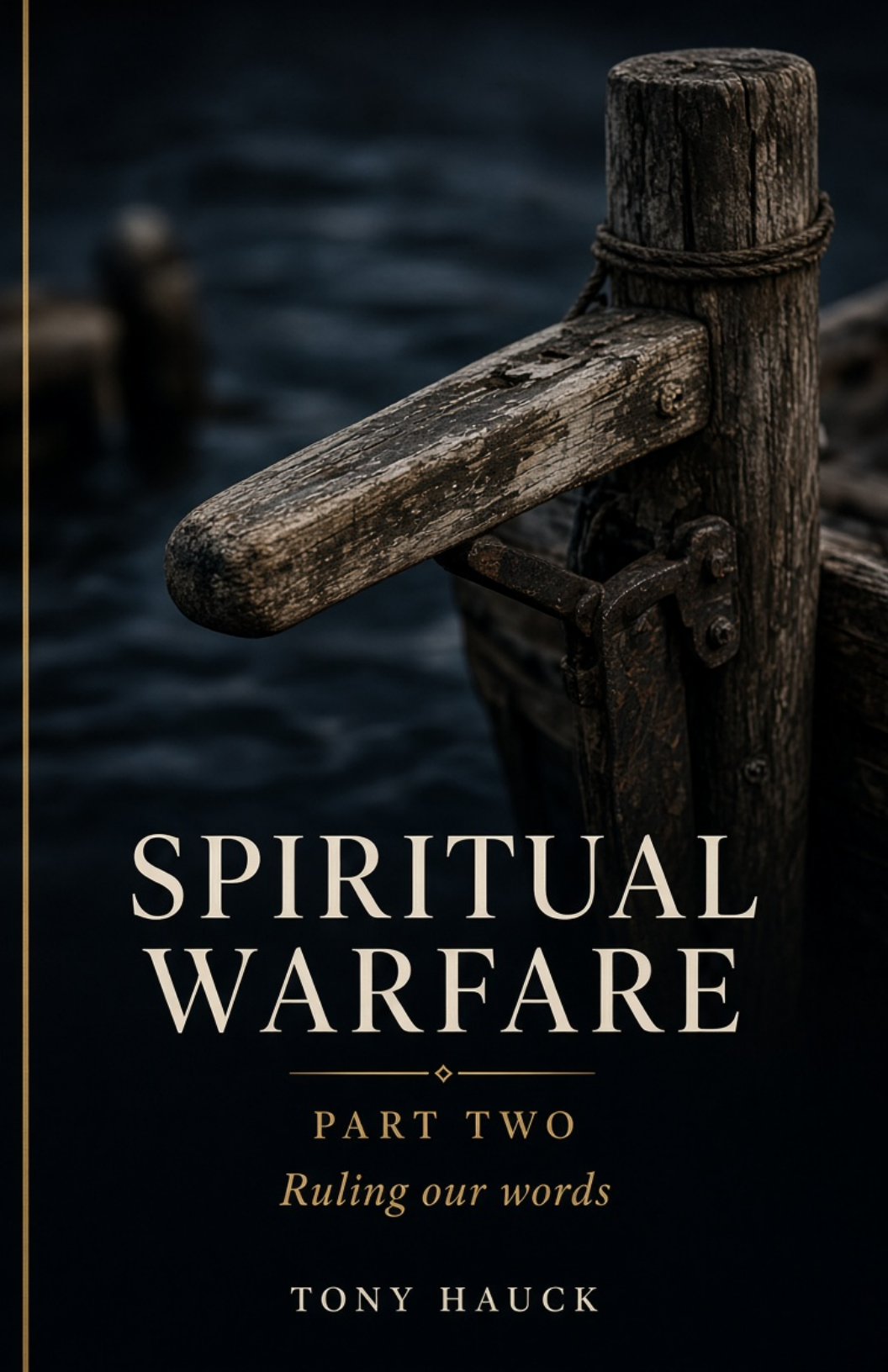


SPIRITUAL WARFARE

PART TWO

Ruling our words

TONY HAUCK

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Every two years this house returns to spiritual warfare. Part one was ruling our emotions. This is part two, and it is where the rubber meets the road: ruling our words. We do not fully comprehend the power of our words. Because we do not comprehend it, we use them recklessly. That is true of all of us.

The Power We Do Not Comprehend

> *"In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise."*
>
> **— Proverbs 10:19**

If you talk long enough, you will sin. That is the human condition. Last week: the fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back. The same rule applies to speech. You have permission not to say everything you think. It appears that may even be wisdom.

James 3: The Tongue

James does not need much commentary. The assignment is not to run from the room. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. The tongue is the hardest member to rule.

We put bits in horses' mouths and turn the whole animal. Ships driven by fierce winds are turned by a small rudder. The tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles. The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. It defiles the whole body, sets on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire by hell. That is not hyperbole. That is experience.

Every kind of beast has been tamed by mankind. No man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Turn it loose long enough and it will spew some. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men made in His likeness. Out of the same mouth, blessing and cursing. These things ought not to be so. We have to learn to rule our words.

Secret Faults and Acceptable Words

> *"Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."*
>
> **— Psalm 19:12–14**

Even with your best analysis of yourself you are missing faults. It takes God to show them. David does not understand his own errors. He is afraid he will sin presumptuously and end with sin ruling him — the same desire we named last week. His answer at the end of the psalm: keep my words and my thoughts in line with You. He is right. In Scripture, words and thoughts are often paired because they feed one another. Ruling words and thoughts is the key to ruling the inner man, and to becoming aware of secret faults. They are hidden from us. They are not hidden from God. You have never once surprised Him. You go to Him to learn about you.

His Word Reveals the Heart

> *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*
>
> **— Hebrews 4:12**

While you are reading the Word, the Word is reading you. Get it in you and you will no longer lack understanding of your errors. Two things at once: how dangerous our words are, and how necessary His words are — not a book on the table, but the Word in us, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart.

All Words Bear Fruit

All words bear fruit. Important words, serious words, idle words, joking words. They have spiritual power. They create and they destroy.

> *"A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth; from the produce of his lips he shall be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."*
>
> **— Proverbs 18:20–21**

Your livelihood is impacted by what you speak. There is produce of the lips. Prosperity is connected to words. Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Those who love it will eat its fruit. What is "it"? Death or life. Love death — speak judgment, accusation, condemnation — and that is the fruit you eat. Love life — speak blessing, grace, encouragement — and that is the fruit you eat. Pick one to love.

Judged by Our Words

We are judged by our words because they reveal our hearts. Words, thoughts, and the inner man travel together.

> *“Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”*
>
> **— Matthew 12:34–37**

If you talk enough, your words will reveal your heart — especially if you say what you are really thinking. There is no “I was only joking” card at the judgment seat. Idle words still bear fruit. That is why we restrain our lips. By our words we shape the spiritual environment around us, and that environment shapes the physical one. We shape a life.

When we stand before Christ, the plan is the blood of Jesus. If you want to argue, you will hear your own words played back. He knows them all.

A Standard for the Mouth

God wants to empower your words. The problem is the standard we actually live by. Ephesians 4 is a usable rule.

> *“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”*
>
> **— Ephesians 4:29**

Speech is supposed to build up and impart grace. That is the measure. Not merely “true,” not merely “funny.” Does it edify? Does it give grace to the one who hears it?

The Court of Heaven

There is a court in heaven. The Father is Judge of all the earth — a righteous Judge who does not make mistakes. Jesus is Advocate. He advocates so thoroughly He did it on the cross with His blood. There is an accuser, a prosecuting attorney: the accuser of the brethren. Think of the worst lawyer you can imagine, every legal trick, a large staff of paralegals collecting information.

> *“Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”*

— Revelation 12:10–11

The Girl Who Said She Wanted to Die

A volunteer at IHOP Kansas City, in a house of night-and-day prayer, was being worn down by a spirit of suicide. The Holy Spirit illuminated a phrase she had been saying since high school — casually, repeatedly, as if it were nothing. She ran the numbers. Something like twenty thousand times in ten years. She got a clicker. She began to catch the sentence in her mouth. From heaven's court the picture is simple: she had been furnishing the accuser with testimony against herself. Agreement is access. Amos 3:3: can two walk together unless they are agreed? What she overcame him with was not a better argument about her feelings. It was the blood of the Lamb and a new word in her mouth. She took Psalm 118 — I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord — and said it until the other sentence starved. The spirit lasted about two weeks against that word, and then it could not stay.

Agreement Is Access

Anything we say can be used against us. Your testimony can be entered as witness for the accuser — against you, and against the brethren if you are speaking death over them. The court does not need you to mean it as doctrine. Idle words still go on the record. That is why reckless speech is not a small thing in this war.

How the Accuser Is Overcome

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. The cross is the only defense. No self-justification. You do not beat the accuser by explaining yourself. You beat him by the blood, and by a testimony that agrees with God instead of with the lie. Not loving our lives to the death is dying to ourselves to live for Him — ruling the flesh by His Spirit. The things of the Spirit outrank the things of the flesh.

His Word in the Mouth

> *"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."*
>
> — Ephesians 6:17

The weapon is His Word. In the wilderness the devil tempted Jesus three times — once even with Psalm 91. Every time Jesus answered, "It is written," and quoted Scripture. If anyone could have told the devil to sit down without a

verse, it was Jesus. He was teaching us. We overcome by the word of our testimony, and we use His Word. It is the sword.

In Revelation, four times, Jesus has a sword in His mouth. That is the Word. A Bible at home is not enough. Having read it is not enough. Right doctrine on a test is not enough — not if you want to overcome the evil one. The Word has to be in your mouth. You have to be able to say it out loud. They need to hear it. The testimony has to be recorded in the court of heaven. Not just on the table.

> *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."*
>
> **— John 15:7**

> *"I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one."*
>
> **— 1 John 2:14**

Strength in this war is not personality. It is the Word abiding in you. That is how the evil one is overcome.

Promises, Keys, Fire, and Hammer

We rule ourselves through the application of His Word to the inner man. That is the same close as last week, because it is the same war.

> *"As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."*
>
> **— 2 Peter 1:3–4**

You already have what pertains to life and godliness. The promises are in the Word. Through these — through specific promises applied — you partake of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world. Find a verse. Use it to access His nature. Resist the devil with "It is written."

> *"You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*
>
> **— Matthew 16:18–19**

The rock is the revelation that Jesus is the Christ. The church is built on that. The gates of hell shall not prevail — and the picture is the church on offense.

Keys, plural. Any specific verse that addresses your issue is a key: it unlocks binding and loosing. Not merely that you changed your mind. The Word is living and powerful. A spirit of suicide could wear a girl down. It could not stand against the Word.

It is not always two weeks. Rachel's fight with anxiety was months. The Word still won.

> *"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."*
>
> **— Isaiah 55:11**

His living Word in your mouth works. Always. It is still His Word when you say it. That is why we quote Scripture instead of inventing a comeback. It may work like rain — a season before you see growth. Be consistent. Devils are like two-year-olds. You tell them no until they get it.

> *"Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"*
>
> **— Jeremiah 23:29**

Sometimes the Word in your mouth is fire: it is written — and the thing burns up in two minutes. That happens. Love it when it does. Sometimes the thing is a stronghold, a rock. Then the Word is a hammer. No one hits a boulder once with a sledge and says it failed. We do that with Scripture. "I tried it for a week." It depends how big the rock is. It is written. It is written. Keep hitting until it breaks. Rachel beat anxiety for six months with a Word-hammer. The alternative is to relinquish the dominion God called us to.

A friend's reading of Genesis: Adam's failure was not first that he ate. It was that he did not exercise dominion over the serpent. That was the job. Revelation 5: He has made us kings and priests to our God, and we shall reign on the earth. God's plan has always been human dominion under Him. He is still training us. We do it through the application of His Word. Get good at this. Go on offense.

A Word as You Close

Restrain your lips. Do not give the accuser language he can enter as testimony. Put His Word in your mouth. Find the verse that breaks the lie. Say it until the rock gives. His Word does not return void.

> *Lord, let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in Your sight. We refuse corrupt speech. We take the blood of the*

Lamb as our only defense. Put Your Word in our mouths. Make it fire where it should be fire, and a hammer where the rock is still standing. Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. Where do you talk long enough that sin is no longer lacking (Proverbs 10:19)? What would restraining your lips look like this week?
2. Out of the same mouth: where does blessing and cursing still travel together in your speech?
3. What idle sentence have you repeated so often it could be entered as testimony against you?
4. Does Ephesians 4:29 describe your last hard conversation — edifying, imparting grace — or only accurate and sharp?
5. Is the Word on the table, in your doctrine, or in your mouth? What verse will you put on your lips this week?
6. Where do you need fire, and where do you need a hammer? Are you willing to hit a rock longer than a week?

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Death and life are
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PROVERBS 18:21

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