

# Speaking to the soul



## Speaking

**Watch your tongue and keep your mouth shut, and you will stay out of trouble. Proverbs 21:23**

Speaking is such a huge part of our daily lives that we need all the wisdom we can find to guide us. The book of Proverbs comes back to the subject time and again precisely because it is so important. We need to be constantly learning how to use our tongues more effectively, and part of that is to learn when to speak and when to be silent. Benjamin Franklin once wrote: “Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.” Those are wise words. There are many moments when we could be lured into sharing some juicy gossip or joining in with damaging criticism but God expects us to keep our mouths firmly shut. This isn’t easy, but it is all part of learning to live life to the full and deliberately turning our back on those things that will cause damage and hurt.

The trouble with speaking is that we do so much of it, and it just happens. It isn’t the product of a long process of reflection – we just open our mouths and the words flow out. The writer of the Proverbs is encouraging us to put more thinking into our talking. He commands us to “watch our tongue”, which involves standing back and reflecting on what we are saying and how we are saying it. This is probably best done in prayer. As we come before God at the end of the day we can offer him our conversations and reflect with him on the way in which we have spoken. At times it will be immediately obvious that we need to seek his forgiveness for words that have been poorly chosen. There will be other moments when we can think of things that could have been phrased better. And we will also spot moments when not saying anything at all would have been in every way the best choice!

## **QUESTION**

What might help you to use your tongue more effectively?

**PRAYER**

Lord God, thank you for the gift of my tongue. Help me to use it in a way that will be helpful and encouraging to other people. Amen

*Photograph - View of Hereford Cathedral and statue of Sir Edward Elgar*

