

Death or Life?



Does Your Tongue Need Healing? (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

The title for my theme this week takes the form of a Question: Does Your Tongue Need Healing? As we follow through with this theme, you may be in for some surprises!

But first, I want to say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write—even if it's only a brief personal note.

Now back to our theme: Does Your Tongue Need Healing?

Let me begin by pointing out something very significant about the way in which the Creator designed the human head: every one of us has seven openings in our head, and the number seven in Scripture often denotes completeness. There are three pairs of openings. Each of us has two eyes, two ears, and two nostrils. But the remaining opening the Creator restricted to one, the mouth—that's the seventh opening. I've often asked people: How many of you wish you had more than one mouth? But I've never met anyone who did. The truth of the matter is that most of us have all we can do to make the right use of just one mouth. In fact, that one opening causes us more problems than all the other six put together.

Some day you would do well to take a Bible Concordance and look up in it all the words related to that one opening; such as mouth, tongue, lips, speech, words, and so on. You'd be amazed at how much the Bible has to say about this whole subject. And with good reason—because there is no area in our personality more directly related to our total well-being than our mouth, our tongue.

In my talk today I'm simply going to share with you a number of passages of Scripture which all emphasize the vital importance of the mouth and the tongue. Once we've established that in the talks that follow, I'll go on to deal with

principles that arise out of that.

First of all, I'm going to quote to you from Psalm 34, verses 11 through 13:

> "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." (NIV)

The offer there, of the inspired Word of God, to us as God's children, is to teach us the fear of the Lord. I have a series of talks on the fear of the Lord which point out, I think, that there is nothing in all Scripture to which there is attached greater blessing and fruitfulness and assurance than the fear of the Lord. So when the Scripture offers to teach us the fear of the Lord, it's offering something that's of infinite value and worth. And by implication, the Psalmist says here, "Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days," those are two things that go with the fear of the Lord: life. In fact, in Scripture, life in its fullness and the fear of the Lord are always associated together. The measure in which we have the fear of the Lord is the measure in which we enjoy true life.

But then coming down to the practical application, where does the fear of the Lord begin? What's the first place that it will be manifested? It's very clear. The Psalmist says, "Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies." In other words, the first area of our life in which the fear of the Lord will be practically manifested, is our tongue and our lips. And if we can keep our tongue from evil, and our lips from speaking lies, then we can move on into the fullness of that which is designated "the fear of the Lord," and out of the fear of the Lord, comes life and many good days. It's all bound together, the fear of the Lord, life, good days, and the proper use and control of our tongue and our lips. We cannot really have a good life if we do not control our tongue and our lips. We just have to make that decision. Good life, many good days, the blessing of God, the peace of God—they're all contingent upon the right use of the tongue and of the lips.

And then in Proverbs 13, verse 3:

> "He who guards his lips guards his soul, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin." (NIV)

Your soul is the whole of your personality. It's the real you. And if you want to guard your soul, you have to guard your lips. It's the area where weakness will first be manifested, where the enemy will first gain access. The area which you have to guard if you're going to guard your soul is your lips. But if you speak rashly, you will come to ruin. See the alternatives are very clear. It's either protection and control of the tongue, or it's ruin. If you speak rashly, if your tongue gets out of control, if you're not master of your words, then the end is ruin. That's so clear. The alternatives are so precise. There's no blurred edges. If we want to have good life, many good days, we have to guard our soul. We have to control our tongue and our lips. But if we let our tongue and our lips get out of control, the result is ruin.

The whole Book of Proverbs is full of these principles. I'll just quote one other Proverb on that theme about guarding our mouth and our tongue. Proverbs 21, verse 23:

> "He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity." (NIV)

See again, the vital area that you have to protect is your mouth and your tongue. And once again too, the alternatives are so clear, so clear-cut. They're black and white. There's no gray areas. You guard your mouth and your tongue, you guard your soul, you guard your life, you're safe. But if you fail to do that, the alternative is calamity. That's a very strong word and I believe the Bible uses it deliberately. The failure to guard our lips and our tongues will ultimately bring us to calamity.

There are two other passages in the Book of Proverbs concerning the use of the tongue which are particularly significant. Proverbs 15:4:

> "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit." (KJV)

Where the translation says, "a wholesome tongue," the literal Hebrew says, "the healing of the tongue." That indicates clearly that our tongue can need healing. In fact, I believe, the tongue of every sinner needs healing. There is one area in which sin is always manifested in every life, and that is the tongue. There are some areas in which a sinner may not offend. He may offend only in certain areas. But I believe there's one area in which every sinner offends. There's one area in the life of every sinner which must be healed and that's the tongue. The healing of the tongue is a tree of life. Notice again, the close connection between life and the correct use of the tongue. The alternative perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. Perverseness means the wrong use. The misuse of the tongue is a breach in the spirit. It's a leak in the spirit.

I remember once being in a service where a visiting preacher prayed for a certain person and said, "Lord, fill her with the Holy Spirit." And the pastor who knew the person said, "No,

don't Lord; she leaks." You see, there are many of us that get filled, we get blessed, but it all runs out through our tongue. You have to keep a tight reign on your tongue if you're going to contain the blessing of the Lord. It's one thing to be blessed; it's another thing to contain the blessing. But the healing of the tongue is a tree of life that brings life to us and to others. It works inwardly and outwardly. And then one final passage in the Book of Proverbs, Proverbs 18:21:

> "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit." (NASB)

See again, the alternatives are always so clear. There's nothing fuzzy. It's either death or life. They're both in the power of the tongue. If we use our tongues aright, it will be a tree of life. But if we use our tongues awrong, then the result is death. And, which ever way we use our tongue, one thing we can be sure of, we'll eat its fruit. There's no escaping. Each one of us eats the fruit of our own tongue. If the fruit is sweet, we'll eat sweet fruit. If the fruit is bitter, we'll feed on bitter fruit. But the fruit of our tongue is something that all of us must eat. God has ordained it that way. Whatever way we use our tongue, we're bringing forth some kind of fruit, either sweet or bitter. And whatever fruit we bring forth with our tongue, that we're going to eat. The tongue is the decisive member. Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

Well our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue with this theme: Does Your Tongue Need Healing?

Radio Program

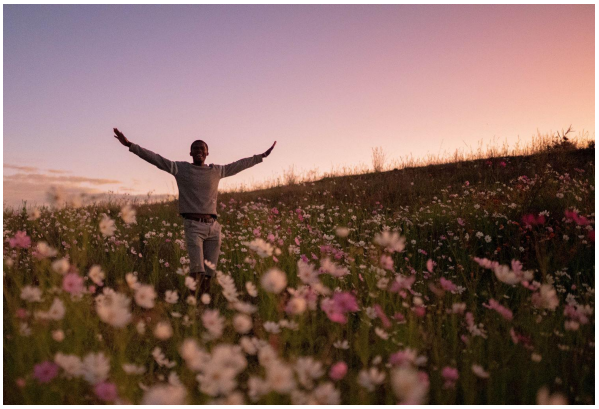
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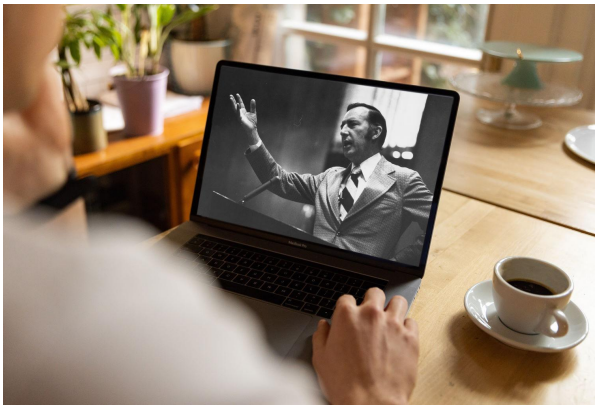
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