

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart March 2025

STUDY before you speak

by Steve Huston



“Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” Col. 4:6

Every portion of the above verse seems like a really tall order. Yet, by God’s grace and the Spirit’s help, this tall order is not an impossible one. Solomon, through the Proverbs, has many helps for governing our speech; let’s look at the 15th chapter.

“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.” (15:1)

In this first verse, the wise man speaks to us about **the tone** of our answers, that we should respond softly. That doesn’t mean that they should be answers that compromise

truth. God, forbid! Rather, they should be answers motivated by and spoken with compassion and with love, as we are given opportunity to speak into the lives of others. They aren’t words of vengeance or anger, nor are they heated with a passion to “win” an argument. Instead, our desire is for God to win their hearts with truth, for His glory and for their sakes.

“The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.” (15:28)

As we approach the end of this chapter, Solomon speaks to **the content** of our speech. Our answers are to be more than mere feeling or what today’s popular notions are; they are to be well-researched. For that, we must both hear the whole of the situation (Prov. 18:13) and look into the whole counsel of God for the answer.

There are too many today that allow their feelings to direct their faith and their answers, regardless of

what the Word of God says about it. There is no area in which the Bible is silent. It gives solid answers, either directly or by principle, to everything: Immigration, LGBT+ agendas, Marxism, IVF, evangelism, worship, faith, and the list goes on, but too many allow their own feelings or the culture’s feelings to dictate their answer instead of **compassionately addressing the issues by the God-given facts found in Scripture**.

Dear Reader, the Scriptures should be our final and only authority! I recently received a short, well-written devotional from a dear friend. It describes perfectly what I am trying to say.

“In the days in which we live where deception does abound, it is more important than ever to know the Word of God! We must view everything through the lens of God’s Word. It is the litmus test, the proving ground.

“[It’s] the scales in which everything must be

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weighed, whether it be a dream, a vision, an experience, doctrine, teaching, etc. If it does not line up with scripture, it must be found wanting and rejected.

Let me also point out that “the heart of the righteous” will not skew the answer in order to benefit himself either. It’s about loving God first and foremost, and then loving your neighbor as yourself. Our own interests ought not to weigh in on the matter. Simply, what does God say about it; that’s what “our neighbor” needs to hear – let it be lovingly spoken with compassion – but let it be the pure Word of God that heals relationships, issues, and souls. The fear of God and the love of one’s neighbor combine to dictate the righteous man’s response.

Whether dealing with people inside the church or with the unchurched, as we give answer or

speak up in defense of truth in the face of deception, let us follow the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 4:2. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort **with all longsuffering and doctrine.**”

Our job is to present the truth with the love and compassion of Christ. He was full of grace and truth; let us be likewise. We needn’t get in an argument. Compassionately speak the truth, then get out of the way and allow the Spirit to work. Ours is to speak the truth with grace and allow God to “bring the increase.” In other words, we are to be faithful and trust God for the outcome. Sometimes we are simply planting while another comes along to water and perhaps someone else gets the privilege of harvesting. Nonetheless, be faithful in what you’ve been called to.

Verses 31-33 tell us the outcome of those who will listen to the truth which is given by the heart of the righteous who studied, and studies, for the answer. These verses also warn of the

outcome for those who reject such godly truth and wisdom. It’s vital, so I’ll include those verses here. I don’t want anyone to miss it:

“The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.”

Most people seem to enjoy giving “instruction” more than receiving it; each of us have opportunities for both. Whether a “giver” or a “receiver,” we need to humble ourselves before the precious Word of God. When you give instruction, do you study and seek the will of God in the matter before you? When it’s your turn to receive instruction where do you turn? Will you humble yourself to God-honoring instruction which has come from the Scripture?

Humility precedes honor.



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