

Norman C. Schwab
Yacolt EV Free
October 22, 2000

Speaking Truth Part 11

Proverbs

Lynn Austin writes in the *Christian Reader* that sometimes Satan makes a little "white" lie seem like an easy way out of a problem. In her article she tells about a special day on vacation she had planned with her five year old son. Her son had great interest in stars and had been looking forward to visiting the planetarium. But when they arrived, they learned that children under the age of 6 were not admitted. "Lets pretend you just had a birthday, she told him. If the ticket man asks you how old are you, I want you to say, "I'm 6" She made him practice it until he sounded convincing, then bought the tickets without any problems. When the show ended they moved on to the museum. There was a large sign there that read "Children 5 and under are admitted for free. So to avoid the \$5 dollar admission fee, she had to convince her son to forget his pretend birthday. The consequences of her lie became readily apparent as they were walking up to the steps of the Aquarium, their final destination that day, The boy grabbed her mom and with a worried look said, "Wait a minute mom...how old am I now?" She had fallen for the father of lies that whispers..heres an easy way out take it. Go ahead sell me truth, all I want is a little bit of it. Sell me some of your truth and I can make your life much easier. Proverbs 14:12 says "there is a way that seems right to a man but in the end leads to death." Initially it may seem like the lie is the easiest way to go...but in the end it leads no where you want to be.

Speaking truth is very valuable. It may look very attractive to sell off some of your truth, and it will get you out of a pinch. But...before you do that think again, for speaking truth is very valuable. Turn with me in toward the middle of your Bibles where you will find the book Proverbs. It is not a dusty collection of myths and yarns, it is a treasure chest of divinely inspired wise sayings ready to give life and wisdom to all who follow their principles. Many of them were written by one of the wisest kings of Israel whose name was Solomon. We continue our study of

Proverbs and truth by looking at **Proverbs 23:23**. It reads "Buy truth and do not sell it. Get wisdom and instruction and understanding." This verse says buy truth. That tells me it will probably cost me something to obtain truth. It will take some effort, expense, discipline, hard work to obtain and hold on to truth. The wise Proverb tells us to buy truth, whatever the price, whatever the cost...do all you can to obtain and hold on to truth. Why? Because it is extremely valuable. That is the first point I want us to remember this morning. Speaking truth is extremely valuable, so obtain truth at all costs...and pssst by the way, lying will cost you even more. There are many hidden costs with lying. There is fine print too small to even read, there are traps, loop holes, terms and conditions you must sign away your rights if you agree to sell truth away. Buy truth and do not sell it away.

In a classic Peanuts comic strip, the first day of school, the teacher has the students write an essay about returning to class. In her essay Lucy wrote, "Vacations are nice, but it's really good to get back to school. There is nothing more satisfying or challenging then an education. I look forward to this year of expanding my knowledge." The teacher of course was quite pleased with Lucy's essay. In the final frame Lucy leans over to Charley Brown, "After a while, you learn what sells"

It's tempting to sell off truth because there are many buyers. It may be what you think others want to hear..so you sell off truth to please them. When do we sell truth away? When a situation comes along that looks like it will offer us a better deal in exchange for the truth. Temptation comes along and says, "I can put more money in your pocket...sell me your truth and lie about the product you are selling. I can reduce your tax payment...sell me your truth and lie on the 1040 form. Temptation comes and says "I can close that deal, just sell me truth. The evil one is the biggest salesmen. He comes along and says lie, sell off your truth, it isn't worth that much, in fact you will probably never even miss it. Sell me your truth and I will get you out of hot water with your parents...sell me your truth don't really tell them what happened Thursday night. Temptation comes along and says "I will promise you better grades...just sell me truth and cheat on the test. Temptation comes along and says I will give you that job promotion if you will just sell me a little bit of that truth, just lie about whose idea

that really was. Temptation comes along and says, "I can make you more popular...just sell me some of your truth. Exaggerate a few stories so there more dramatic, more funny, lie to cover for your friends go ahead...I can make you more popular. Just sell me your truth...psst you will never miss it.

I think some of us sell off truth much too quickly when we don't even have to. For example; your 92 year old grandmother gives your a gift. She wants to know if you've been enjoying it..but its not your style, not the right color, maybe it's a broken down piano that you just had to get rid of but you don't want to hurt her feelings so. You lie to her and say, yes, we are enjoying it....you fill in your own lie. Folks there are wise ways to craft your words so you don't lie and you don't cause unnecessary hurt. You may want to anticipate and think through your response. When she asks there is nothing that says you are required to answer her question. When she asks you if you are enjoying the piano, You may wish to reply "Grandmas, thank you for giving us that piano. I appreciate your thoughtfulness. You must have had some great memories with it. Tell me about them." You have truthfully acknowledged the gift, thanked her for it and really she probably just wanted to share in the memories she may have had with it. Kids ask questions at times that I am not ready to give them the answer, nor are they ready to hear the answer, or at least the full answer. If you are not prepared to answer them you are not required to answer..but you don't have to lie. Don't sell truth up so cheaply. Jesus often answered a question with a question. This is a wise skill to acquire. At least you could say, "I'm not going to answer that right now." or that's an interesting question, let me think about that. Don't sell truth so easily when you don't have to.

God's word in Proverbs 23:23 says to buy truth and do not sell it. Fight to gain truth whatever it costs...and never, never, never sell it off. It is far too valuable **Proverbs 10:20** Says, "The tongue of the righteous is of choice silver. Point number one, Speaking truth is extremely valuable.

Second point this morning I want us to remember; Our words hold great power. Look at Proverbs 18:21 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" Wow...the power of death and life. Our words have power. I remember when I was a kid and someone would tease me or say unkind words, I would quote a rhyme to them..it went like this "Sticks and

stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." What a lie. Guess what...you will not find that statement in Proverbs. Most of us will agree words can be far more damaging and hurtful than sticks and stone. Proverbs says our words hold great power to penetrate deep into the soul. Proverbs 25:15 "A soft tongue breaks the bones." Even a whisper, a calm quiet word has the ability to wield great power. Proverbs 12:18a says "There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword." A spoken word has the power to cut in deeply like a knife and wound others. Our words have the power to penetrate and break or just as effectively our words have the power to penetrate deep beneath the muscles and bones and soothe an aching spirit.

Look at 12:18b. "But the tongue of the wise brings healing" It can refresh and revitalize the whole body. 16:24 "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." John Graham sells honey and I was asking him about all the FDA and health regulations for selling food products. He told me something fascinating. Honey is the only food product exempt from all the regulations and laws...because it is recognized as a natural preservative. Like honey healing and preserving qualities, pleasant, truthful, righteous words penetrate deeply into the soul and heal the bones.

Our words have power not only in penetrating effect but also in their spreading ability. Proverbs 16:27b-28 "...his words are as a scorching fire. A perverse man spreads strife." Words have great power in their ability to spread. Lies seem to spread out fast. Mark Twain once said, "A lie will run around the world twice while truth is still tying on its shoes." Like a scorching fire that races across the forest not caring who or what it devours in its way...is the lie of a perverse man. Words implant ideas in minds and their effect ripples and rushes and scorches out to others at sometimes a terrifying speed. Just as a fire may start with just a small little match, a careless cigarette flicked out the window. So to a firestorm of lie can begin with just a careless word thrown out of the window of your mouth. Then whoosh. It takes a life on its own. A cut-down here, a whine here..a complaining attitude...a gossip...a twisted story. Whoosh.

The words we speak are incredibly valuable. Don't sell the truth for anything. Our words are also incredibly powerful. Be wise in the way you

use them. They can penetrate deeply they can spread far and wide. It is your choice as to how they are used, for death and life are in the power of the tongue. So, Have you said anything recently you wish you could take back? What are the most life giving words you've spoken lately? Have you been able to encourage someone. This week I have heard both. I have heard incredibly damaging words and I also heard words of life giving, encouraging words that soothed my soul and brought healing to my bones. I heard of one individual who attends our church spreading words of healing and encouragement. She said, "I love going to church. I love the worship, it heals my soul. my friends all think I'm crazy for coming here..but they notice the difference, as I'm beginning to change and not the same person I used to be." Wow! There is nothing more encouraging to see the power of God transforming people, little by little. And what an encouragement to hear that. Spread that. That's worth encouraging others. So how have you used the powerful words that your hold inside your mouth? Who have you encouraged this week. Have you been encouraged by someone? Thank them. Spread that encouragement right back to them. Proverbs 12:14 says "A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his words, the deeds of a man will return to him." Good words have great power as well to penetrate and spread life and healing. Their benefits will reach out to many others and be that revitalizing tree of life and refreshment. (15:4) The Proverbs say that the words we say have the power to kill or bring life. They can poison or provide refreshing fruit. And you have the choice on how to use them.

The third point I want us to remember this morning is this. Speaking truth will always win in the long run. Proverbs 12:19 "Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts just a moment." Some of us may look at that principle and say, "I can't see how truth will ever win out over lies. It seems like lies are too powerful, everybody is abusing lies. You can't get anywhere without them. It seems like the best deal. Truth in our world seems so weak in comparison to lies. Everybody seems to be getting away unpunished and unscathed selling truth and buying lies. yes, some days it does seem like that. But that thinking is confined to our homes, this week, this year, even confined this life time. When God think of truth...he is talking about forever. He looks at eternity, all the way before time and all the way after time and tells

us...truth last forever. The lying tongue...in eternity perspective...is disposable. It last only just a moment, a flicker. Truth will always come to the surface...in the long run. The leopard will always show its spots...in the long run. Truth will always win..in the end. "For truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts for just a moment."

Buy truth and do not sell it. Honesty is such a good thing you cannot afford to be without it. So how can we buy truth? How can we become more honest?

Truth and lies all start far deeper than the teeth. far deeper than the mouth, deeper than the esophagus and stomach. Truth begins in the heart and soul of a person. That is the very seat of his mind, will and emotions. This is where the core values of the person drive all his thoughts and words and actions. Our Lord Jesus himself said in Matthew 12:34 "Out of abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks" If you wish to buy truth, to become more honest..then it needs to start with a volitional choice of the heart, will, mind for Proverbs insists that what a man **says** wells up from what a man **is**.

James calls out to us to leave behind our patterns of dishonesty and to start fresh and new. James 5:16 says "Confess our sins to each other so that we may be healed." Sometimes I am blinded by my own sin, that big old plank is stuck in my eye while I am trying to pick out a splinter in another persons eye. I don't see my own sin and lies right away, but as soon as I do and the Lord reveals it, I need to go to the person and ask forgiveness. If we want to become truth tellers we must invite ourselves into the discipline of confession. You must not assume it is only the big, bald faced, industrial strength lies that you must confess. It is the white lies the shades of truth the exaggerations and twists and distortions. Imagine what a community we would build if all those in it committed to speaking the truth and committed to pursue the discipline of confession. And not just to each other but also to God.

That is where truth begins. God. Why? Because God is truth and goes totally against the father of lies. In God will we find truth. Maybe you have lived your life as one big lie. Maybe you have used your tongue as a powerful penetrating force to stab and wound others around you. for the tongue is incredibly powerful as it holds the power of death and life. The words you choose could kill or bring life. In order to speak truth we

must align ourselves with Truth Himself. with God. If you have not ever done that before, then your words or lack of words could mean death for you, I'm talking about eternal death. Romans 10:9-10 says "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes resulting in righteousness and with the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation. A failure to confess Jesus as Lord. A failure to recognize Jesus as Sovereign Lord, Truth itself..is in fact a flat denial on God and a denial of truth. This morning your heart may be drawn to Jesus Christ and the truth that He holds. You may be ready to align yourself with truth, ready to confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart the gospel message. What is that message? Simply that we are all sinners. But God loved us so much that He did something about it. He sent his son Jesus to pay for our sins on the cross. If we accept that free gift of salvation given to us by God through Jesus we can have life. If we believe in our heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead. We too can be raised up into fresh newness of life. We can align ourselves with truth. It is God who equips us to speak the truth. Because he is truth we can learn to break free from the shackles of our lies and live the truth. Are you ready to speak the powerful words of receiving Gods gift? Pray with me these words. I think a fitting response as Annette plays would be to stand up come down and I would love to pray with you and encourage you...as the rest of the congregation is encouraged. Elders come on down. Maybe God has spoken to you about something you need to make right come on down. Maybe you would just like to have someone pray for you. Come down.