

## THE CALL TO BLESS

### Defining the Word-Moment

Words are not simply sounds caused by our mouths shaping air passing through our larynx. Words have real power. God spoke the world into being by the power of His words (Hebrews 11:3).

Humans are made in God's image, and our words also have power not only to convey information; but to create an impact when it connects.

To *bless* means to cause to prosper. To speak well of. To release favor.

To *curse* means to speak evil of—or in Hebrew, to "stab with words." To wish harm or failure.

Think about this saying: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."

**Fact check - Words do hurt.** But they can also **heal**.

Bible reference - "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

— *Proverbs 18:21*

**As believers, we are called not just to avoid cursing—but to actively bless. It's part of our identity as priests.**

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood..."

— *1 Peter 2:9*

In the Old Testament, priests had three roles (Deuteronomy 10:8 NIV):

- To carry the Presence of God (the Ark)
- To minister to the Lord
- To pronounce blessings in His name

God literally assigned them to bless. It was part of their *job description*.

And now we, as His royal priesthood, carry that same responsibility.

"This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

'The Lord bless you and keep you...'"

— *Numbers 6:23–24*

God's blessing is voice-activated. He set it up to flow through our words.

Even Jesus operated in a voice-activated ministry:

“...to preach the gospel to the poor...to proclaim liberty to the captives... to declare the year of the Lord’s favor.”

— *Luke 4:18–19*

If you’ve been raised up as a priest, then *your voice is part of Heaven’s delivery system.*

God wants to release His blessing *through you!*

## **THE IMPACT OF BLESSING**

When you bless someone, you do more than encourage them. You partner with God to shift their destiny.

“By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,  
but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.”

— *Proverbs 11:11*

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for building others up, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

— *Ephesians 4:29*

Your words can **impart grace**—meaning, they can empower people for godly living. That’s supernatural. That’s what it means to bless.

When you bless someone, you’re representing the Father.

You’re declaring His good intentions for their life.

And in a world where people are hurting, doubting, and searching for love...your words could be the open door to their breakthrough.

In Ezekiel 22:30, God said He looked for someone to stand in the gap... but found no one.

What if today, He’s looking for someone to *bless* Are you available.?

To bless your city.

To bless your church.

To bless your kids.

To bless someone who cursed you.

**The blessing of God breaks off every curse**—generational, emotional, and verbal.

1. It heals rejection. 2. It silences shame. 3. It restores identity.

### **Numbers 6:24–26**

1. Encourage them.
2. Ask God for a word for them.
3. Speak Scripture.
4. Prophecy.

### **Negative Impact**

The power of our words can burden one's spirit, even stir up hatred and violence. Words can exacerbate wounds and inflict them directly.

### **Positive Impact**

Alternately, words can build up and be life-giving (Proverbs 18:21; Ephesians 4:29; Romans 10:14–15). Of all the creatures on this planet, only humans have the ability to communicate through the spoken word. The power to use words is a unique and powerful gift from God.

Our words have the power to destroy and the power to build up (Proverbs 12:6). The writer of Proverbs tells us, “The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 18:21). Are we using words to build up people or destroy them? Are they being filled with hate or love, bitterness or blessing, complaining or compliments, lust or love, victory or defeat? Words are tools that can make life better, but any tool can be misused.

Words are so important that we are going to give an account of what we say when we stand before the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:36–37).

The apostle Paul wrote, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Ephesians 4:29). The Greek word translated “unwholesome” means “rotten” or “foul” and originally referred to rotten fruit and vegetables. Vulgar humor, dirty jokes, and foul language have no place in the life of a Christian. Instead, our speech is to be characterized by “only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (cf. Colossians 3:16; 4:6). Helpful, edifying, meeting needs, and beneficial—these are our descriptive goals for the words we use.

There is a remarkable parallel between Ephesians 4:25, lying; Ephesians 4:28, stealing; and Ephesians 4:29, unwholesome talk. In each case Paul is urging us to be a blessing to those with whom we have daily contact. Rather than lie, we are to speak truth; rather than steal, we are to do honest labor; rather than corrupt with our speech, we are to build up. Each sin needs to be replaced with something wholesome. As followers of Christ, we should emulate the example of Jesus, whose words were so filled with grace that the multitudes were amazed (Luke 4:22).

Jesus reminds us that the words we speak are actually the overflow of our hearts (Matthew 12:34–35). When one becomes a Christian, there is an expectancy that a change of speech follows because living for Christ makes a difference in one's choice of words. The sinner's mouth is “full of cursing and bitterness” (Romans 3:14); but when we turn our lives over to Christ, we gladly confess that “Jesus is Lord” (Romans 10:9–10). The condemned sinner's mouth is silenced before the throne of God (Romans 3:19), but the believer's mouth is opened to praise and glorify God (Romans 15:6).

Christians are those whose hearts have been changed by the power of God, a change reflected in our words. Remember, before we were saved, we were spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1–3). Paul describes those who are dead in sin: “Their throats are open graves” (Romans 3:13). Our words

are full of blessing when the heart is full of blessing. So, if we fill our hearts with the love of Christ, only truth and purity can come out of our mouths.

Peter tells us, “In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). Let the power of our words be used of God to manifest the power of our faith. Be prepared to give the reason for why we love the Lord—at any time, to anyone. Our words should demonstrate the power of God’s grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives. May God enable us to use our words as an instrument of His love and saving grace.

Question: Is it true that life and death are in the power of the tongue?

## ANSWER

“The tongue” is used throughout Scripture in both literal and metaphorical ways, especially in Psalms, Proverbs, and James. The tongue is a “small part of the body” (James 3:5), yet Proverbs 18:21 says it “has the power of life and death.” This holds true whether we’re speaking of spiritual, physical, or emotional “life and death.”

First, we should keep in mind that the word *tongue* is often a reference to the spoken word. This is a special kind of figure of speech called metonymy, in which one word stands in for another, closely related word. A common example of metonymy is seen in this sentence: “The White House issued a statement.” Of course, the White House, as a building, cannot issue statements; however, in this instance, *White House* refers to the President, who lives there. In the same way, when Proverbs 15:4 states, “A deceitful tongue crushes the spirit,” *tongue* is a metonymy. Obviously, a literal, fleshly tongue cannot crush the human spirit, but the *words* the tongue produces can.

### *Spiritual:*

What our tongue produces has eternal implications, for it reveals what is in our heart. Jesus said that “the good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him” (Matthew 12:35). Isaiah places words on par with actions for displaying a sinful heart (Isaiah 59:2-3). “Men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken” (Matthew 12:36). In and of ourselves, we are utterly unable to “tame the tongue” because “it is a restless evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8). A tongue under control is a mark of the Spirit’s power. Apart from accepting Jesus’ atonement on the cross, we will be judged according to our words: “For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:37).

### *Physical:*

In order to take Proverbs 18:21 literally – that the tongue can cause *physical* life and death – we do not need to tax our imagination. Words create actions, good and bad. A judge or jury, by simply saying a word, can cause a person to be killed or to live. Words often save lives: a doctor advises surgery, a weatherman issues a tornado warning, a counselor gives hope to a suicidal

person. Conversely, words can also kill: murders are often initiated because of arguments or verbalized hatred. In the sense of causing action, then, the tongue does indeed have the power of life and death.

#### *Emotional:*

Emotions are powerfully affecting, yet they are vulnerable to injury. James describes the tongue as “a fire” (James 3:6) – and who has not been burned by it? Proverbs 15:4 describes a “healing” tongue as “a tree of life.” As much as love is an action, what would romance be without words? Encouragement often comes through spoken words. So does discouragement. “Reckless words pierce like a sword” (Proverbs 12:18). The wound is emotional, and it is deep. What we say can have a profound effect on others.

#### *Conclusion:*

God made us expressive beings, so we are nearly lost without communication. That is why we have audio recordings and Braille for the blind, sign language for the deaf, and writing for anyone who has something to say from afar. Indeed, speech has enormous implications, especially as a vehicle for sharing the gospel (Romans 10:14). Therefore, we are commanded to control the tongue, to “keep [it] from evil and your lips from speaking lies” (Psalm 34:13). A Christian’s speech should consistently honor the Lord: 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” (James 3:9-10).

Colosians 3:8

Ephesians 4:31

Colosians 3:19

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:8

Ephesians 5:25

Ephesians 4:29

Phillipians 1:8

**Question:** What are idle words (Matthew 12:36)?

#### **ANSWER**

For sure, words are powerful things. God’s words were so powerful that they actually created everything (Genesis 1). But even the words of us humans can do powerful things. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 18:21 that “death and life are in the power of the tongue.”

The power of life and death can be seen in jury trials, where witnesses and jury members can speak words that might literally determine whether a defendant lives or dies. Less extreme, but no less real, are the power of encouraging words to give hope and joy and the power of discouraging words to spark dismay and depression.

Jesus said, “I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken” (Matthew 12:36). The KJV translates “every empty word” as “every idle word”; the ESV says, “every careless word.” The Greek phrase is *rema argos*, meaning “careless or inactive or unprofitable words.” In context, Jesus is contrasting the “good things” within a good person with the “evil things” in the heart of an evil person. We are admonished to make the best use of our words, because words express what is in our hearts:

“The mouth speaks what the heart is full of” ([Matthew 12:34](#)).

In [Matthew 12:37](#), the significance of words is that they will be used to gauge a person’s spiritual condition in the judgment: “For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Jesus was speaking to a group of Pharisees who had just accused Jesus of being demon-possessed (verse 24). Jesus calls them a “brood of vipers” and asks them, “How can you who are evil say anything good?” (verse 34). Just as vipers have a mouthful of poison, so the Pharisees had evil words concerning the Savior.

Then Jesus warns the Pharisees of the coming judgment, at which they will be held accountable for their words ([Matthew 12:37](#)). There is no better judge of a person’s heart than the words he allows to come forth from his mouth. Just like good trees produce good fruit and bad trees produce bad fruit, so does the mouth reveal the heart’s condition (verse 33).

But it’s not just evil words for which people must give account. Jesus said every “careless” or “idle” word can also be used as a judgment against the speaker. Even the slightest sin, the smallest deviation from God’s perfection, will condemn a person in God’s eyes. The Pharisees’ sin was great—they had blasphemed the Lord of glory with their words—but even seemingly insignificant words, sometimes excused as “slips of the tongue,” are considered sinful if they do not bring glory to God. According to verse 38, Jesus had the last word on this subject, for the scribes and Pharisees changed the subject immediately.

Other passages give additional insight. [Ephesians 4:29](#) sets the standard: “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” [James 3:8](#) advises us on how hard it is to control the tongue: “No human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.” Then in [James 4:11–12](#), “Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who can save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?”

Given the weighty consequences of our words—even our “careless” ones—we must learn to yield our body’s members, including our tongues, to the control of the Holy Spirit—the only One who can tame the tongue. “Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips” ([Psalm 141:3](#)).