



MULTIPLYING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Book Excerpt by Thomas Hale

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The following words are taken from the book, “Does Your Tongue Need Healing,” by Derek Prince.

THE BLESSING OR THE CURSING OF OUR WORDS

You may be surprised at how much the Bible has to say about them. Altogether words for blessings and curses occur almost 600 times.

Both blessings and curses are usually expressed in words—either spoken words or written words. But those words are not ordinary words, they are words charged with supernatural power. The power may be the power of God or it may be the power of Satan.

One of the features of both curses and blessings is that they often continue from generation to generation to generation. This means that a person who is experiencing either a blessing or a curse may not easily discern where it comes from, because it may be in the past, even hundreds of years ago.

CHARGED WITH SUPERNATURAL POWER

So curses and blessings are words that are charged with supernatural power—maybe the power of God, maybe the power of the devil. They are words which impinge upon people's lives, and to a large extent determine their destiny. Often they will go on from generation to generation, even for thousands of years.

So let's take the case of Jacob and his family. Jacob had served for a long time, more than fourteen years, with his uncle, Laban. He had acquired two wives and concubines and eleven children. Then he decided to flee back to the land that God had promised him. He fled secretly because he was afraid that his uncle, Laban, would claim back his daughters—who were now Jacob's wives. Laban pursued him and eventually caught up with him quite near the boundary of the land of Canaan.

When they fled, Rachel, who was Laban's daughter and the second wife of Jacob, stole her father's household gods. First of all he shouldn't have had household gods, and secondly she shouldn't have stolen them. But she did.

Laban was extremely angry because the household gods had been taken. So when he caught up with Jacob, Laban asked why he had left without saying goodbye, and why he had stolen his household gods. Of course Jacob didn't know that Rachel had taken them, and Rachel succeeded in keeping them hidden from Laban. Jacob was very indignant because he had been accused of stealing his father-in-law's gods, and so he said,

"With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live" (Genesis 31:32).

Now that's a curse, and it was pronounced by Jacob, the husband of Rachel, who had authority over Rachel. They were not empty words; they were words that were charged with his authority.

Do you know what happened? The next time Rachel had a child, she died in childbirth. Without knowing it, Jacob had pronounced the destiny of his wife. Such things still happen today.

THE TONGUE

If you take a Bible concordance and look up all the words related to that one opening such as "mouth," "tongue," "lips," "speech," "words," and so on, you will be amazed how much the Bible has to say about this subject, and it is with good reason. There is no area in our personality more directly related to our total well-being than the mouth and tongue.

DEATH OR LIFE?

In the first section of this study I wish to share a number of passages of Scripture which all emphasize the vital importance of the mouth and the tongue. Then, in subsequent sections, I will deal with principles that arise out of these Scriptures. First, we will consider *Psalms 34:11-13*:

Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. (NIV)

Proverbs 13:3 states:

He who guards his lips guards his soul, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.(NIV)

The whole book of Proverbs is full of these principles. Consider **Proverbs 21:23**:

He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. (NIV)

Again, the vital area that you must protect is your mouth and your tongue. Once again, the alternatives are black and white. There is no gray. If you guard your mouth and tongue, then you guard your soul and your life. You are safe. But if you fail to do that, the alternative is calamity. "Calamity" is a very strong word and I believe the Bible uses it deliberately. The failure to guard our lips and our tongues will ultimately bring us to calamity.

There are two other passages in the book of Proverbs concerning the use of the tongue which are particularly significant.

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. (Proverbs 15:4 KJV)

DOES YOUR TONGUE NEED HEALING?

Where the King James Version says, "a wholesome tongue," the literal Hebrew says, "the healing of the tongue." This clearly indicates that our tongue can need healing. I believe the tongue of every sinner needs healing. The tongue is one area where sin is always manifested in every life. There are some areas in which a sinner may not offend. But the tongue is one area in which every sinner offends, and it must be healed.

"The healing of the tongue is a tree of life." Notice again the close connection between life and the correct use of the tongue. The alternative is, "perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit." Perverseness means "the wrong use." The misuse of the tongue is a breach, or a leak, in the spirit.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:21 NAS)

The alternatives are always so clear. It is either death or life. They are both in the power of the tongue. If we use our tongues properly, they will be a tree of life. But if we use our tongues improperly, then the result is death; and whichever way we use our tongues, we can be sure we will eat the fruit. Each one of us eats the fruit of our own tongue. If the fruit is sweet, we will eat sweet fruit. If the fruit is bitter, we will feed on bitter fruit. God has ordained it that way.

THE DECISIVE MEMBER

The tongue is the decisive member. Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. (James 3:9-12 NIV)

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.

Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. (James 3:3-8) (NIV)

James is bringing out the unique significance and influence of the tongue for the whole course of our lives. The first example he uses is the bit in the horse's mouth. He says, "If we succeed in putting a bit in a horse's mouth, we can turn the whole animal around."

The horse, in the Bible, is usually a type of physical strength. James is saying that no matter how strong a horse is, if you can get control of its mouth with the bit, you can control the whole animal. The horse's strength is brought into subjection through the control of its mouth. The same is true with us. That which controls our mouths controls the whole course of our lives.

THE TONGUE IS THE RUDDER

The next example is perhaps a little more vivid. He compares the tongue to the rudder of a ship. A ship may be a great structure, but be carried to and fro by the tremendously powerful forces of the winds and the waves. Yet, in that ship there is only one decisive, small piece—the rudder. It is the use of the rudder that determines the whole course of the ship. If the rudder is used properly, the ship will arrive safely in the harbor. If the rudder is not used properly, the ship is likely to be shipwrecked.

James says it is the same in our lives. The tongue is the rudder. Our tongues control the course of our lives. If the rudder of the tongue is used properly, we will make it safely to our appointed destinations. But if our tongues are not used properly, we will be shipwrecked. James also gives the example of a small spark that can start a forest fire. Every year in the United States, billions of dollars of damage is caused by forest fires, and they usually start just the way James says, with a small spark. The Forest Department of the United States has a very vivid poster which says, "Only you can prevent forest fires."

That is also true in the spiritual realm. The tongue is like a little spark that can cause a forest fire of vast proportions, causing billions of dollars of damage. The final example James uses is that of a source of lethal poison. He says the tongue is like a deadly element that can poison us by spreading infection through the whole system of our lives.