

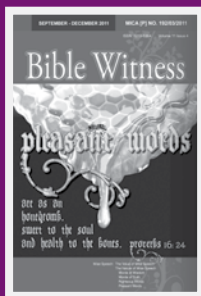
Bible Witness



pleasant words

are as an
honeycomb,
sweet to the soul
and health to the bones. **proverbs 16: 24**

Wise Speech: The Value of Wise Speech
The Nature of Wise Speech
Words of Wisdom
Words of Truth
Righteous Words
Pleasant Words



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Editorial

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). Our speech has the power to either hurt or comfort, to destroy or nurture. The potential of the tongue is sobering. So it needs to be used with much care.

If we do not pay close attention to our speech, it will destroy our Christian testimony. "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (James 3:6). What a startling caution this is against unguarded speech!

The evils that can arise from one's speech are beyond measure. From one's mouth proceed blasphemy, falsehood, slander, scandal, profanity, perjury, obscenity, threatening, ridiculing, boastfulness and the list of evils goes on and on. Oh, what fiery destruction and shame would proceed from an uncontrolled tongue!

So our Lord Jesus reprimanded His hearers, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:34-35). Then He put everyone on notice, saying, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36).

Christian men and women must take heed that no unwholesome word proceed from their mouths. In Proverbs 4:23-24, we are exhorted: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee." Christians must be deliberate in avoiding every form of ungodly speech, and then cultivating wise and godly speech. To disregard or to think lightly of the importance of wise speech is to prove oneself foolish and unrighteous.

The book of Proverbs gives special attention to the importance of wise speech. It encourages readers to cultivate speech which builds up their hearers, by promising them that "a man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth" (Proverbs 12:14).

Proverbs has many wonderful counsels on wise speech, and they are strewn across the book, mingled with myriads of counsels on many other subjects. The articles in this magazine form a collection of these wonderful counsels in Proverbs concerning wise speech. We present them with an earnest prayer that all our readers will profit greatly from them.

This magazine also contains testimonies from the last two Bible Witness retreats which were held in March and September. Our next retreat is scheduled for March 14-16, 2012. Please note the details of the upcoming retreat and plan on joining us for a time of spiritual blessings.

We have also included mission reports about one of our latest mission efforts, Gethsemane Bible Institute (GBI). It was set up to equip men for the work of the Gospel. By the grace of God, GBI has already started its classes in Cebu, the Philippines. God willing, GBI will begin its classes in Ethiopia in January 2012 upon the completion of the buildings that are now being built.

By the way, have you logged on to our Web Radio? A series of new programmes are planned out for children, youths, ladies and men. Do visit www.biblewitness.com/webradio. We also appreciate your testimonies and feedback, so please write to us or email us.

I also take this opportunity to seek the earnest prayers and support of God's people everywhere for the Bible Witness Media Ministry.

Finally, I would like to inform our readers that this magazine is a combined publication of two issues, namely the September-October Issue and November-December Issue. Have a pleasant and an edifying read!

In Christ's service,
Prabhudas Koshy

Please give towards the Lord's work done by Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church. Your generous support is urgently needed. You may send your cheques to 'Gethsemane B-P Church' (510 Geylang Road #02-06 Singapore 389466)

The Value of Wise Speech

Proverbs recognises and promotes the great value of wise speech, whether it be in personal, family or societal life. For instance, it declares, “A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth” (Proverbs 13:2a). Again in chapter 15, verse 23, we are told that “a man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!” How vividly God’s wisdom recommends to us the blessings of wise speech!

The book also uses several vivid imageries to applaud and explain the value of wise speech to its readers. By carefully considering these imageries, we can appreciate the importance and benefits of wise speech.

It is like an honeycomb



“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24). Here, the imagery of an honeycomb is used to

demonstrate a couple of wonderful benefits of pleasant or gracious words.

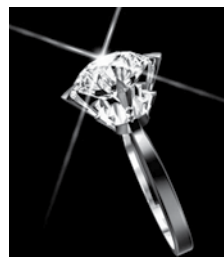
In ancient Israel, honey was a staple food, and was also used as a medicinal remedy. Of its refreshing and reviving effects, we read in 1 Samuel 14:27 that Jonathan “put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put

his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened”.

An honeycomb is both refreshing and healing, so are pleasant words. Both flavour life with goodness and health. Here, we are also told that just like an honeycomb, the amazing results of pleasant words are felt both in body and soul. Pleasant words will have a beneficial effect on the whole person.

It is very helpful to recall Psalm 19:10 where the Word of God is compared to honey and honeycomb. Consequently, if the words of our mouth are guided and guarded by the Word of God, we will be able to minister the goodness and health of God’s own words to our hearers.

It is like a priceless jewel



Wise speech is like a priceless jewel – “There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel” (Proverbs 20:15).

Gold and rubies are of little value when compared with the lips that publish knowledge. Words of wisdom are like the finest and most valuable jewel among all the precious metals and stones.

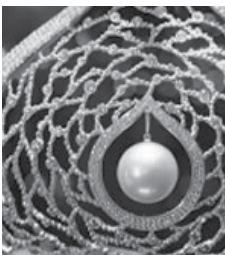
No price can be placed upon the words of wisdom that declare the wisdom that comes from above, even the truth of God. A person who speaks sound words of wisdom and judgment, in accordance with God's Word, is worthy of highest esteem. His advice is to be counted superior in value to all the costly gems.

More of similar imageries are used in Proverbs to portray the high value of wise speech.

A wise rebuke, just like wise counsel, is praised for its great beauty and value. "As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reproof upon an obedient ear" (Proverbs 25:12). In other words, correction given by a wise person to someone open to advice is like costly ornaments of fine gold.

"The tongue of the just," says Proverbs 10:20a, "is as choice silver". A just tongue that utters pleasant, profitable and pure words is as precious as the finest silver. Is that possible? Yes, by keeping one's speech according to God's Word, which is pure like silver that is free from dross (cf. Psalms 12:6; 119:140).

It is like an exquisite artwork



"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). The magnificence of wise speech is compared to an elegant oriental

artwork of fruits carved in gold against a backdrop of delicate silver. This brilliant imagery is chosen to attribute the highest

possible praise to wise speech. Just as an exquisite work of art is attractive to the eye, so is a wisely and appropriately spoken word to the ear.

Here, Proverbs gives immense value to careful and wise speech. The great value of speech is not dependent on the abundance of words, but on the aptness of the words uttered, though they may be few. Not many words, but the right word is what really matters!

It is like a well of life



"The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life," declares Proverbs 10:11a. The mouth of a righteous man that speaks forth words of wisdom and

edification will quench the spiritual thirst of the hearers, and hence it is depicted as "a well of life". A righteous man will be like his God who is said to have "the fountain of life" (Psalm 36:9) and is "the fountain of living waters" (Jeremiah 2:13). Every godly person who nourishes himself in God's Word will be a "well of life" to his hearers.

The same thought is also expressed in Proverbs 18:4 which says, "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook." The wise man, being filled with God's wisdom, will be like a reservoir from which nourishing water flows out. Words of wisdom coming from his mouth are like a flowing water brook.

Blessed is the man who is wise in his speech; and he blesses his hearers with it!

The Nature of Wise Speech

Wise speech is a distinguishing mark of godly men. It pleases God and brings cheer to its hearers. But foolish speech which characterises the wicked, dishonours God and troubles man. Proverbs 10:31-32 says, "The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness."

While the wise man desires excellence in speech, the fool despises it. "Excellent speech becometh not a fool" (Proverbs 17:7a). In Proverbs, a wise man is one who fears God and loves godly wisdom. He always seeks to nurture his speech according to the wisdom that God gives. Only a fool would reject such a noble aspiration.

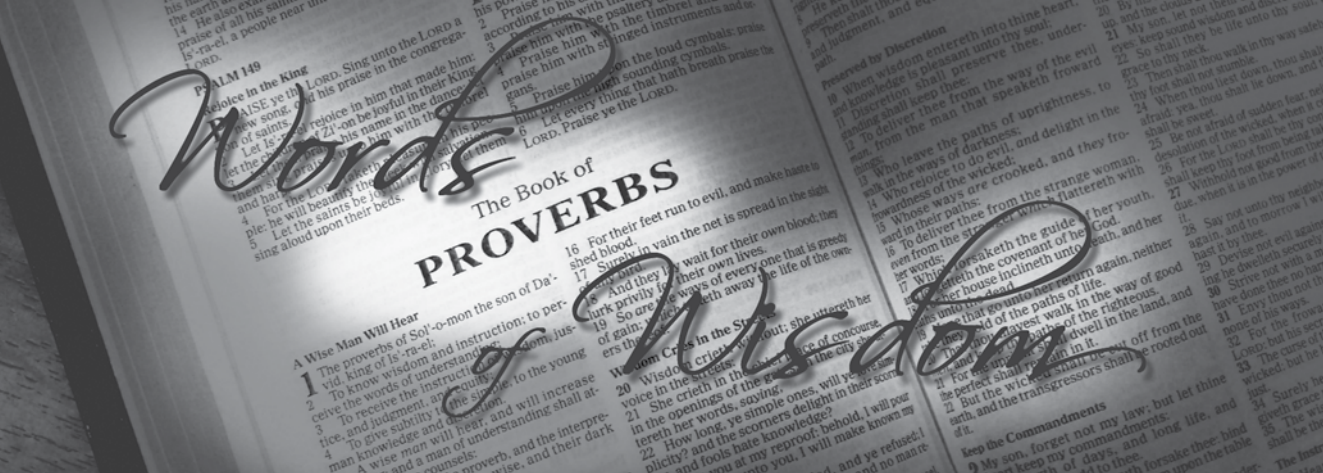
Proverbs urges us to cultivate wise speech by pointing out to us its benefits. The helpful nature of wise speech is lauded in Proverbs. "The tongue of the wise is health," declares Proverbs 12:18b. In other words, a wise man who cautiously utters his words will bring healing to his hearers.

Another verse that speaks of the helpful characteristic of wise speech is Proverbs 18:4, which says, "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook." The synonymous parallelism of this verse requires that "the words of a man's mouth" be wise words. These are "deep waters", a great reservoir of wisdom and counsel. Moreover, it flows out like a brook to provide wisdom for others.

As much as one's wise speech honours God and edifies his hearers, it also brings wonderful benefits to himself. "A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth" (Proverbs 12:14). Likewise, it says in Proverbs 18:20, "A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled." Indeed, a man who grows in wise speech will receive this promise of much happiness and satisfaction in life. The phrase "fruit of his mouth", as with its other occurrences in Proverbs (cf. 12:14; 13:2), refers to good fruits produced by a man's speech. The phrases "fruit of his mouth" and "increase of his lips" are synonymous. They both refer to the benefits of one's speech.

Proverbs 14:3b further affirms that "the lips of the wise shall preserve them". The words that the wise speak are a protection to themselves and to others who hear and follow.

In order to help us cultivate wise speech, the book of Proverbs describes various characteristics of wise speech, and it provides practical instructions on developing wholesome speech. They are discussed in the articles that follow.

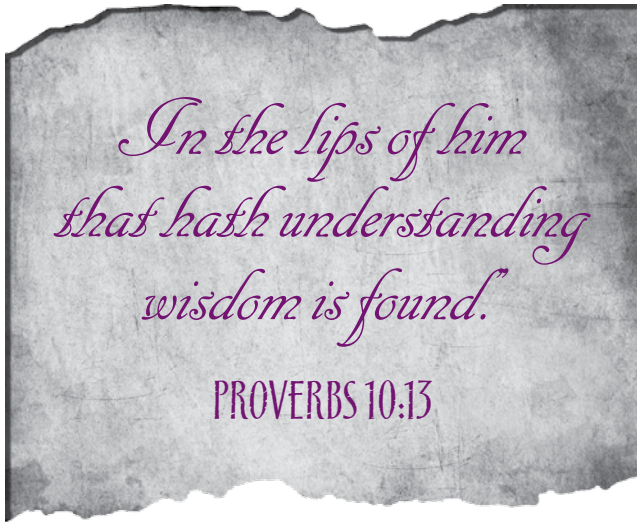


The book of Proverbs lauds men who impart wisdom and understanding to others. In fact, it exhorts the readers to seek after such people and listen to them intently.

Who speaks words of wisdom?

Proverbs 10:13 casts light on those who utter words of wisdom. “In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found.” In Proverbs, a man of understanding is one who yields his mind to the fear of the LORD (2:5) as well as righteousness (2:9; 8:8; 10:32), learning (1:5; 16:21), prudence (14:8, 15; 16:21) and knowledge (2:5; 8:9; 14:6; 18:15; 19:25; 28:2). Such a man will possess wise thoughts and is deemed wise.

Proverbs 10:31 sheds more light on how we can be wise in our speech. It says, “The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom.” Just men are mentioned here as speaking wisely. The same is said about the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 – “She openeth her mouth with wisdom” (v. 26a).



A commitment to righteousness or virtue will help us dispel foolish and ungodly thoughts and attitudes so that we may speak wisely.

We are also told in Proverbs that through much learning (cf. Proverbs 1:5; 16:21) and careful analysis (cf. Proverbs 14:8, 15; 16:21) we can obtain needful knowledge for wise speech. Proverbs 15:7a says, “The lips of the wise disperse knowledge.” Not only does he possess knowledge, but he is also committed to use it to everyone’s benefit, unlike fools who use their knowledge to the hurt of others. “The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness” (Proverbs 15:2).

Words of Truth




The words of the wise in the book of Proverbs are recorded that we may know and speak the truth. Proverbs 22:20-21 proclaims this purpose of the book when it says, "Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?" The wisdom of the Bible is absolute truth; and we should never doubt the veracity of its wisdom.

God's wisdom declares in Proverbs 8:6-7a, "Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth." This is a call to all the readers of Proverbs to take heed to its excellent counsel, for they are truth.

If we utter a word that is contrary to the Scriptures, it is a lie, and hence deceitful. In other words, if we speak contrary to the truth of God's wisdom, we become false witnesses and deceivers. So we must uphold the wisdom of God's Word in our conversations. Proverbs 12:17 says, "He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness; but a false witness deceit." We must guard and guide our speech according to the true wisdom of His Word lest we become false witnesses.

So when we speak to others, we must be careful to fashion our speech according to the wisdom of God's Word. When our words are based on the



*He that speaketh
truth sheweth forth
righteousness.*

PROVERBS 12:17

truth of His Word, we shall be faithful and righteous in our conversations and instructions. Otherwise, our speech will be deceitful.

Moreover, Proverbs 14:5 reminds us that “a faithful witness will not lie”. While commenting on this verse, Matthew Henry described a faithful witness as such: “He speaks truth and represents every thing fairly, to the best of his knowledge, whether in judgment or in common conversation, whether he be upon his oath or no, he shows forth righteousness; he makes it to appear that he is governed and actuated by the principles and laws of righteousness, and he promotes justice by doing honour to it and serving the administration of it.” Proverbs 13:5a says, “A righteous man hateth lying.” The righteous man does not just avoid lies; he hates them!

Those who speak the truth according to God's Word shall be a great blessing to those who hear them.

Proverbs 14:25a says, “A true witness delivereth souls.” A man of integrity would endeavour to bring truth to light and rescue those who are injured by falsehood. Over and above, a faithful Christian who truly witnesses against sin and preaches the gospel truths of Jesus Christ will be an instrument in God's hand to deliver souls from eternal death.

A truthful person, even a child, can bring great joy to those around him. A father's admonition in Proverbs 23:16 testifies to this blessing: “Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.”



Righteous Words

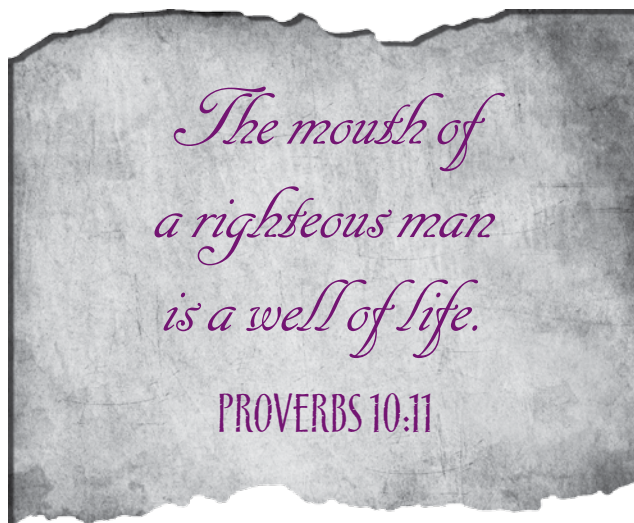


The words that a righteous man speaks are acceptable to God. Proverbs 10:32 says, "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness." Unlike the wicked, the righteous man seeks to please God in his speech. He will not allow his mouth to speak any perverse thing, which is detestable to the holy God.

Hence, words that originate from the righteous will have the qualities that impart spiritual blessings. They will be helpful and life-giving. "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life," proclaims Proverbs 10:11. A righteous man's words are depicted as "a well of life". The Hebrew word for "well" (*māqôr*) is normally translated as "fountain" or "wellspring". The picture is of a vibrant, bubbling fountain. The speech of the righteous is intellectually, emotionally, morally and spiritually rejuvenating to his hearers.

Hence, Proverbs 10:20a gives much praise to "the tongue of the just", and says that it "is as choice silver". Like the silver that is refined by the removal of dross, a just man would carefully refine his speech by removing every unacceptable word.

Again, Proverbs 10:21 speaks of "the lips of the righteous" which "feed many". The Hebrew word for "feed" (*rā'â*) indicates more than just "feeding", as it occurs widely in connection with shepherding. Therefore, it can be said that the speech of the righteous does the work of a shepherd, such as guiding, leading, feeding, nursing, caring and guarding. Righteous words will nurture the hearers.





Pleasant Words

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24). The Hebrew word translated as “pleasant” (*nō’am*) occurs about seven times; and the King James Bible translated it as “beauty” four times, “pleasant” twice and “pleasantness” once. The root form of this word is even used to refer to the beauty of the LORD (cf. Psalms 27:4; 90:17a).

Here, pleasant words are compared to the sweet and healthy honeycomb. This comparison is meant to show us that pleasant words sweeten fellowship and restore troubled relationships.

Besides Proverbs 16:24, there are other passages in Proverbs that speak of pleasant words. Proverbs 16:21 says, “The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.”

Sweet words, which are the result of prudence, promote instruction in the sense that they make learning desirable. There must be much forethought concerning the attitude and choice of words before one opens his mouth to speak. This is further emphasized in Proverbs 16:23 – “The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.” Prudence of heart is essential in developing pleasant speech.

Proverbs 27:9 also provides a similar instruction: “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel.” According to this verse, it is the “hearty counsel” that adds sweetness to one’s speech. But what is hearty counsel? It is sincere and passionate advice given without any hidden agenda or deceit.

This thought is repeated in Proverbs 15:4 which says, “A wholesome tongue is a tree of life.” The words “wholesome” (Proverbs 15:4) and “health” (Proverbs 16:24) are from the same Hebrew word (*marpē*). A wholesome tongue is a healing tongue, i.e. a conciliatory or appeasing tongue. This is compared to a “tree of life”, an emblem of a blessed and meaningful life.



Soft Answer

Proverbs 15:1 regards “a soft answer” as wise speech because it “turneth away wrath”. The Hebrew word for “soft” (*rak*) appears about 16 times in the Old Testament; and it is translated by the King James Bible as “tender” (9 times), “soft” (3 times) and also “fainthearted”, “weak” and “tenderhearted”. In the context of this verse, it points to gentle, conciliatory words.

We must be careful to avoid provocative words at all times. Especially in tense situations, gentle and non-provocative words will help to calm those who are agitated and wrathful. So our words must be chosen with much self-control, forethought, love and patience. Words spoken in haste will aggravate a heated conversation even further. Speak to pacify - that is wise speech!



So Proverbs 25:15 says, “A soft tongue breaketh the bone.” It is yet another maxim that drives home the truth that gentle and amiable words will make tender those who have been most difficult and inflexible. A modern Greek proverb says, “The tongue has no bones, yet it breaks bones!”

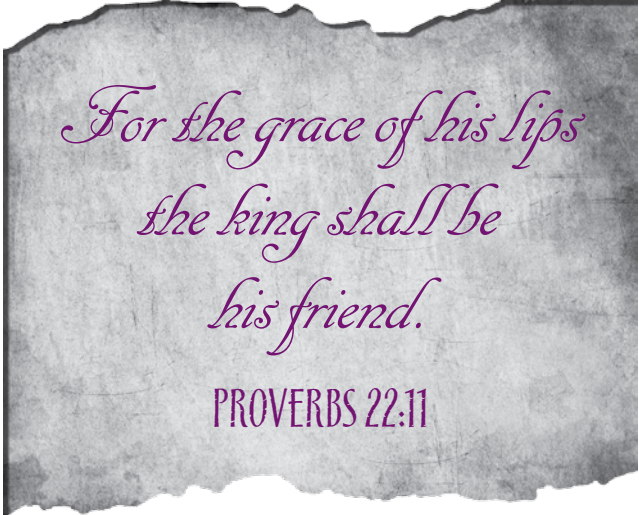
Words of Kindness

Wise speech is always characterised by virtues like love, grace and kindness. Wise speech is not harsh, discourteous or rude.

Proverbs 22:11 provides instruction on the graciousness of wise speech - "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend." The Hebrew word for "grace" (*hēn*) is often translated as "grace" and "favour". So the phrase "grace of his lips" suggests gracious speech or expressions of kind and favourable words. This verse also tells us that a man who loves purity will be gracious.

Purity of heart and graciousness of speech make a man worthy of notice and reward from his king. Though many kings would care nothing about righteousness and graciousness, yet several of the Old Testament characters were promoted by their kings because of their purity and graciousness. Joseph (cf. Genesis 41:37-45), Daniel (Daniel 6:1-3, 28) and Ezra (Ezra 7:21-25) are truly examples of those who had lived out the instruction and promise of this verse. "Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right" (Proverbs 16:13). If God, the King of kings, were to bring any promotion to us at all, He will be looking for purity and graciousness in our hearts, words and actions.

Concerning the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, it is written that "in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26). "The law of kindness" is a very necessary rule for every tongue if the words it utters are to be wise.



*For the grace of his lips
the king shall be
his friend.*

PROVERBS 22:11



Proverbs' promotion of words of encouragement does not preclude the necessity of words of warning and rebuke. Both are equally important. In fact, the book itself has many instances of rebuke for those who behave foolishly.

Proverbs 28:23 lauds the usefulness of rebuke when it says, "He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue."

Daring to rebuke a person may cause temporary alienation but if the person who has been rebuked is truly wise, he will return to give thanks for the correction he received. On the other hand, flattering someone who has erred may appear pleasant but it prevents him from seeing his errors. Flattering someone who ought

to be rebuked is tantamount to cheering him on in his foolishness. A faithful and loving friend will sharply rebuke the man who has erred, that he may be corrected and rescued from the consequences of his errors. Hence, rebuke is better than flattery.

"Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Proverbs 27:5-6). Rebuking is to be preferred to hidden (literally, "closed up, withdrawn") love. In other words, correcting a person's fault is evidence of love but failing to correct him shows that love is withheld. An enemy (literally, "one who hates") may seem to be a friend by his many "kisses", whereas a true friend (literally, "one who loves") may seem to be an enemy by the wounds he inflicts (i.e. inner hurts that come from



being rebuked or criticized). Ironically, while rebukes can be genuine expressions of friendship, kisses can be deceitful expressions of hatred.

On several occasions, the wisdom of Proverbs urges readers to respond positively to wise rebuke directed at them.

‘Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you’ (1:23).

“But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof” (1:25). This is a rebuke in itself for ignoring correction. A similar correction is found in Proverbs 1:30 – “They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.”

“My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction” (3:11).

“Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee” (9:8).

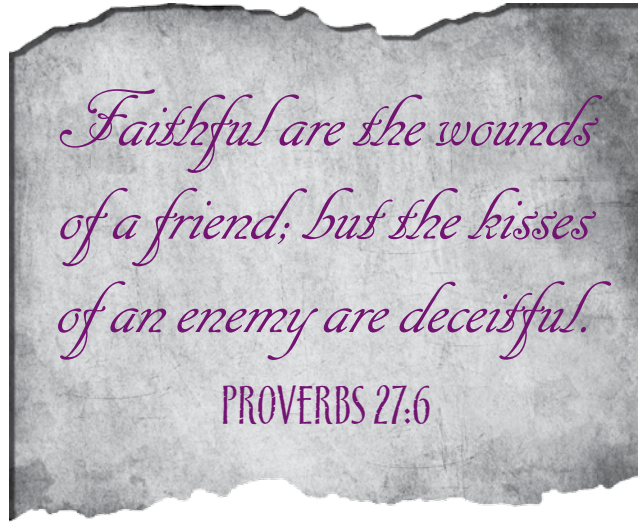
“A wise son heareth his father’s instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke” (13:1).

“The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise” (15:31).

“A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool” (17:10).

“Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge” (19:25).

“As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprove upon an obedient ear” (25:12).



Words Used Sparingly



A wise man generally uses few words. In fact, Proverbs teaches us to use words sparingly and speak slowly.

“In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:19). Firstly, the verse warns us that constant talking will eventually lead us to sin and trouble. Secondly, it teaches us to avoid that danger by refraining our lips from uttering too many words.

The warning against chattering is repeated two other times in the same chapter. We read: “a prating fool shall fall” (Proverbs 10:8b and 10b). Likewise, Proverbs 11:12 says, “He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace” (cf. James 3:2-8). The Hebrew word for “despise” (*bûz*) can also mean “deride” or “belittle”. It often expresses the idea of speaking contemptuously of another. It makes no sense to deride one’s neighbour (one who lives or works in close proximity). Since this causes friction and dissension, it is wise to “hold his peace”. Divine wisdom highly recommends friendly silence rather than unwise ridicule.

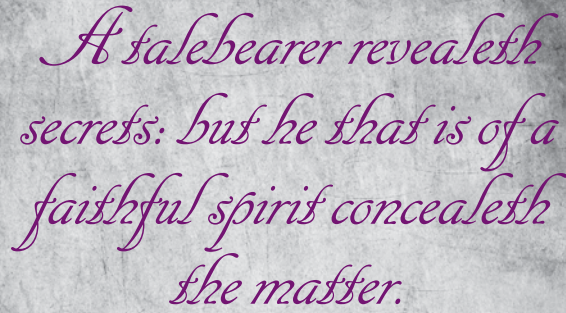
Wisdom of silence is again mentioned in Proverbs 17:27-28 - “He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.” Proverbs also advises us to refrain

In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

PROVERBS 10:19

from gossiping. “A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter” (Proverbs 11:13). This verse recommends prudent concealment, rather than spreading rumour. A friend who confides should not be betrayed by a talebearer. It is foolish and unrighteous to reveal what one has been entrusted with.

Proverbs also tells us that guarding one’s speech is self-protection: “Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles” (Proverbs 21:23). A man who guards his speech protects himself from many troubles that careless words would have brought to him. By a constant watchfulness over our words, we can avoid the many troubles of an ungoverned tongue.



*A talebearer revealeth
secrets: but he that is of a
faithful spirit concealeth
the matter.*

PROVERBS 11:13

Examine yourself before you lash out:

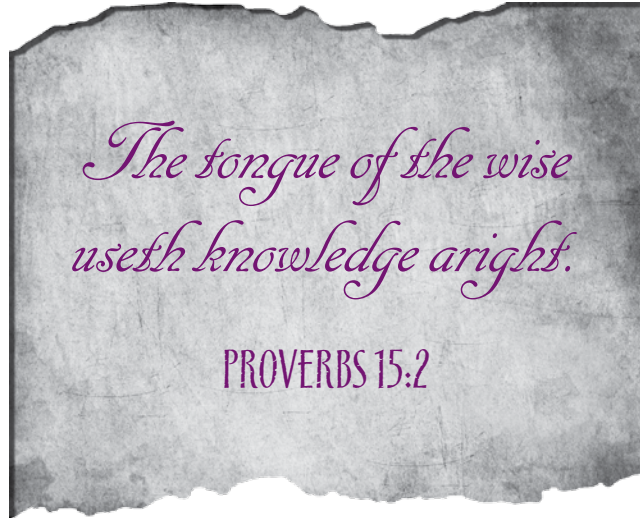
- Do I really have the facts? Are they conclusive? (Proverbs 15:2; 16:23)
- Have I understood the other person correctly? (Proverbs 18:23)
- Will what I say help or hurt? Is it profitable? (Proverbs 10:20, 21; 16:24; 20:15; 25:12)
- Is this the proper time for me to say it? (Proverbs 15:23, 28; 25:11, 12)
- Is my attitude right? (Proverbs 15:1; 15:18; 29:22)
- Have I chosen the right words to say it? (Proverbs 12:25; 15:1; 16:23; 25:11).
- Have I prayed about this matter? (Proverbs 3:5, 6; Nehemiah 2:4; Psalm 19:14).
- Will what I say glorify the Lord? (Proverbs 3:7; 8:13; 12:22)

Words Carefully Chosen

Engaging in conversation is often a necessity. However, we should be careful with our choice of words. Most importantly, our words ought to be wise and apt.

Proverbs 15:28a notices that “the heart of the righteous studieth to answer”. The Hebrew word for “studieth” (*hāgâ*) carries the idea of “meditating”. The emphasis of this verse is that a godly man would first make a judgment about the thoughts in his mind before he utters them.

This process of evaluating our thoughts and feelings before we say anything at all will help us avoid careless errors and to speak with wisdom. Pouring out every thought provoked by circumstances, without weighing its merit carefully, can lead to foolish speech of various kinds. “The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness” (Proverbs 15:2). Again, it is said, “The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips” (Proverbs 16:23).





Report on GBI

The vision of GBI is derived from the eternal counsels of God's Word - "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

For the preaching of the Gospel to be faithfully carried out in our mission fields, those who are called to the ministry must be well equipped in the sound doctrines of the Bible. In keeping with the Biblical counsel, the Reformed and Presbyterian traditions always require the theological and ministerial training of men. This is also our Bible-Presbyterian heritage.

The primary goal of GBI shall be to prepare men to be preachers, pastors and missionaries. It is our desire to produce preachers who know God and His Word, and who can passionately, effectively and accurately communicate the Word of God to others.

By the mercies of God, GBI is now being established in two countries, the Philippines and Ethiopia - the first of which was inaugurated in Cebu, the Philippines, on 17th July 2011 and the second in Ethiopia will be inaugurated on 11th December 2011.

GBI, Cebu



The first semester (June-October 2011) saw an intake of 18 students, of which 1 student enrolled in full-time studies, 5 students took part-time day classes while the rest attended the Monday night class.

In the second semester (November 2011-March 2012), 14 students have already registered for the Monday night class, with 4 of them also taking part-time day courses while one student took up the challenge to study full-time.

Courses that are presently offered by various lecturers:

- Bro Eliezer Ortega - OT History, Principles and Practice of Prayer, and Biblical Separation.
- Bro Richard Tiu - Harmony of the Gospels, Contemporary Theology – I, Church History, and Modern Cults of Christianity.
- Rev Reggor Galarpe - Systematic Theology – I, Missions, Homiletics, Survey of the Whole Bible, Westminster Confession of Faith.

GBI, Ethiopia

The construction of the buildings for the Bible Institute and the Church are in good progress. If the Lord permits, the classes will begin in 2012. Please pray for the quick completion of the buildings, enrolment of students, and missionary lecturers to serve in the college.



Testimonies

Bible Witness Retreats - 2011

I thank God for the opportunity to attend my first ever Bible Witness Retreat. It has truly been a refreshing break, away from my work and the troubles of life. The location was just ideal - peaceful, tucked far away from the city and its busyness. On the topic, I did not expect that there would be so much to learn from a study on the names of God - the meaning of each of the names of God from the Hebrew word and the scriptural context, the significance of those names, as well as the applications on how we ought to live our life. It also taught me to take God's name in a more reverential and respectful manner. Reading the Bible would not be the same again, especially wherever there is a reference to a particular name of God. There was also fun and laughter over sports and games we had in the afternoon and at night. And finally, I thank God for the good weather, for my roommate (Gerard), the efforts of Bro Stephen, Sis Winnie and the BWMM in organizing this retreat. Hallelujah!

Bro Aron Ong

Praise God for the provision and opportunity to attend this retreat, and how smoothly things went for us. I thank God for Pastor who meticulously taught us the names of God, their application in our lives, and even gave us a brief understanding of the names in Hebrew. It was an interesting time of learning, as well as a sobering time of reflection on the various attributes of our God in relation to my personal life. I thank God for Bro Stephen who faithfully and tirelessly worked to make sure we were well taken care of all the time. Besides the

spiritual food, I was impressed by the good spread of food at each meal. Fellowship was a blessed time too. Thank God for the many friends and visitors who joined us. May God continue to bless and use Bible Witness near and far for His glory. "God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him" (Psalm 67:7).

Sis Ruth Low

The 3rd Bible Witness Retreat has been a great blessing to our family. It was enlightening to learn about the various names of God from the Scriptures. I especially treasured the explanation of the word "Elohim", derived from "El" and denoting the plurality of divine majesty. "Elohim" is the first name of God in the Bible (Genesis 1:1). Indeed, the original meanings of the names of God in Hebrew are so much deeper and meaningful.

We greatly enjoyed the fellowship and company of like-minded brethren throughout the retreat. The schedule allowed us not only to learn God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15) but also to spend time resting (Matthew 11:28) from our busy schedule in Singapore.

The visit to the Ostrich farm was also very enjoyable. In particular, we were amazed at how strong Ostrich eggs were. It was amazing to see another of God's creation.

Special thanks to Pastor Koshy for delivering the messages which spoke directly to our souls. Both my son and daughter found the

camp very informative and engaging.
Bro Christopher Tan

Thank God for His providential care towards me in allowing me to attend this retreat. It was definitely a retreat from the busyness of work, to rest and to recall His goodness in the school term that has just passed by. However, the retreat was the most blessed time as it was a time when I could get to know God more and more, through the studying of His Word.

Through His word, He has revealed His Majesty from the beginning (Genesis 1:1) with His very first name, Elohim. I am grateful that my God, who is the creator, so strong and mighty, takes an interest in me as His child, despite the fact that I feel so small and sinful. This renews my spirit as I know that my God is a faithful God and I can trust and rest in His every promise in the Bible (Isaiah 40:28). Our God is the God of all things; there is nothing too hard for Him (Jeremiah 32:27), especially towards the eternal salvation of my family and friends.

Lastly, I want to thank Rev Koshy for teaching us from the Bible; the organizing committee, the Bible Witness Media Ministry and friends from Gethsemane BPC, who have been so hospitable and warm to the camp participants; and the new and old

friends, whose fellowship has encouraged me greatly. To the staff in Bible Witness Media Ministry, thank you so much for your effort in producing material so useful to us all this while.

Sis Tan Kee Sing

Psalm 103:2 – “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.”

True to His name, Jehovahjireh (the Lord who sees), God “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think ...” (Ephesians 3:20) through His wonderful provision for my family and me. Not only did the Lord grant us an opportunity to be part of the 3rd Bible Witness Retreat held in March but amazingly, He also provided for the recent 4th Bible Witness Retreat at Pulau Desaru Beach Resort. All thanks, praise and glory unto His great name! Indeed, this recent retreat had been a real bonus to us in several ways.

Firstly and most importantly, we thank God for Pastor Koshy who taught us “The Names of God” – Part 2. This he did with much passion, patience and cheerfulness. We also remember, with much appreciation, how he painstakingly took us through the names of God such as “God of our fathers”, “Ancient of days”, “The Father” and “The Creator” besides dealing with the various names of



WITNESS MEDIA MINIS



God in relation to “Israel”, “His Sovereignty” and “His Attributes”. Undoubtedly, God’s names reveal so much about Himself and I am greatly assured that I can find my solace in Him alone. I pray that this tremendous knowledge of the names of God will challenge my family and me to desire to know God and to love Him even more.

In fact, Pastor Koshy’s message on God “The Creator” came alive for us on the last night of our retreat. Thanks to provision again from our “Great God”, my family and I, along with many brethren, were treated to a boat ride to enjoy the beauty of God’s creation, namely the fireflies. Against the backdrop of the dark night, these tiny winged insects with tails that glow like mini torches light up the trees and bushes before us and instantly, squeals of delight, particularly from the young ones, filled the air. All glory to God, the Creator! One could not help but appreciate even more the beauty of Christ, the Light, in a world full of darkness of sins.

Secondly, it is a great joy to witness the warm fellowship among God’s people. There was much family bonding, catching

up with one another, making new friends and renewing old ties. Many sweet and memorable moments were spent over games and scrumptious meals in a most relaxed and unhurried manner. It was a good break from the hustle and bustle of city life back in Singapore.

Last but not least, we are grateful to Bro Stephen Yap who laboured tirelessly before and throughout the retreat, overseeing all the physical arrangement, food, accommodation and countless logistic details. This had made our stay at the resort such a cosy and pleasant experience. We also acknowledge the good work of Sis Carolyn Koshy who faithfully ministered to the children in our midst.

Truly, my family and I thank God for a fruitful and refreshing retreat, not forgetting His love and protection over each one of us throughout the 3 days. Our heartfelt appreciation also to the Bible Witness team that has contributed much in making this retreat possible. Above all, to God be the glory!

Jenny Lok



BIBLE TRIVIA - EXODUS 2

Sarah Yong

READ THE PASSAGE FROM YOUR BIBLE. CHOOSE A NAME FROM THE BOX BELOW THAT MATCHES EACH GIVEN DESCRIPTION. THEN FILL IT IN THE BLANK AT THE END OF EACH SENTENCE.

MOSES	PHARAOH	REUEL	PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER
GOD	GERSHOM	ZIPPORAH	DAUGHTER OF LEVI

1. She bore a goodly son and hid him for three months, after which she made an ark of bulrushes, and left her baby by the river's brink.

2. She came down to the river to wash herself, saw the ark among the flags, and sent her maid to fetch it. _____
3. He killed an Egyptian who had smitten an Hebrew, and so he fled from Pharaoh who wanted to slay him. _____
4. The priest of Midian who had seven daughters. He invited Moses to dine and dwell with his family. _____
5. He heard the cry of the children of Israel and remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. _____

Spiritual Lesson

FILL IN EACH BLANK WITH A SUITABLE WORD, USING THE REFERENCE PROVIDED AS A GUIDE.

Just as the Lord had heard the cries of the Israelites in their affliction, He also promises to 1) *i*_____ (Psalm 17:6) His ear when we cry to Him in times of 2) *t*_____ (Psalm 86:7). We can bring our 3) *s*_____ (Psalm 6:9) to Him and cry unto Him 4) *d*_____ and *n*_____ (Psalm 88:1), because He is 5) *n*_____ (Psalm 145:18) unto them that call upon Him. We can 6) *h*_____ (Psalm 38:15) in His promises knowing that He is our 7) *m*_____ (Psalm 41:4) God, and our 8) *h*_____ (Psalm 30:10) in times of need. He will 9) *s*_____ (Psalm 27:14) all who wait upon Him for He is the God of our 10) *s*_____ (Psalm 18:46).

Answers to Vol. 11, Issue 3 - Bible Trivia - Exodus 1

p. 28 - 1 (E), 2(F), 3 (G), 4 (I), 5 (O), 6 (R), 7 (V).

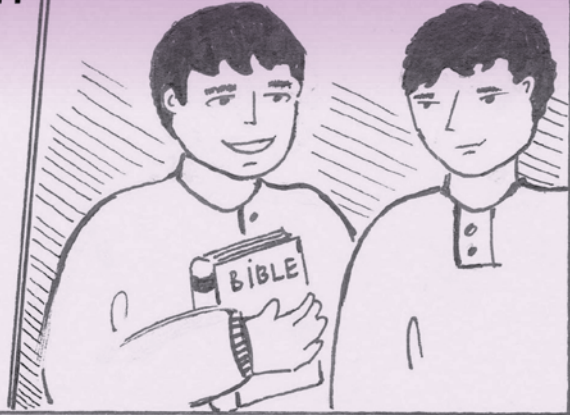
FORGIVE EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER THEIR TRESPASSES.

"A Fruitful Christian"

*A real incident from the life of
Jonathan Goforth,
a Canadian missionary to China.*

Bibliography: "Goforth of China" by Rosalind Goforth.
The stories are retold by Sis Ruth Low.
Illustrations by Sis Meilanie Ferreira.

There was a man called Mr Tung who was brought back to the Lord through Mr Jonathan Goforth's ministry in China.



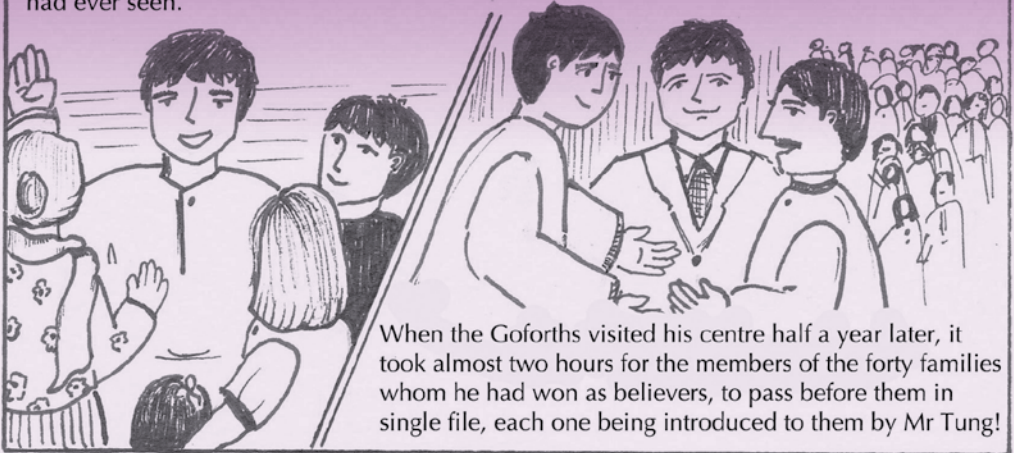
Mr Tung was baptized 30 years ago but had since backslidden. He was living a life deep in sin - drinking, taking opium, gambling, etc. **SIN WAS CONTROLLING HIM.**



Then on a certain occasion, a Christian brought him to a revival meeting held in a place called Szepingkai, where he was awakened and convicted of his sinful living. He confessed and repented of his sins, and God renewed him.

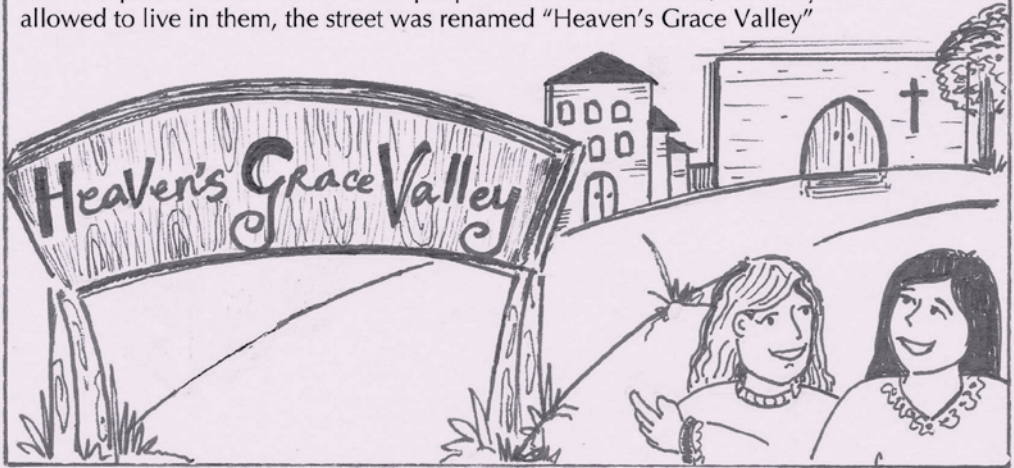


When he returned home, Mr Tung at once set himself to win others to Christ, and became the leader in one of the most remarkable Christian movements Mr Goforth and his wife had ever seen.



When the Goforths visited his centre half a year later, it took almost two hours for the members of the forty families whom he had won as believers, to pass before them in single file, each one being introduced to them by Mr Tung!

A street on which all the houses were owned by Mr Tung was once named "Harlot Alley". After the prostitutes and other sinful people were asked to leave, and only Christians were allowed to live in them, the street was renamed "Heaven's Grace Valley"



Truly, Mr Tung was very contented with his salvation and renewed life in Christ. So he dedicated himself to serve the Lord and His people, and to fight against sin in his society. He bore much fruit for God.



Dear child, are you bearing fruit for Christ? Christ himself tells us in **John 15:8**, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

Bible Witness Media Ministry's
302N Bible Study Retreat

Sovereignty of God
Paul Ferguson

Raising a Godly Family
Prabhudas Koshy



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