The Gift of Speech

Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Psalm 34:13.

Speech is one of the great gifts of God. It is the means by which the thoughts of the heart are communicated. It is with the tongue that we offer prayer and praise to God. With the tongue we convince and persuade. With the tongue we comfort and bless, soothing the bruised, wounded soul. With the tongue we May make known the wonders of the grace of God. With the tongue also we May utter perverse things, speaking words that sting like an adder.

The tongue is a little member, but the words it frames have great power. The Lord declares, “The tongue can no man tame” (James 3:8). It has set nation against nation and has caused war and bloodshed. Words have kindled fires that have been hard to quench....

Satan puts into the mind thoughts which the Christian should never utter. The scornful retort, the bitter, passionate utterance, the cruel, suspicious charge, are from him. How many words are spoken that do only harm to those who utter them and to those who hear! Hard words beat upon the heart, awaking to life its worst passions. Those who do evil with their tongues ... grieve the Holy Spirit; for they are working at cross purposes with God....

Guard well the talent of speech, for it is a mighty power for evil as well as for good. You cannot be too careful of what you say; for the words you utter show what power is controlling the heart. If Christ rules there, your words will reveal the beauty, purity, and fragrance of a character molded and fashioned by His will. But if you are under the guidance of the enemy of all good, your words will echo his sentiments....

Only through Christ can we gain the victory over the desire to speak hasty, un-Christlike words. When in His strength we refuse to give utterance to Satan’s suggestions, the plant of
bitterness in our hearts withers and dies. The Holy Spirit can make the tongue a savor of life unto life.

God wants us to be a help and strength to one another. He wants us to speak words of hope and courage.

This devotional is from In Heavenly Places, by Ellen G. White.