

The Diseases of the Tongue

Teach Me Words of Life: Part 3

Key Scripture:

*“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.”
Ps. 34:11-13*

Portion for the Journey:

When Isaiah saw the holiness of the LORD sitting on His Throne, he was completely undone¹. Why was he undone? He said, “...because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips [unclean natures, who express themselves with inappropriate speech].” Is it any different in our day? As I have studied God’s Word regarding the words of my mouth, I have wondered if it is possible to live in this world, interact with others and not sin continually with the words of our mouth. “For all have fallen short of the glory of God!” The angel of the LORD flew to Isaiah with a live coal in his hand and with it he touched Isaiah’s mouth. He said that with the live coal, he had taken away Isaiah’s iniquity and purged his sin. Once cleansed, God was able to commission him in His Service. It is vital that we heed the warning spoken by James! These verses are worth our time to meditate upon carefully. Apart from God, we cannot tame our own tongue, but Calvary provided us with a way! Jesus blood broke the power of the curse. The mouth speaks out of the abundance that we hold in our heart, so the condition of our heart is the key to redeeming our words from the curse. Lord, we come to You in the name of Jesus and ask that You will give us the wisdom to understand the power of the tongue to bless and to curse. Purify our hearts so the words of our mouth and the meditation of our hearts are acceptable in Your sight! (Isa. 6:1-8; 33:14-15)

The state of our tongue is a very real guide to our true spiritual condition. Jesus taught that the mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart. If there is evil in our hearts, it will be revealed in the words that our mouth speaks. We are instructed to “Let no unwholesome (rotten, corrupt, worthless, foul, words without life, dead and decaying) word proceed from your mouth but only such a word as is good for edification (to build up, build) according to the need of the moment so it will give grace to those who hear.” Eph. 4:29; Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 1 Cor. 14:3, 12; 1 Tim. 1:4. Jesus made it clear that we will be judged for every careless word or empty word that comes from our mouth. It is possible to deceive ourselves and think we are good and pure and righteous, but careful analysis of our words will show us negativity, bitterness or unforgiveness toward others. If we are truly mature in the LORD our mouths produce godly fruit in keeping with our repentance. It is important that we realize the power of the tongue to justify or to condemn so we understand the significance of guarding our tongues from speaking evil. **Misuse of the tongue results in cursing** (calling forth darkness and oppression). James 3:1-12; Matt. 12:33-37; Matt. 7:17-18

¹ Undone is also translated “ruined.” Strong’s #1820 defines this word as to be destroyed, utterly cut down, brought to silence, to perish. To be silenced through a violent end.

Derek Prince wrote an insightful book called “Does your Tongue Need Healing?” In his first chapter he notes that the Creator designed our heads with seven openings. In the Scripture, seven is considered to denote completeness. We have three pairs of openings: two eyes, two ears and two nostrils. We are given only one mouth. Most people are glad we do not have more! He goes on to say, “This one causes us more problems than all of the other six together! If you take a Bible concordance and look up all of the words related to that one opening, such as mouth, tongue, lips, speech, words, and so on, you will be amazed at how much the Bible has to say about this subject, and with good reason. There is no area in our personalities more directly related to our total well-being than the mouth and tongue.” When we speak words of life, we will be blessed. When we speak evil, we curse others and open the door for the enemy to bring evil upon us.

“A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but perversion in it crushes [causes a breach, fracture, ruins, breaking, destruction, breaking down, tearing] of spirit.” Prov. 15:4

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” Prov. 18:21

Digging Deeper in the Word: Diseases of the Tongue

Note: There is a difference between speaking with a corrupted and bringing all things into the Light of God’s presence. The LORD encourages us to walk in His light and truth. As we walk before our brothers and sisters there are appropriate times for transparency and sharing in order to bring all things into the light and confess our sins to one another. It is healthy to bring our wounded hearts into the light of God’s presence and trusted brothers and sisters in order to process what has happened. It is not wrong to be transparent and vulnerable in speaking truth about our feelings or what has happened to us when seeking healing and freedom. The motive of our heart is key. David is an example of one who controlled his tongue in not speaking against King Saul, despite the fact Saul hated him without cause, gave away his wife to another man and was seeking to kill him. David took all that Saul had done to Samuel who was a godly man who would pray for him. God desires that we would walk in transparency, having nothing to hide. The difference between a diseased tongue and a wholesome tongue is the condition and motive of the heart. Ps. 43:3-4; Eph. 5:11-13; 1 Sam. 19:18

1. **Excessive Talking:** *James 3:8 “No man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”* Excessive talking is a sign that one’s heart is not at rest. When we have entered God’s rest, we will have peace and will be comfortable with silence. Many references to excessive words relate to the communication habits of the fool. The Spirit-Filled Life Bible footnote for Eccl. 2:13,14 notes “Wisdom is of far greater value than foolishness, because the wise man realizes what he is doing but the fool blunders along like a blind man.” When we realize our words carry great weight in God’s Kingdom, we want to make sure our words are of value. Prov. 10:19 KJV, NIV, NAS; Prov. 20:19; Eccles. 5:1-3,7; 10:11-14 [Spirit-Filled Life Bible footnote states, “the fool simply babbles on, unaware he is damaging himself with his speech.] Prov. 14:3, 30; 15:2; 21:23; 29:20; Job 11:2

God’s Way: Waiting on the LORD; Listening in Silence) Ps. 37:7; 46:10; 62:1; 65:1 (AMP) Eccles. 3:7; Prov. 11:12

2. **Coarse, Idle or Careless Words:** Ephesians 5:4 tells us that we should “Let there be no filthiness (obscenity, indecency) nor foolish and sinful (silly and corrupt) talk, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting or becoming; but instead voice your thankfulness [to God].” It is important that the words of our mouth line up with God’s will and God’s Word. Idle words are those which are empty of value,

thoughtless or profitless. The Greek word used in Matt. 12:36 is “argos” (Strong’s #692) and it means, ‘careless, idle, barren, unfruitful, inactive, unemployed, lazy, useless, yielding no return because of inactivity.’ One has the sense of a barren field, called idle because there is no good seed planted in that field. The truth is that a field that is not productive and bearing fruit will instead fill with thistles and thorns. Ps. 101:3 states, “I will set no worthless thing before my eyes.” The word “worthless” in the OT is Strong’s 1100. “beliyael” and this word means, “without profit, destructive, wicked, ungodly, evil, good for nothing, this word is connected to “Belial, a name for Satan meaning worthless, or wicked. It is a word applied to such profligate and vile persons as seem to regard neither God or man. Belial is the prince licentiousness and corruption. #1100 comes from 1099 (without, lack of) and 3276 (profit, good, benefit, avail). Theological Word Study of the OT defines the word as the essence of which will wear out, waste away, of no eternal value = evil. The words of our mouth are constantly equated with “fruit” that is either good or evil. Jeremiah 17:5-8 compares a shrub in the desert that is cursed and bears no fruit with one that is blessed because it is planted by the streams of water which never ceases to bear good fruit. The “shrub” referred to in this passage is actually translated “ar’ar” which is remarkably similar to the word for “cursed.’ This bush was called cursed, because a weary traveler approaches the tree and picks its attractive fruit, he will find a nasty surprise. When it is opened, the fruit is hollow and filled with webs and a dry pit. In Israel, the tree is called a “cursed lemon” or “Sodom apple” because it grows in the salty desert waste where Sodom once stood. According to legend, when God cursed Sodom, He also cursed the fruit of this tree. The fruit is revoltingly empty and worthless. Throughout the Scripture, God uses the image of fruit to demonstrate how He evaluates us. We cannot produce rich, plump fruit without the living water of God’s Word as energized by the Holy Spirit in our lives. Without having our roots deep in the river of life, even the best-looking fruit will be hollow and empty. Eph. 5:6-7; Ps. 101:3; Matt. 7:7-18; Matt. 21:19-21; Mark 11:13; Luke 3:9-10; Matt. 5:37; Prov. 13:3; 14:23; Job 15:2-6; Isa. 48:17; 2 Pet. 1:5-8

God’s Way: God gives us words of life when we are filled with His Living Water. Words spoken under the anointing of God’s Holy Spirit. God instructs us to be slow to speak and quick to listen. Isa. 50:4-5; Prov. 25:11; James 1:19; Luke 6:45

3. Grumbling, Murmuring and Complaining: It is easy to fall into a pattern of negative speech and develop a habit of complaining! Complaining satisfies and feeds our flesh. Grumbling is a corrupt form of communication that has destructive power. An attitude of complaining will blind our eyes from seeing God’s goodness and destroy our capacity to experience joy and thanksgiving. The word “grumble” in the NT is G1111 “gongyzo” and it is translated to ‘murmur, complain or grumble, indignant complaining.’ We need to pray to see this sin as the LORD sees it! 1 Cor 10:1-12 clearly sets grumbling and complaining alongside idolatry and immorality. We are told that when Israel journeyed through the wilderness, they grumbled and complained and were destroyed by the destroyer! Have you considered that grumbling opens the door to “the destroyer” [also translated as “angel of death” or “destroying angel] in your life? SEE NUM. 11:1-7. This passage teaches us three things, 1) We must understand that when we grumble it is within the hearing of God, 2) all grumbling or complaining is speaking personally against the LORD who is sovereign over all things, 3) His anger and judgement are kindled against us through grumbling and complaining.

Grumbling and complaining reveal rebellion in our hearts and disobedience to His commands to be thankful in and through and for all things! It is a spiritual principle that we have set before us Good and Evil. Praise, worship and thanksgiving are good in God's sight while grumbling and complaining is evil. Good overcomes evil. James MacDonald, in his book, "Lord, Change My Attitude" stated, "Complaining is an attitude choice that if left unchecked, will wither my capacity to experience joy and genuine thankfulness. We always have the choice to thank Him in every circumstance. As believers, we are called to react to discomfort in a different way. The world is restless and discontent, but we are to find our contentment and satisfaction in the LORD no matter what our circumstances. He has given us the mighty privilege of prayer which is powerful in its working, powerful and effective. Why would we choose to complain and open the door to the destroyer, when we can thank Him and pray? Num. 13-14:26-29; Phil. 2:14-15; 2 Tim. 3:1-2; Rom. 12:21; Prov. 15:4; Num. 11:1, 14:2; Ps. 106:25; James 5:9; John 6:41-43; Eph. 4:29-32; Ps. 95:8-11; Heb. 3:7-11; 15-18; 4:1-3

God's Way: Thanksgiving and praise releases God's blessing! We are to be content in all circumstances. By faith we accept all things as coming from the hand of God and believe that He is able to make all things work together for good. We may not understand how our circumstances can possibly be used for good, but when we submit our lives fully into His hands with a thankful heart that trusts in His goodness, our hearts will be at peace and we can thank Him in and for all circumstances. Heb. 13:5, 15; Phil. 4:6, 12; Ps. 50:14; 107:21,22; 116:17; 1 Thes. 5:18; Eph. 5:4,20

4. Criticism and Slander: Criticism is the act of examination or expression of disapproval based on perceived faults or mistakes. The examination is for the purpose of judging, exposing or exploiting the faults of another. In the New Testament, Satan is referred to as "the devil." This word means literally "slanderer." A slanderer is one who reports or repeats malicious information for the purpose of defamation; to misrepresent by fraud, calumny, unjust accusation. Ps. 140 gives us an in-depth look at David's prayer for protection from slanderers. The word for 'slanderer' used in vs. 11 is translated from the Hebrew word "leshonah" (Strong's # 376 and 3956) means "tongue, evil speaker, evil tongue, wedge, slanderer, ingot, fork of flame, man of detraction and inflammation, a man of the tongue with a three forked tongue. Tongue set on fire from hell, tale bearer, dealer in slander, wounding three at once: his neighbor who is slandered, the hearer and himself who deals in it. (Adam Clark notes). This word comes from Strong's #3960 which is translated 'to wag the tongue, to calumniate, accuse and slander.' Not only are we not to slander others, but we are to be careful not to receive a slanderer or listen to their tales. Lev. 19:16; Ps. 15:1-3; Prov. 10:18; Ps. 35:15-16; 50:20; 43:1; Ps 59:7 AMP; 41:5-9; Ps. 119:23; 52:1-4; Prov. 16:28

God's Way: We are to bring all things to the Throne of God in the Secret Place of the Most High. We are to pray for sinners. The Word says we are not to judge others or regard them after the flesh, but instead to see them as God sees them or has purposed them to be as new creatures in Christ. When we are slandered, we do not need to try to defend ourselves, instead we pray and ask the LORD to vindicate us in His timing. Our vindication comes from the LORD. Ps. 91; Ps. 7:6; 17:2; 24:5; 37:6; 103:6; Isa. 54:17; 1 Cor. 1:8

5. Evil Reports: Giving an evil report or listening to an evil report pollutes and defiles us and affects our relationship with the LORD. Prov. 17:4 An evil report is one that maliciously injures, damages or

discredits another's reputation or character through the use of words or attitudes that are contrary to God's truth. Evil reports are negative or critical attitudes. Evil reports damage and cause injury and exact vengeance against the reputation of these people. Webster's Dictionary defines "evil as having bad qualities of a moral kind, wicked, corrupt, producing sorrow, distress, injury or calamity. Evil reports bring a pattern of pain and relationship separation. The king listened to Haman's report and did not question the truth or validity of what he reported. Esther 3:8-10 Listening to an evil report can damage our own perspective, viewpoint and overall spirit. It defiles us and affects our relationship with the Lord. Nehemiah was aware of the power of an evil report and recognized Satan's strategies to use an evil report. He did not give heed to evil reports that hindered his directions from the LORD. He said, "For all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking they will become discouraged with the work and it will not be done.... I perceived that surely God had not sent him, but he uttered his prophecy against me because Sanballat and Tobiah had hired him. He was hired for this reason, that I might become frightened and act accordingly and sin, so they might have an evil report in order that they could reproach me." Neh. 6:8,9, 12-13; Prov. 17:9, 16:28.

The power of an evil report is clearly demonstrated in the account of the twelve spies who were sent to spy out the Promised Land (Numbers 13:32-37; Num. 14)

God had given Israel this land, commanding them to take the land without fear or dismay (Deut. 1:8, 21). It was their heritage and their promise. Deut. 1:21 tells us the people approached Moses and asked if they could send spies and bring back a word regarding which way they should go. He chose leaders from among the people. Yet when the twelve spies returned from spying out the land, ten of the spies gave an evil report that made the people unwilling to go into their inheritance. "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants and all the people who we saw are men of great stature. There also we saw the Nephilim... and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." The evil report was born out of unbelief and had the following effects on the people:

- The obstacles they reported took on a magnitude that was greater than the LORD Num. 13:27-29
- The people lifted up their voices and wept that night. Num. 14:1
- It caused them to rebel [became disobedient and bitter] against the command of God. Deut. 1:26
- They grumbled [became peevish and discontent] Deut. 1:27
- They actually wished they had died in Egypt or died in the wilderness. Num. 14:2
- They believed God had brought them to this place to be destroyed, to become plunder for the inhabitants of the land—defamation of God's character and love Deut. 1:27; Num. 14:3
- They wanted to return to a life of slavery in Egypt rather than obey the LORD and inherit the promises. Num. 14:3-4
- Their hearts melted [4549- masas, meaning discouraged, to waste with disease; to faint (with fear, fatigue or grief), despair, physical and emotional distress] Deut. 1:28
- Even though God had carried them the whole way, as a man would carry his son, the report caused them to lose their trust in Him. Deut. 1:30-32
- Final result was that they grieved the heart of God and threatened to stone His servants. No one who believed the report ever saw the Promised Land or took possession of God's inheritance for them.

God's Way: The report offered by Joshua and Caleb was different because it was united with faith. They believed God and His promises and even though they saw the same things and reported the same giants, they responded in belief that God could give them victory. Their trust was in the Lord.

6. Gossip: Gossip is often viewed as a rather trivial habit. Who doesn't like to hear an enticing tidbit of "news" about a celebrity or neighbor? The Hebrew word translated "gossip" in the Old Testament is defined as "one who reveals secrets, a whisperer of scandal, one who goes about as a talebearer or scandal-monger." A gossip is a person who has privileged information about people and proceeds to reveal that information to those who have no business knowing it. Gossip is distinguished from sharing information in two ways: 1) Intent. Gossipers often have the goal of building themselves up by making others look bad and exalting themselves as some kind of repositories of knowledge. 2) The type of information shared. Gossipers speak of the faults and failings of others, or reveal potentially embarrassing or shameful details regarding the lives of others without their knowledge or approval. Even if they mean no harm, it is still gossip. In the book of Romans, Paul describes those who turned away from God's word and guidance, He gave them over to their sinful natures. The list of sins includes gossips and slanderers (Romans 1:29b-32). We see from this passage how serious the sin of gossip is and that it characterizes those who are under God's wrath. The words of a gossip are full of deadly poison. Gossip can take several forms; it spreads tales and also betrays confidences and secrets. If you listen to the words of a gossip, you become an accessory to the sin. Gossip is a prime means by which we are tempted to take up a reproach or offense against them on behalf of another. Lev. 19:16; Ps. 41:6; 69:26; Prov. 11:13; 18:8; 16:28; 20:19; 26: 20-22; 31:27; Ezek. 36:3; 2 Cor. 12:20

God's Way: We are to cover the sins of others through prayer and intercession, not to share them maliciously. 1 Peter 4:8 tells us that love covers a multitude of sin. Gen. 9:20-27 provides a beautiful example of "gossip" and a godly way to cover the other person's sin. After the ark settled on land, Noah planted a vineyard. The Word says that he became drunk and "uncovered" himself in his tent. Ham saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers. The word for "saw" meant, "to look upon with pleasure or gazed with satisfaction." The motive of his heart in telling his brothers was not to do his father good! The word used here for "told" means to stand boldly in opposite, to manifest, to announce (always by word of mouth to one present, to expose, to place a matter into a place of being highly conspicuous, usually the matter is previously unknown or unknowable." Noah's other two sons took a highly different stance, backing into the tent, and turning their faces away so they did not see their father's nakedness. They covered their father with a garment. The Hebrew word for "garment" is the same word for "garment" that God provided for Adam and Eve through the shedding of blood. Noah's sons portray the type of intercession that glorifies God and protects and covers the sin of another. Their actions resulted in a blessing while Ham's actions resulted in a curse that included his offspring for generations.

7. Lies: We live in a world where lies are told as a matter of routine. Even those in the Church feel it is OK to tell a 'little white lie' to protect someone's feelings or to avoid certain issues or topics. We need to pray to see all lies as the LORD sees them. The Word says that there are seven things that God hates and two of these relate to lying. Lies will separate us from fellowship with the LORD and carry the same weight as the sins of murder. Jesus spoke very clearly to the religious leaders of His day, saying that liars belong to the devil, who is the father of all lies. Liars will have no place within Heaven's gates. We are

told that those who do not hold to the truth will perish in the lake of fire. John 8:44; Rev. 21:8; 22:15; Prov. 6:16-19; Prov. 12:17, 22

God's Way: God is truth. It is not just that He tells the truth, He is Truth. He is The Way, The Truth and The Life. He desires that truth fill our innermost being. Truth will make us free! Truth is meant to be spoken with love in all spiritual knowledge and discernment. Ask the LORD to forgive you of lies you have told in the past. Ask Him to bring to your remembrance any that He wants you to confess to those with whom you shared the lies. Ask the LORD to convict you of the Words of your mouth, that no lies would pass your lips. If the LORD shows you situations in which you have not been truthful, make every effort possible to correct your actions by confessing and asking forgiveness. Ps. 51 (entire chapter); Phil. 1:9; John 8:31-32

8. Flattery: Flattery is another form by which we curse others and bring a curse upon ourselves. Flattery comes from the corrupt and deceitful heart of man. It is very much a part of our culture and is often viewed as harmless. Remember Eddie Haskell on "Leave it to Beaver?" He used flattery to try to disarm Mrs. Cleaver and hide his true nature. The LORD sees flattery as a form of deception and manipulation. Flattery exaggerates a person's qualities for the sake of gaining an advantage over them or ensnaring them. Flattery is defined by the motives and intentions of the heart. It has the potential to ensnare and produce pride and self-exaltation in the hearer. It is possible for one to flatter oneself, also be translated "boasting" or "congratulating oneself." Self-flattery comes from pride; self-exaltation is self-deception. Flattery tickles our ears and speaks to our flesh and seeks to make us feel good about ourselves. It is the opposite of the heart attitude Isaiah exhibited when he said he was completely "undone" and silent before the LORD.

The Word says that flattery will abound in the last days. It is prominent characteristic of the apostates and false prophets who will lead many astray. Deut. 29:19-20 speaks of the man who flatters (Strong's 1288) himself (blesses himself in his heart, boasts in his heart) and God's angry response to this attitude of heart. We need to beware of those who rely upon flattery! Job 17:5; 32:21-22; Ps. 5:9; Prov. 7:21; Prov. 2:16; Ps. 36:2; Ps. 78:36; Prov. 27:14 AMP; Prov. 29:5; 28:23; 20:19; 26:28; Ps. 12:1-3; Dan. 11:21-35 AMP; 1 Thes. 5; Rev. 3:7-10; Isa. 30:10; Ezek. 12:23-25; Ezek. 33:31; Matt. 22:16 AMP; Mark 12:38 (MSG) Luke 11:43; MSG; Luke 6:26 MSG; Gal. 1:10; Gal. 4:17 (MSG); Jude 1:16; Jer. 14:16; 5:31;

God's Way: God would have us speak through the Holy Spirit. His words edify, encourage and build up. The motive of our heart is from love and a desire to bless the person, not to manipulate them. There are times when the truth must be spoken regarding a person's true condition and it may be painful for the person to hear, but true love speaks that which is necessary and not just that which is pleasant. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Rev. 3:7-10, 18-19 AMP; 1 Thes. 5:11; 2 Thes. 2:9-12 AMP; 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 4:3 AMP

John Wesley prayed for protection from words of flattery: *"Convince me that the words of praise, when they are smoother than oil, are like swords attacking my spirit. Give me to dread them more than the poison of snakes, or the pestilence that walks in darkness. And when these cords of pride, these snares of death, do overtake me, let me find no pleasure in them, but enable me to instantly*

flee to you, my only true pleasure, and enable me to cry out to God from my bones, only you are worthy to be praised! Only then shall I be safe from those who would lead me into sin."

9. Hastiness of Speech: A provoked spirit causes us to speak hastily and hasty words can be extremely costly. Prov. 29:20 When we sin with our tongue, we fall into league with the enemy. Moses spoke in anger when he smote the rock. In his hasty speech, he did not obey the LORD and did not hallow God in the eyes of Israel, and it cost him the privilege of entering the Promised Land. Hasty speech is often linked with anger... hence the old remedy of counting to ten before speaking! Prov. 12:18; Num. 20:7-12; Ps. 106:32-33

God's Ways: God wants us to be slow to speak, slow to anger. We need to ask the LORD to help us to wait and seek Him and allow Him to give us His words at the right moment. We can pray as Paul requested, "...pray that I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." The Greek word for "ought" is "dei" (Strong's #1163). It means 'to speak that which is unavoidable, urgent, compulsory, a necessity or 'must' in the nature of things as established by the decree or counsel of God, especially for His purpose of the salvation of man. Prov. 16:32; 25:11-12,28; James 1:19-20; Isa. 50:4; Prov. 15:23, 28; Eph. 6:20

10. Accusations and condemnation: Accusations and condemnation are words that have judged a person and call for judgment. There is no pity or grace in words of accusation or condemnation. When we speak words of accusation or condemnation, we align ourselves with the devil. One of the enemy's attacks on God's people is to bring charges of accusation against them so they will be condemned. These accusations may be true or false, it does not matter to the "Accuser of the Brethren" who accuses men before God day and night. Satan seeks to find and exploit our flaws. (See Luke 6:7; Neh. 6:7)

Satan's name means "adversary" and he is constantly seeking to bring charges against God's elect. Satan seeks to find someone to agree with his accusations. The Word makes it clear that a person can only be condemned by the testimony of two witnesses. God's law required a minimum of two witnesses who had to be sure enough of their testimony to cast the first stones at a person. In a stoning, the victim was stripped naked and his hands were bound, then he was paraded out of town. He was placed on a scaffold about 9 feet high. The first witness pushed him off the scaffold and the second witness dropped a large stone on his head or chest. Then bystanders pelted the dying man with stones. No mourning was permitted for the dead man. When the woman was caught in adultery, the law required that the woman be stoned to death. The crowd brought her to Jesus hoping to get Jesus to take part in the accusations against her. We now see the significance of His challenge to the crowd, "he who is without sin throw the first stone." Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6,7; 19:15-20; Matt. 18:16-20; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Rev. 12:10-11

God's way:

- God is our only judge. He is the only one we need to seek to please! Yet through trusting Jesus and repenting of our sins, we have no fear of God's wrath. Isaiah 33:22 says, "for the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King, it is he who will save us." In the Hebrew the word for "judge" and "salvation" can be used synonymously. The word for "judge"

is also used to describe the heroes and defenders of God's people. When God judges He seeks to bring people to repentance. He disciplines us for good. Isa. 26:8-10; Heb. 12:10

- There is no condemnation in Jesus. Roman 8:1 Jesus bore the penalty for our sin on the cross and made it possible for all sinners to be saved by repentance. He has made it clear He does not seek to judge us. (John 12:47) Zechariah 3:1-7 has a beautiful picture of Satan standing in God's throne room to accuse Joshua the High Priest.
- Jesus is our advocate and defender against the accusations of the enemy. Advocate (Strong's 3875) is 'parakletos' and this word means 'someone called to one's side, one called to one's aid, to plead another's cause before a judge, counsel for the defense. Jesus is an intercessor who stands at God's right hand and pleads our cause. 1 John 2:1; Job 16:19
- We are to be imitators of Jesus Who has commanded not to judge others. We are called to judge or discern between good and evil, but forbidden from pronouncing an outcome or a punishment as consequence for their actions. Instead, He desires that we would intercede and stand in the gap. God desires that we would intercede and pray for those who are in sin, to seek their redemption.
- We must stand in faith and believe God's promises to sanctify His people and to complete the work He has started in each of us. We stand against the spirit of condemnation by stand on the Truth of God's Word. Matt. 7:1-2; Luke 6:37 (AMP); Luke 12:58; Luke 19:22 (ASV); John 3:17 AMP; John 5:22; John 8:15; Isa. 54:15-17; Ps. 76:8-9
- We should not lose heart when we are accused! Jesus says we are blessed when we are reviled and accused for His sake. Matt. 5:11-12
- We do not need to defend ourselves against our accusers, but instead, we are to follow Jesus. Jesus did not justify Himself before His accusers, but entrusted Himself to His Father, who always judges righteously. We also can entrust ourselves to our Father. When we defend ourselves, we lose the authority that comes from entrusting ourselves into God's power to protect and defend us. Matt. 27:12; 1 Peter 3:16-18; 1 Pet.2:23

HEALING THE HUMAN HEART:

1. The root of every problem affecting our tongue originates in our hearts. The mouth speaks out of what is in the heart. We need to pray for God to cleanse our heart in order for the words of our mouth to be acceptable in His Sight. We do not want words that are just neutral, but words filled with power and life. Words that bless and bring healing. See Isa. 6:1-9; Ps. 51

- Ask the LORD to search your heart with the light of His Spirit and to convict you of any sin in your heart.
- Ask Him to show you if there are any vows or judgments, anger, bitterness, jealousy, or offenses that would taint the purity of our words.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see your sin as He sees it. Ask the LORD to show you if you have grieved the Holy Spirit through your words coming from a wrong attitude of heart.
- Be willing to confess your sin and ask for forgiveness for those who may have been hurt by your words. Confess your sin and ask the LORD to cleanse your heart from all unrighteousness. Receive His cleansing and forgiveness. Eph. 4:29-31; 1 John 1:7-9; Ps. 51

2. Pray for the LORD to set a guard over your heart. “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Derek Prince wrote, “Your soul is your whole personality. This is the area where weakness will be manifested first and where the Enemy will gain access first. If you want to guard your soul, you must guard your lips.... If you speak rashly, you will come to ruin.” The alternatives are very clear. We must be diligent to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Examine what comes into our mind and do not let words that are not based on truth take root in our hearts. We must guard against words that are designed to provoke us to fear, anxiety. We must not fret when we hear of the wicked who are prospering in their way. Guard against the strategies of the terrorist whose words seek to get inside our heads and change our hearts. Pray we will have no delight in evil and will not listen or regard the words of those who speak evil. Pray we will have discernment and understanding so we will not be gullible or blind to evil reports. Prov. 4:23; Ps. 19:7-14; Ps. 101; James 4:8

3. Pray the LORD will set a guard over the words of your mouth. It is impossible for the words of our mouth to be acceptable in God’s sight if there is sin or unforgiveness in our heart. We must set the meditation of our hearts upon the LORD and His Word. God desires truth in our innermost being. Meditate on His Word and let His living water fill your heart. If we make His Word our source and drink of His living water, the word of our mouth will be acceptable in His sight. We need to be careful what we eat! We need to choose to eat of the fruit of life and reject the fruit of wickedness. Ps. 19:14; Ps. 39:1; 141:3; Matt. 12:33-35; James 3:9-12; Heb. 12:15-16; James 1:19; Prov. 15:28; 22:12; Eccles. 5:1; Hab. 2:1; Mal. 2:7; John 8:32

4. Above all else, seek to walk in the fear of the LORD. Life in its fullness is always related to the fear of the LORD. The Word offers to teach us the fear of the LORD, which is a gift that is of infinite worth! Possessing the fear of the LORD offers more promises of blessedness, fruitfulness and assurance of God’s favor than any other character trait we can seek. The fear of the LORD leads us to wisdom, which leads us to control of our lips and tongues. The ability to control the words of our mouth are equated with completeness and maturity in the LORD. Unless we learn to control our tongue, we cannot mature in the LORD. Ps. 39:1; Ps. 141:3; Prov. 13:3; James 1:26; 3:1-12; 1 Pet. 3:10; Matt. 15:2-20 (Amp)

What is the LORD speaking to your heart?

How do you respond to the LORD?