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The Proverbs Series

Tongue Trouble

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Proverbs 26:17-28 ¹⁷Like one who grabs a dog by the ears is a passerby who meddles in a quarrel not his own. ¹⁸Like a madman shooting firebrands and deadly arrows, ¹⁹so is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking!" ²⁰Without wood, a fire goes out; without gossip, a conflict ceases. ²¹Like charcoal for embers and wood for fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife. ²²The words of a gossip are like choice morsels that go down into the inmost being. ²³Like glaze covering an earthen vessel are burning lips and a wicked heart. ²⁴A hateful man disguises himself with his speech, but he lays up deceit in his heart. ²⁵When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart. ²⁶Though his hatred is concealed by deception, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly. ²⁷He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him. ²⁸A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth causes ruin. (BSB)

I. Here are the details of this passage.

A. It is unwise to put yourself into the **middle** of a quarrel between others. V. 17

B. It is unwise to use **joking** as an excuse for saying hurtful things to others. V. 18-19

C. Repeating gossip and starting quarrels are causes of **division** and **strife** among people. V. 20-23 We do not need devil advocates!

D. Beware of people flattering you with words. They are using your **weakness for attention** against you. V. 24-26, 28

E. Keep in mind the sowing and reaping principle with dealing with people of **low** character. V. 27

II. What can we learn from this?

A. Commit yourself to not being a **rescuer** to others who are in conflict.

Encourage conflict to stay in straight lines. Mediation may be necessary, but it should never be the first thing tried.

B. Harsh joking and biting sarcasm often reveal painful unforgiven **wounds** in us. Seek pastoral help in getting these healed.

C. If we are not sure of something we should **never** repeat it. The best rule is to treat others as you would have them treat you.

D. Be aware that your self-esteem issues are being used **against** you. It is never too late to discover who you are in Christ and to become the VIP that God says that you are.

E. Let God **judge** those who have hurt you. His judgment isn't like yours. His goal is to redeem them not to destroy them.