

WHEN TO TALK—WHEN TO REMAIN SILENT!

By Keith Greer

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness." {Proverbs 15:1,2}

Do you remember that after your children were born, it took a while for them to learn to talk. Sadly, after we learn to talk, we often fail to also master the wisdom we need to know when to refrain from talking. Sometimes, the wisest thing a person can do is remain SILENT.

Job's friends. "But you forgers of lies, You are all worthless physicians. Oh, that you would be silent, And it would be your wisdom!" {Job 13:4,5} Job's friends were adding to his suffering by offering their personal opinions on a subject about which they knew nothing. Despite popular sentiment, human wisdom does not always arrive at the correct answers. Job was seeking kindness, compassion, understanding, and empathy. When people are undergoing difficulty, they don't necessarily need to know why; they just need to know we care and that we're there to help in whatever way we can.

Correct response. "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." {Colossians 4:6} Experience and observation should help us know what to say and when to say it. Husbands and wives could avoid many marriage difficulties if they learned the art of when to speak, when to listen, and when to say nothing. At times, our mates need to be reassured of our love for them; and at other times, they need to be left alone. The wise know when to supply each need.

Let's begin today to make a strong commitment to use our tongues more wisely. Criticism is fine as long as it's constructive criticism administered with love. Constant fault finding, whispering, complaining, and backbiting will never profit any relationship, whether personal or spiritual. Speak or be silent — develop the wisdom to know when to speak and what to say. ***