

# *The Power of the Tongue*

Teach Me to Speak Words of Life Part 1

## *Key Scripture:*

*“Death and life are in the power of the tongue,  
and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it [for death or life].”*  
Proverbs 18:21 (AMP)

## *Portion for the Journey:*

Do we take our words seriously? Are we cognizant that our words literally have the power of life and death? The word for “power” used in this passage is taken from the Hebrew word “yad” (Strong’s #3027) which means literally, the open hand. It represents power, dominion, service, strength, assistance. It is used in a variety of contexts, such as, “to deliver into one’s own hand, to delegate authority, responsibility, or to stretch one’s hand in attack or in yearning for the LORD. We must never underestimate the power of our words, even those spoken casually or without intent.

The phrase “who indulge in it” is also translated “who love it” in the KJV, NKJV, and NASB. This phrase comes from the word “ahab” (Strong’s #157) in the Hebrew. This word means, ‘to have affection for, like that of a lover or friend. It is a word describing intense love, and can be used positively to refer to God’s infinite love for His children or the carnal appetite of a glutton. It is used with reference to the Word in Psalm 119:47-48, 97-98, 119. It is in the same word family as “ohab” which is translated delight. This word speaks of the delight one has in their lover. Do we love to speak God’s Word, to speak words of life or negative words that carry death?

Job prayed, “Teach me; and I will hold my tongue and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. *How forcible are right words.*” Job. 6:24-25 The word “forcible” in the Hebrew is ‘maras’ (Strong’s #4834) defined as ‘having the power to be strong, fierce, vehement, violent, to be grievous, to press, embolden, make grievous or sore.’ See 1 King 2:8 where it is translated a heavy or vehement curse; Micah 2:10 as painful or violent destruction.

When we speak, our words can literally be life-giving, or we can speak words that bring forth death. Our words can speak faith and healing or our negative words can bring forth death! This definition of power carries with it the idea that our words carry authority or the ability to delegate that authority to another. God does not work through formulas but He does give us “absolutes” in His Word and the power of the tongue is one of these absolutes. Matt. 15:11; James 3:5-11; Prov. 10:32

In Zechariah, we are given a glimpse of the power of the tongue in chapter 4. Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, had been tasked with rebuilding the temple. The work had come to a standstill. The workers were overwhelmed with the task. The Lord gave Zerubbabel this word, “Not by might, nor by power but by My Spirit.” He goes on to speak “What are you, O great mountain [of human obstacles]? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain [a mere molehill]; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!” (Zech. 4:6-7 AMP) The mountain of obstacles and hindrances would be leveled by his words or cries spoken to the mountain! The LORD was instructing him to speak words of ‘grace!’ The word for ‘grace’ is ‘chen’ in the Hebrew (Strong’s #2580) which also means ‘to find favor, compassion or sympathy. It conveys God’s heartfelt response to our prayers and supplications in time

of need.” Is He telling Zerubbabel to speak words of life based on his faith in God’s response to do the work by His Spirit?

In the book, “Breakthrough,” Joyce Smith wrote the miraculous true story of her son’s resurrection from death after drowning and being submerged for over 20 minutes in a lake. His lifeless body had not responded to any of the medical professional’s attempts to resuscitate him. After an hour of CPR and every medical technique known, the doctor was urged to “call” his time of death. He wanted the boy’s mother to be present and say good bye before they pronounced him dead. When she entered the room, she began praying and she declared, “I believe in a God who can do miracles! Holy Spirit, I need you now to come and breathe life back into my son!” She sobbed an exhale and closed her eyes. And in that instant, she heard the sound of a miracle. “Beep...beep...beep!” John’s heart monitor—and John’s heart—sprang back to life!” This was the first miracle they witnessed but for this young man to live and survive this trauma without lasting brain damage and physical impairment, they prayed for and received many, many more miracles. Joyce was adamant that no one was allowed to speak negative words or discuss the impossibility of his situation. She did not tolerate negative words from the doctors, friends or family. She declared, “We are only going to speak life!” The doctor’s turned to her with every life-threatening new development and told her to pray. They knew their medical skills could not save him, but clearly recognized God was at work. John walked out of the hospital two weeks later with no residual effects on his body of his death and decomposition! All of his medical providers recognized this was a miracle. No one had ever survived after this long without a heartbeat.<sup>1</sup>

In Hebrews 4:12, the word says that His Word is “quick” and “powerful.” The word “quick” is not used in this way in modern language but is used Biblically in context of comparing the “the quick and the dead.” It is defined as “to stir, or move” in the Webster’s 1828 Dictionary. It means to be alive, active brisk, nimble, prompt and ready. This word is used with reference to “quickening” the moment when a mother feels her unborn child begin to move within her womb. Quickening means to give life, accelerating or inciting. The word “quick” in Hebrews 4:12 is translated from the Greek word “zao” (Strong’s 2198) which means ‘alive, lively, to live, be alive. It describes the power of resurrection life and the manifestation of divine power in support of divine authority, full of power and divine strength. The change and transforming power of His life to give us life. Gen. 2:7; 2 Cor. 13:4, 1 Cor. 15:51.

The word “powerful” used in Heb. 4:12 is “energes” and it is the word from which we get our English word for “energy.” It means “active, effectual, powerful in its operation or action, full of power to achieve results.” Are your spiritual eyes being opened to see the amazing power of God’s Word? See 1 Cor. 16:9; Philemon 1:6

The power of the Word of God comes when we speak forth His Word out of faith or belief in the absolute truth of His Word. Whether we pray out loud or in our hearts, God hears, because He knows our every thought, whether they are spoken or uttered silently before His throne. When we use our authority as believers to speak His Word over the works of the enemy we need to speak it out loud. It is important to distinguish this from prayer because the enemy can’t hear our unspoken thoughts. There are many examples in the Scriptures where the LORD instructs His people to speak the Word He has given them. Jesus told his disciples to speak to the mountain. God commanded Ezekiel to speak to the dry bones. Jesus spoke to the fig tree. Ezekiel 37

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<sup>1</sup> “Breakthrough” by Joyce Smith, Faithwords, Hatchette Book Group, 2019 (also a movie released in 2019)

In Ephesians 6, the Sword of the Spirit, (which is the Word of God), is the only offensive weapon provided in our spiritual armor. The Greek word for “Word” used in this passage is ‘rhema.’ Rhema comes from the Greek root which means to speak. It is the word spoken or uttered. It is a word or command, denoting the all-powerful Word or command of God. Jesus said, “It is the spirit that *quickeneth*; the flesh profiteth nothing: *the words* (rhema) that *I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*” John 6:63

Words have the capacity to carry a creative force! When God’s Word comes from His mouth as rhema, it literally means, “God-breathed.” Remember, when God created Adam, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. (Gen. 2:7) His Word, as breathed from His mouth, carries tremendous power that is beyond our comprehension. He breathed the word and all of the stars were born! (Ps. 33:6) The word of the LORD spoken can heal and raise from the dead! See “All Powerful Word of God” handout.) Ezekiel 37 demonstrates the way God was able to bring life into dead bones and raise up an army when Ezekiel spoke to the bones under the direction of His Spirit.

- *"worlds were framed by the word (rhema) of God" or "The LORD merely spoke, and the heavens were created." Ps. 33:6*
- *"...He breathed the word, and all the stars were born." Ps. 33:6*
- *"For when He spoke the world began. It appeared at His command." Ps. 33:9*
- *"... For He commanded and they [sun, moon, stars, highest heavens, waters above the heavens] were created." Ps 148:1-5*
- *"... by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water..." 2Pe 3:5*
- *"By faith we understand that the worlds [during the successive ages] were framed (fashioned, put in order, and equipped for their intended purpose) by the word of God, so that what we see was not made out of things which are visible. Hebrews 11:3 (AMP)*
- *"all things are upheld by the word (rhema) of His power." Hebrews 11:3*
- *"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (rhema) that proceeds out of the mouth of God. " Matt 4:4*
- *"...the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life." John 6:63*
- *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa 55:9-11(KJV)*

- *“Let him who has my word speak my word in Truth...Is not my word like fire? declares the Lord, and like a hammer which shatters a rock?”* Jeremiah 23:28-29 See Amplified version.
- *“Out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword and His face was like the sun shining in Strength.”* Rev. 1:16
- *“I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.”* Rev. 2:16

Controlling our tongue and learning to speak words of life are part of our calling to grow into all aspects into Jesus Christ. Eph. 4:15, 29; Romans 14:19; Matt. 12:34-37; Luke 6:45; Col. 4:6; Ps. 140:3<sup>2</sup> God will teach us how to “profit” and use words that are full of life and power. Isa. 50:4-5; 48:17-19; Jer. 1:8-10

The Power of Proclamation: Many times, the Lord instructs us that His power is released through the speaking forth of His Word. We cannot comprehend the devastation that is wreaked against Satan's strongholds when we proclaim or speak forth the Word God reveals to us. “Whosoever says...” Mark 11:23 Jesus has granted that we, as His disciples, might also take up this Sword of the Spirit, by which we can wage spiritual warfare. We must speak in faith and in His authority.

Matt 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, ...for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, **ye shall say** unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. (KJV)

Jer 1:9-10 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant. (KJV)

The "proclamation" of God's word is powerful in spiritual warfare. It is especially important that we "proclaim God's word" when we pray. Proclamation carries the idea of speaking out loud. Proclamation means to announce officially, to show something to be true, in the Hebrew it means literally 'to make or cause your voice to pass through or to penetrate, to allow someone or something to pass through, to send over or cause your voice to sound. The principal meaning of this word is the movement of something (your voice) in relationship to a stationary object, barrier or boundary.

The Word makes it clear that we will be judged for every idle word that we speak. See Matt. 12:36; Eph. 5:4, Col. 3:8; Eccles 10:12-14. The Greek word for “idle” is the “argos” and it means “careless, thoughtless, barren, useless, inactive, unemployed, yielding no fruit or return.” Used 3x in the NT, see also James 2:20 (AMP) and 2 Pet. 1:8. Contrast this with Hebrews 4:12. Ps. 103:3 states, “I will set no worthless thing before my eyes.” In the Hebrew, “worthless” is translated from (Strong’s #1100) “belliyael” without profit, destructive, wicked, ungodly, evil, good for nothing. Word is closely connected to “belial” a name for Satan, meaning ‘worthless, wicked, lewd, profligate, vile, those having neither regard for God or man. Belial is the prince of licentiousness and comes from 1097, without, lack of and 3276 profit, good, benefit or avail. Theological Word Studies of the Old Testament describes the essence as that which will wear out, waste away, with no eternal value. Eph. 5:6; Ps. 101:3

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<sup>2</sup> A Viper’s poison paralyses the victim, preventing inhalation in order to draw a breath. See “The Poison of the Viper, Part 5 in “Teach Me Words of Life Series”.

The enemy has no creative power, he is only able to counterfeit what God has created. Derek Prince, in Charisma magazine, April 1991, stated that he feels "The basis of the spiritual power of Islam in the Middle East and North Africa can be summed up in one word: proclamation. Every mosque proclaims five times a day certain statements about their god Allah and their prophet Mohammed." He believes that the tremendous dominating spiritual power of Islam is due to the ceaseless proclamation of the spiritual force the Muslims want to establish. He states that "we of the Church have badly failed to appreciate the power and value of persistent proclamation. Truth is far more powerful than error, but it is up to us to use the truth to make the appropriate proclamations in faith: the victory of Jesus, the power of His name, the power of His blood, the work accomplished by His death on the cross, His exaltation as the supreme ruler of the universe, and His return in power and glory to establish His kingdom on earth."

### **SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING PROCLAMATION IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE:**

1. **Remember, we are not speaking to each other**, we are not even speaking to God, we are in the place in the heavenlies with Jesus, according to Ephesians 1:20,21, Ephesians 2:6, and speaking in His authority to the rulers of darkness, in order that now "the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places." (Eph. 3:10)
2. **State specifically the lie of the enemy**, i.e. "The Muslims believe God is unapproachable."
3. **State specifically the Word of the Lord God Almighty**: i.e. "But the Word of the LORD says, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." (James 4:8)

**Another example:** The Muslims do not believe in a God of love, but it is written in God's Holy Word, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38,39 KJV

Another example: In the Name of Jesus, we speak Truth in the heavenlies where principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness, have caused the Muslim people to believe a lie, that Jesus Christ is not God, but the Word of the Lord says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

4. We can also proclaim the various covenant names of the LORD. We can proclaim aspects of His character or His attributes in response to lies and strongholds of the enemy. For example, there are many verses that speak of the sovereignty of God over men, over governments and rulers and over nations. These verses become powerful forces of proclamation.
5. Proclamation of the Word is also a powerful method of standing against the enemy's lies, accusations and temptations in our personal life. Jesus proclaimed the Word to Satan when He was tempted in the wilderness and defeated each one of Satan's strategies with "It is written...." Prepare your weapons and have them ready for Satan's attacks.