



THE POWER OF WORDS

DEATH AND LIFE ARE IN THE POWER OF THE TONGUE. PROVERBS 18:21 NKJV

The book of James talks 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 winds, they are steered by this 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 it 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 maybe just 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)**

HOW TO TAME THE TONGUE

We need God's help to change the way we speak, but know this: **Change is possible.** Because we were made in God's image, we were meant to speak words of life that build up, bring healing, and offer encouragement.

Let's take a look at a few principles that will help us use words that advance the kingdom of life.

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. Remember, *"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."* **(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.
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?

At times, we need to say things that are difficult or may appear negative, but even so, we can speak in a way that can bless and encourage the other person. Even bad news can be delivered in a life-giving way. Discipline can be given in a way that truly benefits the one being corrected.

Sometimes, the best thing to say is nothing at all. There were plenty of times that Jesus held His tongue, even when He endured absolute brutality. In fact, although He never committed a sin, the Bible says that Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered. *"When being reviled and insulted, He did not revile or insult in return."* **1 PETER 2:23 AMP**

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. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* **1 JOHN 1:9 NIV**

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

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. *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* **JAMES 4:7 NIV**

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. *"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* **EPHESIANS 2:10 NIV**

LIFE DECLARATIONS

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

- 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!**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does my day to day conversation say about my spiritual condition? Do my words reflect that God lives inside of me?
2. Am I intentional about how I use my words? Do I use them to promote the Kingdom of God and to minister life to others?
3. What words of death and cursing have been spoken to you by others?
4. What words of death and cursing have you spoken over yourself? To others?