

# Speaking to the soul



## Speaking

**There is more hope for a fool than for someone who speaks without thinking. Proverbs 29:20**

The writer of Proverbs has a lot to say about fools. They live dangerously and destructively, and he does everything he can to encourage his readers to avoid foolishness and to live a life of wisdom. When he declares that there is more hope for a fool than for someone who speaks without thinking, he is clearly describing the most terrible disaster,

and that's because words are so powerful. They can be powerful to build, but they can also be devastatingly destructive when used in the wrong way.

So, what thinking should we do before speaking? I love the mnemonic T-H-I-N-K. Here are five excellent tests to apply to anything that you say. T stands for True. So much damage is caused in relationships and organisations because untrue things are said. Gossip feeds off this. A statement might be partly true but give a misleading impression, and when it is passed on a number of times, it bears no relationship to the real situation. If you are not absolutely sure that something is true, it is better to keep quiet. H stands for Helpful. It can be very tempting to share information simply to show that you know it, but it is better to be quiet if what you are saying won't help. I stands for Inspiring. Your words need to have a positive effect and leave people encouraged and strengthened. N stands for Necessary. For some of us, when we start talking, it can be difficult to stop, and we end up sharing half formed thoughts that are totally unnecessary and are in danger of fuelling gossip. K stands for Kind. If our words are not kind, then they should never have been spoken.

We won't go through all those five steps every time we speak, but I encourage you to start making use of this simple guide. It may help to slow down our speaking and increase our thinking time.

## **QUESTION**

Which of the five steps is most challenging and important for you to reflect upon?

## **PRAYER**

Loving God, thank you for the privilege of speaking. Help me to become increasingly wise in the way in which I speak.  
Amen

