind of an after school tutoring program.

Or maybe you're in sports, uh, area where you're working on that, or maybe a medical piece or whatever, but you've got someone that you're working with. You have incredible moments in which you either bring life and hope, or you bring a sense of discouragement and even people wanting to quit. I mean, you've got impressionable moments, fragile moments that make such a difference in those areas. And he's saying to us, listen carefully, but our tone makes a difference. I mean, sometimes I tell my son, Jonathan, Jonathan it's, you know, trash day, take out the trash. Yeah, I'll take it out. What'd you say? Oh, I just said, yeah, I'll take it out. No, no, no, no, no. The tone said a whole lot more in that way. And we are masters at revealing at times the real true intentions. Now once we grow up a little bit, mature a little bit more, we become masters at masking at times. But it still comes out one way or another.

And there's something about the tone that he's saying makes such a difference, whether you respect somebody or you're just tolerating him. I love a little phrase that says this. Remember, it is not just what you say. It does make a difference how you say it. I told you I love you, what more do you want to hear? Wow, you know, the words I love you, but the tone completely belies what you're trying to say. And so he says with unique strength, there's that sense of, I love you. Yeah, I said I'd get to it tomorrow., okay, I'm not, I'll do it on Friday. I already told you I'll take care of it on the weekend. All you said is I'll take care of it on the weekend as the words. But the tone of how you said it becomes explosive and impressionable and shapes those particular areas. I mean, that, that sigh, that negative tone is incredible. Look at verse twenty six of Proverbs, chapter fifteen. Same thought [unintelligible] is filled within this chapter. The Living Bible paraphrases it this way. The Lord hates the thoughts of the wicked, but delights in kind words. That's a really nice paraphrase. Evil plans are an abomination to the Lord, but pleasant words are

pure. The Lord hates the thoughts of the wicked, but delights in kind words. Turn to the one I had on the board just a moment ago on the screen. Chapter sixteen, just go over there. We saw it earlier in our introduction but look at it again, would you, with me. Verse twenty-four, chapter sixteen. Here's one that we might call a complete parallelism. He gives you, he starts with the first phrase and then he builds on it. It's not a contrast, it's not an antithesis, but it's a complete. Would you look at this? Pleasant words are a honeycomb.

And then notice, sweet to the soul, and healing to the bone. I came across this great little page that says, fifty ways to encourage your child. For years there was a great little publication that came out once a month called Dads Only. And it was written for dads to help be better fathers and better dads, better parents. And there was this one called Fifty Phrases to Encourage Your Child. Would you listen to some of them? First one said, you are so much fun to be around. Man, those kind of words, man, they are sweet to the soul. They are healing to the bones. Number seven, you are so thoughtful. When's the last time somebody said that to you or you said that to somebody else? Number twelve, you handled that beautifully. Oh. Number fifteen, you know, you are always teaching me something. Man, to hear that from a parent. To hear that from a prof or a teacher when I'm learning from, it's one thing I love about just this whole young adult dimension of college and our graduate program because we're all learning from each other. No prof has it all together, no student has it all together. It's that wonderful lifelong learning dimension. Number nineteen, you know, I really enjoy being with you. And you can tell, you hear that, you know that. Number twenty-nine, hey, you are going to make it. You're gonna make it. We're gonna get through this. See that brings life to the soul. That brings health to the bones. Number thirty-seven, I love to hear you laugh. Anybody said that about you? I love your laugh.

You just start laughing, it is infectious. This releases people to be themselves, it opens you up to a sense of trust.

Number forty-five. I believe in you. I believe in you. You said that to somebody lately? Somebody said that to you? See our words, and then how we say it. Number fifty. I love you. I love you. Wow. Powerful dimensions. Well friends, think with me as you keep focusing on communication that only seven percent is the words, but thirty-eight percent is how we say those words, how we communicate those words. But for a moment today, I want you also to think about the non-verbals, make it that wide, if you would, the non-verbals. I mean, it goes with that wonderful saying, you know, your actions speak so loud, I can't hear what you say. I just can read all over your body language. I could read all over your non-verbals. I can tell by your hesitation and I can tell by what's happening. I mean, you're telling me a whole lot more than what's going on. Look at Proverbs chapter six with me would you? Verses twelve through fourteen. It's a great little story in just these three verses of a whole body language dimension, because see there's times that our body language can contradict what we say. We're saying one thing, but we're signaling in some other way. There's other times that our body language may mask our true intentions. So we have that choice. Look at Proverbs six beginning in verse twelve. A worthless person, NIV says, a scoundrel or a villain, a wicked man, is the one who walks, see there's lifestyle, with a false mouth, a corrupt mouth, [clears throat] excuse me, who winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, points with his fingers, and who with perversity in his heart devises evil continually, and spreads strife.

Verse fifteen is calamity will come suddenly, instantly be broken. And there'll be no healing. Wow. Let me ask you just in a sense of your own, excuse me, [coughs] just in your own reflection, other points to where you're on the phone and, oh yeah, I mean, so glad you called. And the people around you, you're going, hm, you know, and you're making the mark, you know, oh, you'd like me to pick you up, you know, oh, well sure, no problem. You know, call me any time. You know.

[audience laughs]

And you're saying one thing on the phone, but you're communicating something completely different. That happens so often. I mean, you watch the sitcoms, you watch what's going on, and you see that constant double meaning of what's happening. I mean, is there certain areas where, you know, there's a certain evil eye you grew up with, with your parents. They didn't have to say a word. But you knew by a certain look, or a certain tap or a certain way they clench their fist or you, you mean you got the message right across the table in that Thanksgiving that you were out of line or whatever. Didn't say a word. But nonverbally they communicated with you. Was there a sense to where, you know, you, as I say, have a certain look, maybe a certain smile, the certain point when you're really caught in the middle that you start laughing, sort of that release of humor that, you know, you just kept, that's the one, one way that you respond to nervousness so that you communicate. But there's times you're trying to, you know, hold one line in one way, but you're really acting a whole different way. Those of you in communication, someone shared this with me, saying listen to these different kinds of language. There's symbol language. This is the way we give signals with our fingers or our hands. I mean, just, you know, don't have to say

a word, you know, thumbs up, we won, we're all, you know, that type of thing. Now, do be careful with your symbol languages in other cultures, okay? [chuckles] Because what works over here doesn't work somewhere else at times. But just that very sense of your, you know, thumbs up, thumbs down, don't have to say a word.

You know what you're talking about. There's the object language, statements we make about ourselves with the objects we surround ourselves with, such as the make of our car, the label on our clothes, the wall decorations, the jewelry, the toys. There's that sense in which all of a sudden you're saying something about who you are by what you drive, what you wear, those kind of things. And some of you are very conscious of that. Then there's the space or distance language. The amount of space or distance we keep around ourselves. Distance determines whether the relationship will be, is it a public, social, personal or intimate. You know, you're talking with somebody and you get a little bit closer [unintelligible] and they back up a few steps, and everybody has their space. And there's something about space, even that nonverbal. Okay, that dimension, which says something to people. And here's one I thought was very interesting that's called haptics, or touch language. The way we touch or we don't touch someone communicates a message. You've got a relationship with somebody and you know, you hold their hand or you join, you give a hug and a kiss or, you know, for myself, my wife and I as we'll, we go for a walk most every evening after dinner if we're home and, you know, we'll grab hands, we'll walk down. And if there's something between us, sometimes I don't grab her hand and I'm walking, you know, she'll say, Gordon, what's wrong? Nothing. Nothing wrong. You know, I'll start, whole ego thing. No, nothing's wrong. You know. Want, I want you to guess. Keep prompting, keep asking. I don't say that, but, you know, the old game goes on, you know.

But the fact that I didn't grab her hand like I normally do, The fact I don't hug her when I leave or give her a kiss before I leave or greet her when I come back., I mean, that tells something. If you're a touchy person and you're used to those, as they say, haptics, if all of a sudden that stop, you're communicating something. Then often the response is, oh, you know, nothing's wrong. No, nothing, yeah, yeah. Now, here's one very interesting called time language. We send messages through time whether we are early, punctual, fashionably late, or tardy in particular situations can reflect, respect, ego, lack of respect, or a number of other kinds of characteristics. The tilt of your head, bouncing of your feet, tapping your hands, you know, all says something. And what Proverb is saying I believe in chapter six for us is, don't be a hypocrite. Don't say one thing, and then you're communicating something else with the nonverbal. Don't say one thing with your speech, that idea of a walking with a false mouth. I mean, you're talking with a, with a sense it isn't true. But then you're winking, you're signaling, you're pointing in a whole dimension that is very different from that. The last here I'd like to touch on today is timing. Again to realize how important it is for us to consider the timing of what we say. I mean, you've heard it said in the past. I mean, timing is everything. We've all said that. How often have you said the right thing, but it was the wrong time. Now it's also possible to say the wrong thing at the wrong time. But guys, as I love you to say the right thing at the right time. And so the whole idea of timing is really important to us.

Look with me at Proverbs twenty-five verses eleven and twelve. Those of you art majors and into painting or sculpture or pottery. I mean, here's a beautiful dimension of metallurgy and the whole metal works. Look at what he says, like apples of gold. Think of that beautiful artistry. In

settings of silver. You're just talking about something really beautiful, some type of a special object that you have, something that you've bought as a art form or something. Does that how you look at that, you remember the beauty. So think of that kind of beauty, [unintelligible] is a word spoken in right circumstances, or fitly spoken or aptly spoken. The living Bible says it this way. Timely advice is as lovely as golden apples in a silver basket. For a number of years after my wife and I were first married, she would uh, have her hair styled and maybe a, you know, kind of a whole new look and a perm or a cut or, you know, bleach or whatever would go on. And, you know, after she spent her forty bucks or fifty bucks or whatever it was, and she'd come home and say, you know, well, you know, how do you like it? [laughs] You know, that's a really tough time to tell somebody how you really like it if you don't like it. You know, she spent all those hours, she spent all that money. And so, you know, after really getting in a couple of tough binds, because there were some times I kind of liked it the way it was, not the way it was done. I found myself kind of, you know, being a little bit phony. Oh yeah, it looks really nice, uh, you know, it's tough to engender [chuckles] that real exciting emotion if you don't feel that way.

And so a couple years after we were married, you know, I shared with her one time. I said, you know, sweetheart, sometimes it's really hard for me. And I always want to be honest with you. I always want to, you know, so there's no secrets between us. But I said, you know, when you asked me after something is done, oh, how'd you like it? That's a little late. And I said, especially with your hair styling, what about the day or so before you go to have it done? You say hon I'm going to have my hair styled, and, you know, what would you like and how would you like it or what do you like in the past or what might be fun. And you know, a little chance you can talk about it beforehand, so there's that sense. Or wait till a little bit later, but to ask somebody, how

do you like the, how do you like the way I did just after you did it, it's really tough. I'm thinking about that sometimes any, in evaluations. I mean, if you put on this major party, I mean, you're planning this major, you know, snow retreat, you know, in the, in the wintertime, you got this major gala that you're going to take place. Yes there should be evaluation but man if it's the moment right after and you start going through all of bad stuff with some of the good stuff, it's amazing how you can become overwhelming, [unintelligible] nothing good and nothing worked and nothing happened because that evaluation came at a time when it was really tender to you. So that right timing dimension. When does it take place? I think often with my kids, I mean I'll tell you, when I would see my son Jonathan doing something that what it was, was unacceptable with the group of kids, for me to just kind of yell out the window, you know, Jonathan, stop [yells incomprehensibly].

You know, you know, he'd listen and go on. But next thing you know he'd be right back to it. The difference of saying, hey, Jonathan, can I talk to you for a minute? So we'd leave the group and, you know, we'd slide, you know, behind the car or in the garage or somewhere I could be alone with him and say, Jonathan, hey, look, this just isn't appropriate. Let me tell, oh okay, Dad. Yeah. Yeah. You know, he goes back with his dignity. He listened to what I said. Timing makes a lot of difference. And Proverbs says if you'll look at it again, like apples of gold in settings of silver is the word spoken in right circumstances. And friends, that's an ongoing theme. Remember Ecclesiastes three? There's an appointed time for everything. There's a time for every event under heaven. A time to be born, a time to die. A time to plant, a time to harvest. You know, a time to mourn, a time to dance. And right within that whole dimension, he says, there's a time to be silent and a time to speak. Moments in which it isn't the right time to say that. And

friends, it takes God's help for us to know that. God's wisdom for us to, to discern that, and then be honest enough with those friends and those on that intimate level with who we can be able to share those kind of concepts. Now, with timing, go to my favorite, would you please? Proverbs twenty-seven, verse fourteen. I don't know if you're a morning person or a night person. I don't know kind of where you are on that, but Proverbs twenty-seven, verse fourteen talks about timing. If you're not a morning person, and I'm not a morning person. I've believed for years if God wanted us to see the sunrise he would have made it rise later in the day, all right?

[audience laughs]

I've done an extensive historical study. Not really, but you know then, realizing that apart from the resurrection of Jesus, there has been no major historical event which has taken place before noon. OK, you can just trust that all right.

[audience laughs]

But look at chapter twenty-seven, verse fourteen, look at what he says. [clears throat] The one who blesses his friend with a loud voice early in the morning, it will be counted as a curse to him. Now, some of you have roommates you may be struggling with all the time. I mean, their morning and your evening or vice versa or whatever. I mean, there's those people who, you know, wake up at the first crack of dawn and, you know, bad, good morning Lord. And I, it happens, again, timing. Nothing wrong with a pleasant greeting. Nothing wrong with a great super day and good morning, and we're ready to hit it again and God's going with us. But the

issue is when you say that makes a dramatic difference. Now, I am impressed when God gives us a model, an example, someone to sort of sense who's got life together in communication. He takes it from that wonderful Proverbs thirty-one of that godly woman. He uses her as the example. And one of the themes in that great passage is this. When she speaks, her words are wise. I mean, I think she understands that her words can bring life or death. She understands the power of our speech, how our words have therapeutic impact on people's lives. And he says of this woman who was following hard after God, hey this is the model. Her words are wise. And then notice, and kindness is the rule for everything she says. Men and women, continue to be people who speak the truth in love. Proverbs chapter three says, never forget to be truthful and kind. And then the wonderful, wonderful, poetical piece he says, allow kindness and truth to be like a necklace around your neck. Wear it.

And the idea is, you don't have to tell people, well now, you can believe this. And, you know, on a stack of Bibles, I promise you that or, you know, on my mother's grave. Don't have to be telling people you're truthful. Or tell 'em, I'm really kind or I really meant it. That, it's something that should be like a necklace. Think of a beautiful necklace that captures your attention. He says our kindness and truth should be that obvious in lives. And friends, that's even in a moment of confrontation and disagreement, even in a moment of professional evaluation or a sense of what you disagree with somebody, God says never forget to be kind and truthful. Friends, don't ever allow your honesty or your candor to be an excuse for being rude. You asked what I thought and you want me to tell you the truth, and, well you asked me, didn't you? Don't you want me to tell you what I'm thinking? And don't you really want the truth? You know, that isn't what he says. But he says a person who's fallen hard after God, their words are wise, and kindness is the rule

for everything she says. Well, friends, thanks for your great interaction, I'm going to hang around for a while. If you got some questions, you'd like to talk. But I just want to end with that dimension of realizing this is how God would describe that mature person. And he chooses a woman to do it. So women, keep leading us in that area of knowing the real sense of what it means to communicate well. Let's ask God to just allow this to be a part of our lives. Lord God, I thank you for the wonderful mix right here in this room.

Lord, I thank you for the ethnic diversity, the age differences, the gender dimensions, even the social issues. But Lord, remind us in a brand new way today that in the Church, each of us as brothers and sisters in Christ, there is no Jew or Gentile, no racial distinctions. We're to look at each other as brothers and sisters, followers of Jesus first. There are no gender distinctions, male and female. There are no social distinctions. Lord I just ask that there would be that kind of respect in each sphere and circle we're in. Enjoying our ethnic differences and male and female differences and the different areas that you've put us in life, but may that never be something that allows us to be bigoted, prejudiced, and allow us to enjoy the levels of communication so that we don't expect to be on the highest level or close friends with everybody. But what is that initial sort of cliché, that sort of just small talk. Lord it's the highest of intimacy. Help us really to value people. Lord, may we be more Christ-like in our communication. Because Jesus told it like it was, he confronted the issues. He was countercultural, but always with the deepest passion of truth and love. So empower us now, Lord, and I ask that you would to shape and change how we act by what we've seen, because you want us to be in your will. And we take these verses from Proverbs as to be a major sense of how you want us to talk to each other. So enrich relationships. There needs to be forgiveness or confession or an honesty of, hey, I've fall, fallen in these areas,

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I've failed in these areas. May that take place and then bring restoration with the friendships and the family. In the name of Jesus, Amen.