The tongue is a difficult member to control and has tremendous potential for both good and evil. We must strive as Christians to give our speech to God, to make it a positive force for Him. If you think about it, our words are our most prolific contribution to our communities. And there are a couple of different ways this contribution can go. The “fool” utters lies and slander, contributing truly negative things to his community. Notice that these lies can sound sweet to the listener, hiding the hatred that the speaker feels. But in the end lies, regardless of how pleasantly they might fall on the ear, do not benefit anyone. Lies bring only harm to the community. The wise, on the other hand, might not speak often, but their words “feed many.” That is, the speech of the wise is filled with valuable truths. Ironically, we know that unlike sweet-sounding lies, truths can be very difficult to hear. But when offered by the righteous, these still represent a very positive contribution to the community. Like choice silver, honesty is a resource upon which our communities rely. With God’s help and wisdom, we can use our words to provide Christian sustenance to our communities.

“But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.” –James 10:8-10

**Proverbs 10:18-21**

**He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.**

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

**The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.**

**The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.**

**The White-Faced Capuchins of Panama**

Capuchins are highly intelligent and very social monkeys. They live in troops of up to 40 individuals, and these troops occupy home ranges of between 79 and 213 acres. These troops follow a complex social organization. With rare exceptions, females spend their entire lives with their female kin. Males migrate to new troops multiple times during the course of their lifetimes, sometimes migrating alone but more often in the company of other males who are often related to them. Troops are often closely related, as the alpha males tend to have long tenures, and sire most of the offspring. Alpha males have been known to keep their positions as long as 17 years. In other words, troops are usually not merely social groups, but genetically linked families. They appear to be very conscious of these blood ties, with alpha males arranging to have their daughters and granddaughters mate with their own allies.

Yet when called upon to defend their home range, some members of the troop refuse to participate. They don’t want to help protect their own families. These monkeys are contributing negatively to the community—taking advantage of the family’s lands and protection, but not contributing to the good of the whole. And just like we do, they appear to make a choice on each occasion—should they do the right thing, make a positive contribution, or just do whatever would be best for them? Like us, they make the right decision on some days and the wrong decision on other days. But capuchin monkeys do not have the sort of guidance we have here in Proverbs, so we should be able to do better than the monkeys. We need to remember to use our speech to make a positive contribution to the communities in which we live.

NATURE: Natural Born Hustlers

Episode 1: “Staying Alive”

Start: 42:01 (11:02 from End)

End: 46:59 (6:04 from End)