

Freedom Week 8

The Power of Words

(Proverbs 18:21a NKJV) **Death and life** are in the power of the tongue.

(Proverbs 18:21a TPT) Your words are so powerful that they **will kill** or **give life**

The words we speak are a spiritual gauge, showing how much of our soul we have **surrendered to God**. If we have allowed our minds to be renewed by the Word, our conversation can't help but reflect what we have learned. If, on the other hand, we are hesitant to release our **old habits and beliefs**, our words will betray us and reveal our true spiritual condition. If our souls are not in submission to God and we haven't surrendered everything to Him, our tongues will be the first to sell us out.

Ask Yourself: What does my day-to-day conversation say about my spiritual condition? Do my words reflect that God lives inside of me?

(Matthew 12:34-35 NLT) You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? **For whatever is in your heart determines what you say**. A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart.

Jesus tells us that a life **consumed** with the cares and treasures of the world will lead to **fruitless talk** that will bring **judgment** upon us. A life **surrendered to God and filled with the Holy Spirit** will produce speech full of grace, mercy, love, and power.

The Power of God's Words

(Hebrews 11:3) By **faith** we understand that the entire universe was formed at **God's command**, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.

With words, God spoke the entire universe into being. With words, He communicates to us. Through the Bible, with its thousands of words, He reveals Himself to us. John 1:1 says that Jesus is actually the living, breathing Word of God. Words and language were His idea, and His words are literally life to us. Because God created man in His image, our words have power. Since Jesus is our example in everything, and we are to follow in His steps, let's look at a few verses that demonstrate the power of His words. In the following verses, underline what happened when Jesus spoke.

(Matthew 8:26) Jesus responded, “Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!” Then He got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm.

(Matthew 8:32 “All right, go!” Jesus commanded them. So, the demons came out of the men...

(John 11:43–44 ESV) – When He said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” The man who had died came out.

As you can see in these verses, the spoken Word of God can bring healing, peace, deliverance, and life!

Two Kingdoms

Isaiah 14 recounts the fall of satan. Verses 12–14 (NKJV) say, “How you are fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning! You have been thrown down to the earth, you who destroyed the nations of the world. For you said to yourself, ‘I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God’s stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.’”

Through the power of satan’s spoken words of rebellion, the kingdom of darkness was established. And he actually spoke the first words of rebellion in his heart. Satan and his demons continue to speak words of rebellion to our minds. If we aren’t enlightened to this truth, we will be his advocate in hurting others and even ourselves with the words that we speak.

Every time we open our mouths to talk, we either advance the kingdom of life or we advance the kingdom of death. When we were saved, we weren’t taken directly to heaven because we are Jesus’ body—His hands, feet, heart, and mouth designed to reach the lost and make a difference in this world. But we can’t advance the Kingdom of Heaven on our own.

Knowing we would need help in order to represent Jesus to the world, God set us up for tremendous success by sending us the Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples it would actually be to their advantage if He left and went back to heaven (John 16:7). Though Jesus was fully God, He was also fully human—He could only be in one place at a time while He walked around in a human body. We can be filled with the Holy Spirit and have Him as our personal guide through life no matter where we are on the earth. Jesus said, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come” (John 16:13 NASB). In other words, through the Holy Spirit, God will disclose to us all the guidance we will need, including what to say.

Ask Yourself: Am I intentional to use my words to promote the Kingdom of God and to minister to others?

Control Issues

In the Garden of Eden, satan spoke to Eve to entice her. Eve didn't know it, but when she and Adam had a conversation about satan's idea, she advanced the kingdom of death through her spoken words. God said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life" (Genesis 3:17 NASB). Satan didn't bring death to Eve by biting her and releasing poisonous venom or by wrapping his coils around her and squeezing the life out of her. He talked her to death. She then proceeded to talk Adam to death by discussing the evil idea.

Can you see how important it is to control our words?

Controlling what we say requires us to **tame** the part of ourselves that contains the power of life and death: **our tongues**.

(James 3:2) We all make many **mistakes**. For if we could **control our tongues**, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

(James 3:2 TPT) **We all fail in many areas**, but especially **with our words**. Yet if we're able to **bridle** the words we say we are powerful enough to **control ourselves** in every way, and that means our **character** is **mature** and fully **developed**.

Some of our greatest hurts and heartaches come from what people have said to us. Conversely, some of our greatest memories center on positive things that people have said to us, like the phrase, "I love you." Those are wonderful words to hear, but for some of us, they are hard to say, even to those we love. Our words can either tear others down or build them up.

Read the statements below and consider the effect these words of life or words of death can have on someone's life.

Words of death

- I hate you.
- I wish you had never been born.
- You're ugly.
- You'll never amount to anything.
- You're stupid.
- You're selfish.
- You shouldn't even try.
- You're a failure.
- I never want to see you again.
- I want a divorce.

- You were a mistake.
- I don't understand "you people."

Words of life

- I love you.
- You're such a blessing!
- You look great.
- I see potential in you.
- You're smart.
- You're so thoughtful.
- You can do it!
- You did your best.
- I forgive you.
- I'm committed to you.
- Life is better because of you.
- I would like to hear about your experience.

Dehumanizing Language

One way our words can cause significant damage to others is when we categorize people by labels.

How we individually do this varies based on our backgrounds and experiences, but all of us have pre-formed opinions about people who are different from us, whether that difference involves race, gender, socioeconomic status, or a number of other factors. We tend to see those who are different from us as something "other" than ourselves, and we put "them" in a box that comes with a lot of assumptions.

If we love God, we will love who He loves, and He loves every person He has created. We should always strive to see people as individual human beings and image-bearers who are worthy of our respect and the benefit of the doubt. **When we speak with words that honor others, we honor God.**

The book of James goes on to talk about the power of the tongue, our spoken words. In chapter three, James tells us that the tongue can defile the whole body, and he uses three vivid images to help us see his point:

1. **A Bit:** The tongue is petite, weighing only about two ounces, but it is powerful. Like the small piece of metal used to steer horses, the tongue can control the direction of our lives (James 3:3).
2. **A Rudder:** Although ships are typically large and driven by strong engines, they are steered by a very small blade. Too often we focus on the big things and forget that this one little issue of the tongue could determine the direction of our lives. The tongue can control us, or we can use it to control our destiny (James 3:4).

3. **A Spark:** A spark, though caused by a quick strike, can set off a wild fire. In the same way, what we say might be curt but can be consuming. Some of the most hurtful things that we have said or that have been said to us are sharp one-liners or even one word. These abrupt, rude statements may be quickly forgotten by the one who said them but the impact stays with the person who receives them (James 3:5).

Thousands of acres of forest can be destroyed by a fire that hundreds of firefighters cannot extinguish. Similarly, **the tongue can cause destruction beyond belief.** While at times words can be petty and seemingly insignificant, they can be **poisonous. Careless words often cause great harm.**

Taming The Tongue

1. Guard your heart.

Jesus says in Matthew 12:34, **“Whatever is in your heart determines what you say.”** The words of our mouth reflect our **inner condition.** If we desire to control our tongue, we need to control the junk that bombards our ears and saturates our souls. Remember, “A good person produces good thing from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart” (Matthew 12:35). It’s the old “garbage in, garbage out” principle.

2. Gauge your tongue.

A gauge is a tool used to measure or determine the maximum amount of something. If we had a gauge on our tongues, we would know when to stop speaking. Colossians 3:8 (NIV) says, “But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.” We must decide that we aren’t going to say the things we used to say. **We need to make the decision today and then manage our decision daily.**

(Psalm 141:3 TLB) Help me, Lord, to **keep my mouth shut and my lips sealed.**

3. Garnish your speech.

A garnish is an extra flourish set on a plate to add a pleasing aesthetic to the dish. What would it be like if we decided that before we let anything out of our mouths, we would garnish it to make it sound pleasing to others?

(Ephesians 4:29 TPT) And **never let ugly or hateful words come from your mouth**, but instead let your words become **beautiful gifts** that **encourage** others; do this by speaking **words of grace** to help them

Breaking The Curse

Sometimes, entire families are characterized by certain words. “They’re just a bunch of losers. None of them even finished school.” “They’ve always been that way—they say even her grandmother had a bad temper.” Sin can be passed from generation to generation, and so can the consequences (Exodus 20:5). If your family has generational sin in any form, the good news is that you can be freed from it! **You can be the first generation to walk in freedom and begin a flow of God’s loving kindness and blessing to a thousand generations after you (Exodus 20:6).** Ask God to shine light on words that should never have been spoken to you. Also, ask Him to help you identify any language your family might use that has been detrimental to the way you interact with each other or others.

The Voice of Victory

If you have been on the receiving end of destructive words, there is good news: **You can truly be healed and set free from the effects of those words.**

Below are four steps you can take to be set free from harmful words that have been spoken over you. **Pray through these steps** as you begin to identify any lies you have believed.

1. **Confess:** Healing starts with admitting we were wrong. We must first acknowledge that we have **believed** something that is not true and have **agreed** with the lies of the enemy.

(I John 1:9) If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

2. **Repent:** To repent means to change direction. When we repent, **we choose to turn around and go the opposite way of our previous path.** Stop your **agreement** with the enemy in its tracks and set your mind on a new course of thinking. If anyone has hurt you by reinforcing these lies in your life, forgive them and release them to the Lord.

(Acts 3:19) **Repent**, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of **refreshing** may come from the Lord.

It is important to note that when we **confess** our sins and **reject** the enemy’s lies, we **realign** ourselves with God’s **truth**. Armed with **confidence** in His Word, we can take **authority** over the enemy and remove the effects of his lies from our lives.

3. **Cast off:** We must **refuse to allow** the enemy to continue to use **destructive** words or events against us. With the **authority** of the Name of Jesus, **command** the enemy to leave.

(James 4:7) **Submit** yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

4. **Bless:** Once the enemy has been removed, fill the place that he held with **truth** and **promises** found in Scripture. **Speak life** over yourself by declaring an **accurate view** of how God sees you.

(Ephesians 2:10) For we are God's **handiwork**, created in Christ Jesus to do **good works**, which God prepared in advance for us

Life Declarations

Read these words aloud, and receive the truth from God's Word:

- I am blessed with confidence that God made me in His image and that He has given me a great purpose.
- I am blessed with God's supernatural wisdom, and I have clear direction for my life.
- I am blessed with creativity, courage, ability, and abundance.
- I am blessed with a strong will, self-control, and self-discipline.
- I am blessed with great family, good friends, and good health.
- I am blessed with faith, favor, and fulfillment.
- I am blessed with success, supernatural strength, promotion, and divine protection.
- I am blessed with an obedient heart and with a positive outlook on life.
- I declare that any curse that has ever been spoken over me, any negative evil word that has ever come against me, is broken right now in Jesus' name.
- I am blessed wherever I go.
- Everything I put my hands to is going to prosper and succeed.
- I am blessed!