

3 Wise Ways to Fool-Proof Your Day

I can't tell you how many times I've said something stupid and then felt foolish after. How about you?

In Proverbs 10, there are at least 12 references to our tongues and the words we speak. Honestly, I might have missed a few. When I see 12 references to the tongue in one chapter, I know I need to take notice—that means God *really* wants me to understand the importance of what He's saying! The wisdom revealed in this chapter simply this: *Don't be a fool!* Ouch! The question is, how do you fool-proof your day?

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Think before you speak. Don't chatter (Prov. 10: 8, 10, 19): I remember when I was a little girl someone said to me, "Becky, you don't have to say everything that comes into your head." Pretty wise counsel. It's taken me 3/4 of my life to figure that out, and I'm still not sure I get it! The meaning of chatter according to dictionary is: "To talk rapidly in a foolish or purposeless way; jabber."

To be clear here, I don't think this is talking here about processing your thoughts with a good friend or spouse. Chatter refers to filling silent space with meaningless words—saying whatever pops into your head. Some thoughts are simply better left unsaid. Ask the Lord for wisdom about what really needs to be said. I remember when our kids were little, we would tell them Amy Carmichael's rules for talking: "Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?" Not everything is necessary.

Use your words to encourage and lift others up. Don't tear people down (Prov. 10: 11, 18, 21): When you use your words to build others up or to offer encouragement, it is like giving ice-cold water to a thirsty person. I've come to realize that

many in our world are thirsting for affirmation. When you affirm someone else, watch their face. If you look closely, you'll see their eyes light up, and their entire facial expression changes. A good practice is to seek to affirm at least three people a day. You can't go wrong. And it's pretty easy. One affirmation for your spouse, one for your kids and one for a friend, co-worker or stranger! Try it this week.

Fill your mind with wisdom. Don't fill your mind with garbage (Prov. 10:31): What we fill our minds with will come out of our mouths. I don't know about you, but that thought is sobering to me. I want to fill my mind with God's words so His thoughts come out of my mouth. I often think about who I want to be when I'm in my 80s. I've had some good examples as well as some very poor examples. When I'm in my 80s, I want to be speaking life to people. I don't want others to feel afraid of what might come out of my mouth! That means I need to fill my mind now with God's thoughts. I discipline myself to memorize. I want, in the words of Paul, my gentleness to be known by all (see Phil. 4:5). That means I have to do the work *now* to put the right thoughts in my mind so that the right words come out of my mouth *then*.

Hey friend, I know this post is a little tough. Know that I am taking these thoughts to heart myself. Are you with me? We're in this together! We can pray for each other this week, that our words would demonstrate our love for Christ. As always, I'd love to hear from you. What have you found helpful in controlling your tongue? {eoa}

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