

Speaking to the soul



Communication

A loud and cheerful greeting early in the morning will be taken as a curse! Proverbs 27:14

This might sound a bit harsh, but if you've ever lived with someone who is irrepressibly loud and cheerful, you probably know what the writer of this proverb is getting at! In life, it's not so much what you say as how, when, where and why you say it. The writer is talking about people who are insensitive, and, let's be honest, we all know people like that, and we've all done it ourselves.

In the previous chapter, the writer referred to someone who was completely insensitive and totally misread the situation. He saw them as a serious liability. He wrote: "Just as damaging as a madman shooting a deadly weapon is someone who lies to a friend and then says: 'I was only joking'" (Proverbs 26:18-19). Everything was wrong about this. He shouldn't have been lying in the first place, and to try to pass it off as a joke was just pouring fuel on the fire.

We all have something to learn from this. We need to learn to use our words with increasing care, because the same words can be received totally differently depending on the person, time, weather and a thousand other variables. Words that might amuse one person might antagonise another. Statements that some people find full of insight might cause lasting offence to another. Before you conclude that you need to keep your mouth firmly shut and never say another word, let me encourage you to lean even harder on the Holy Spirit. He is the one who can give us the wisdom and strength to speak in the way that the apostle Paul described in Colossians 4:6: "Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."

QUESTION

What has this proverb taught you about communicating with others?

PRAYER

Father God, thank you that you have given me your Holy Spirit to enable me to speak in a way that will honour you and bless others. Amen

