

Protection Against Criticism and Misrepresentation



Where to Find Security (Part 10)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we draw near to the close of another week. Our theme through this week has been: Where to Find Security.

In my two previous talks I've been speaking about security in the realm of the mind and the emotions. I've dealt with four main enemies of emotional security: fear and worry, discouragement and depression. I've shown you in each case how the Holy Spirit, through the truth of God's Word, directs us to the appropriate form of protection. I shared with you my own experience, my battle against discouragement, and how the Holy Spirit showed me the protection, the garment of praise and the helmet of hope.

Incidentally, let me mention that in my complete list of messages on cassette, I have a full length message on that theme, unfolding my own personal experience in much greater detail. The message is entitled, "The Helmet of Hope." If you write into the address that will be given later in my talk and ask for my complete catalog, you'll find that message listed there, "the helmet of hope."

Today I'm going to deal with two other main enemies of emotional security: criticism and misrepresentation.

One of Satan's main weapons against us, as God's people, is the tongue. His very name in the New Testament, the devil, means the slanderer and that's his nature. He's the slanderer; he's the accuser and most often, he uses human tongues against us. He doesn't come there in person but he secretly, invisibly takes control of human tongues and turns them against God's people and he uses them to slander, to accuse, to criticize, to misrepresent.

In the Old Testament we have an example from the career of the prophet, Jeremiah. Jeremiah, in chapter 18, verse 18, speaks about what his enemies were saying about him. And sometimes, you know, God helps us by letting us know what our enemies are saying. Sometimes it's good to know the kind of way they're going to attack, and in Jeremiah 18:18 this is

what Jeremiah's enemies said:

> "They said, 'Come, let's make plans against Jeremiah… let's attack him with our tongues.'" (NIV)

Satan attacks most of the Lord's servants in this way at one time or another. He attacks God's people with human tongues. How are we to react? What is to be our response? It's very, very important that we respond the way Scripture directs. As a matter of fact, Jesus Himself particularly speaks about this problem. In Matthew, chapter 5, verses 11 and 12, part of the Sermon on the Mount, He says this:

> "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. [First of all we've got to see that's it not a problem, that it's not something to lament over, that it's a blessing when it's said against us because of Jesus. Now if it's said against us because of our own errors and faults and wrong conduct, then it isn't necessarily a blessing. But when we are criticized and attacked because of our relationship and our commitment to Jesus Christ and our faithfulness to Him, then Jesus says, 'Blessed are you.' And He goes on in the next verse:] Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (NIV)

So you see, those enemies of yours are really doing you a favor. They may not realize it, in fact I'm sure they don't, but actually they are piling up a reward for you in heaven. Don't try to stop them; just let them go on because the longer they go on, the greater your reward in heaven. And Jesus says, "You're in a very good tradition." He said, "That's how they treated the prophets before you; that's how they're going to treat you." That's how they treated Jeremiah; I read you that example. They said, "Come, and let's make plans against Jeremiah, let's attack him with our tongues." So when people attack you with their tongues because of your relationship with the Lord, you're in the tradition of the prophets. Rejoice and be very glad. You're going to earn a great reward in heaven. Well, that's the first protection. It's the right reaction.

And then we need to remember that when we're in Christ, and you remember that's the secret place, hidden with Christ in God, we spoke about that earlier in this week, the hidden place is the place in Christ where Paul speaks of in Colossians. You died, your life is hidden with Christ in God. Well, when we're hidden in Christ, we're covered by His righteousness. That's the most beautiful thought if you can only grasp it. In Isaiah he says that the Lord gives us a garment of salvation and then a robe of righteousness. One of the translations says, "He wraps us around with a robe of righteousness." So once we enter into God's salvation, we also have a robe of righteousness, not our own righteousness, but Christ's righteousness received by faith and we're totally covered with that righteousness of Christ. All the weak points in our character and conduct are covered by that robe.

This is what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21:

> "God made him [that's Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him [Jesus] we might become the righteousness of God." (NIV)

You see, "in him"; it's all dependent on that relationship with Jesus. When we're in him, we're in the secret place. When we're in the secret place, then we are covered by the righteousness of God in Christ. So when people are criticizing and attacking us on the basis of our relationship to Jesus; they're not criticizing our righteousness, they're criticizing Christ's righteousness. We're protected. We don't have to stand on our own righteousness. We don't have to answer for ourselves because when they attack the righteousness of Jesus that wraps us around, then God the Father moves in and deals with them. This is clearly stated in the Prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 54, verse 17. Listen to this beautiful promise.

> "'No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. [That promise is given because we're going to need it. Weapons will be forged against us. Tongues will accuse us. If there's a promise given, there's going to be a need for the promise. So don't be discouraged.] No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. [Then the prophet goes on:] This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,' declares the Lord." (NIV)

When people attack God's righteousness, it's God who vindicates. The alternative translation for vindication there is righteousness. "Their righteousness is from me," saith the Lord. That's why no weapon forged against us will prevail and we can refute every tongue that criticizes and attacks us because we're not facing them in our own righteousness.

Listen to what David says in Psalm 31, verse 20 about this secret place. He shows us that there's protection there from all the attacks of the tongue as well. He says, and he's

speaking of the relationship with the Lord to his servants:

> "Thou dost hide them in the secret place of Thy presence from the conspiracies of man; Thou dost keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues." (NASB)

Those are the very things that we're speaking about, human conspiracies against us, attacks of people's tongues. David says the remedy is the same, it's the same as in Psalm 91. The same word is used; "the secret place of God's presence." The same word is "the secret place of the Most High" but it's again the hidden place; "Thou dost hide them in the secret place of thy presence from the conspiracies of man;" "Thou dost keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues." Notice the emphasis on being hidden and being secret. That means to say we must not expose ourself. We must take refuge in Christ's righteousness. The moment we begin to expose ourselves, the moment we begin to fight back with the same weapons that the enemy uses, the moment we try to justify ourselves, that very phrase, "to justify ourselves," indicates that now we're not hidden in Christ's righteousness. We're trying to come against them with their own weapons and meet them on their own ground and in doing so, without realizing it, we've moved out of the secret place and we've lost our cover and our protection. So, the remedy for criticism and misrepresentation is to stay hidden in the secret place, covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness; not to meet people in our own righteousness.

Let me say in closing, about all these pressures that we've been speaking about, about fear and worry, discouragement and depression, criticism and misrepresentation; we're going to encounter them all, but it's important that you learn to react to them the right way. Let them do you good. Let them serve God's purposes in your life. Every time you encounter them, let them drive you back into the secret place. That's why God allows them to come, because he wants to bring us to a place where we're dwelling in that secret place of the Most High.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. I'll be continuing with the theme of security. One aspect I'll be dealing with will be financial security and security of investment.

My special offer this week provides practical help in answering this question about security. It's my book Repent and Believe. This book explains in simple, everyday language just what the Bible means by these two basic concepts, repentance and faith. It will show you just where you stand in your personal relationship to God.

Also, my complete series of talks this week on "Where to Find Security, Part 2" is available in a single, carefully edited cassette.

Stay tuned for details.

Radio Program

Transcript: TS-R082-105-ENG
Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

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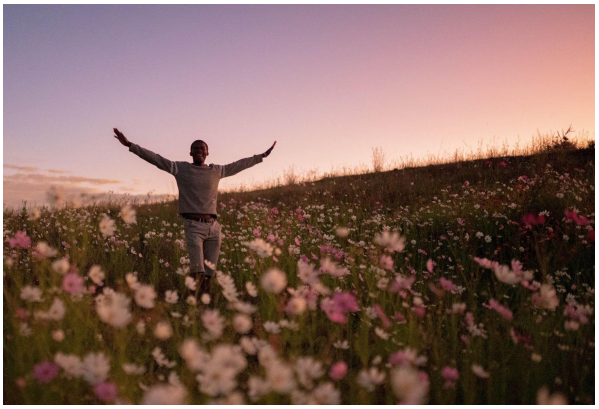

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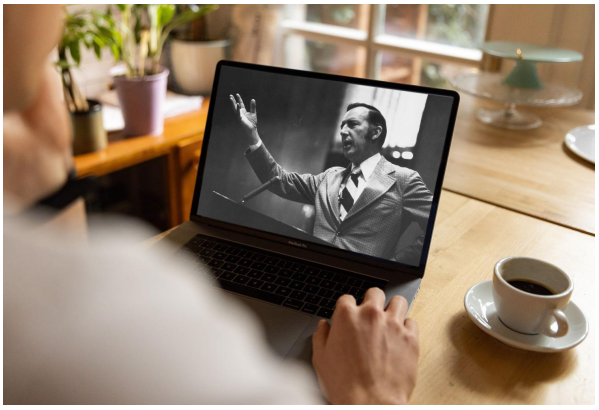

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