

The Second Direction



God's Medicine Bottle (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue with our theme for this week: God's Medicine Bottle.

And again, I'm going to quote the verses from Proverbs that are, as I've said, God's medicine bottle. Proverbs, chapter 4, verses 20 through 22. And may I suggest to you, that if you're finding these talks helpful and if they're meeting a need in your life, you make a decision to commit these three verses of Proverbs to your memory. It will make all the difference if you can memorize them and retain them and have them with you. These are the verses, Proverbs 4:20 through 22:

> "My son, attend to my words; [You notice that God is speaking to you as His child; this is not addressed to unbelievers, this is to God's children—my son, or my daughter, both are included in the Hebrew] My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh." (KJV)

And as I've pointed out, the alternative marginal reading for health is medicine—medicine to all their flesh—medicine for their whole body. I've explained that this is God's medicine bottle and that God's directions for taking His medicine are on the bottle and that there are four successive directions there in those verses.

First, attend to my words.

Second, incline thine ear unto my sayings.

Third, let them not depart from thine eyes.

Fourth, keep them in the midst of thine heart.

Yesterday I dealt with the first direction, attend to my words, and I explained the importance of giving God our total undivided attention, of listening listening, of listening to God with both ears.

Today I'm going to explain the second direction: incline thine ear.

Now the word, incline, is slightly Old English, so we need to be sure that we all understand what it means. To incline is to bend down, and incline is a hill that slopes. So, inclining our ear is bending our ear down. And, it's a fact of the human body that you cannot bend your ear without bending your head. So in inclining your ear, you are actually inclining your head. What is that? It's an attitude indicating humility, teachability. Well, I'll illustrate it from experience.

As I was studying the Bible there in hospital, seeking desperately for the answer to my problem, I came upon many, many promises of healing and blessing and prosperity, but my attitude was conditioned by my background, which is true of probably of all of us. My background was in a certain section of the Christian Church where really, Christianity was not associated with being happy. In fact, very much the opposite. And I had early in life formed the conclusion that if I was going to be a Christian, I would have to be prepared to be miserable, and I decided pretty early that I wasn't prepared to be miserable and therefore I wasn't going to be a Christian. It was only a sovereign intervention of God in my life that changed me. But I still carried a lot of these old concepts with me. And so, when I found these repeated promises in the Bible, of healing, health, strength, long life, prosperity, abundance, I kept shaking my head, not inclining my head, but shaking my head and saying, "Couldn't be; that's too good to be true; I can't believe that religion would be like that." And as I was reacting this way to one of these statements, I believe it was one in Psalm 103 where it says, "God forgiveth all thine iniquities and healeth all thy diseases and reneweth thy youth like the eagle." I thought, you know, that's impossible. God couldn't be like that. I mean, we know we have to anticipate misery being Christians.

Well anyhow, as I was responding like that inwardly, God spoke to me so clearly, not audibly, but just as clearly as I'm speaking to you. And just as I responded in that way to some promise, He said, "Now, tell me, who is the pupil and who is the teacher?" And I thought it over for a moment and I said, Lord, "You're the teacher and I'm the pupil." And He responded, "Well, would you mind letting me teach you?" And I saw that I wasn't letting God teach me at all, that I had my own preconceptions, that I had my mind made up as to what God ought to have said, and that if He said something different in His Word, I really wasn't capable of hearing it because my mind was blocked by these set ideas of mine. So God was saying, "Incline thine ear; give up your prejudices, and bend that stiff neck of yours, and let me tell you how good I am and how wonderful is the provision I've made for you; don't measure me by human standards because I'm God; I'm almighty and I'm a gracious and faithful and merciful God."

And so, this brings out a very important principle about God's Word, and you see, everything is in God's Word that we're talking about. God's Word works in us only insofar as we receive it. If we don't receive it, it doesn't do us any good. There's a very powerful passage in the epistle of James, chapter 1, verses 18, 19, and 21. It's speaking of God. It says:

> "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, [notice, our becoming Christians is due to the Word.] God begat us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: [Note that; He's swift to hear but slow to speak. And then it says:] Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." (KJV)

God's Word can save you, it can heal you, it can bless you in innumerable ways, but only if you receive it with meekness. And one of the things that this version says we have to lay aside is naughtiness. Well naughtiness we usually associate with children. What is a naughty child? One of the marks of a naughty child is answering back when he's taught or reproved. God says, "Don't answer me back; when I tell you something, don't argue with me; don't tell me you think it can't be true or that it's impossible, or that I couldn't mean that; let me teach you." And that's the essence of the inclined ear. It means that we come to God and we say, "God, you're the teacher; I'm the pupil; I'm willing to let you teach me; I bow down my ear and I listen."

You see, in this matter of inclining the ear, we have to come face to face with the fact that most of us have mental barriers when we begin to read the Bible, and they're due, in many cases, to our past backgrounds. Many of us have some kind of denominational affiliation in the past. We may indeed still be active members of some particular denomination. I am not opposed to denominations but I want to suggest to you that every denomination has its weak points and its strong points. It has areas in which it's been faithful to the truth and it has areas in which it has not been faithful to the truth. And so, if we measure God from our own denominational background, if we judge the Scriptures by what some church or some denomination teaches, we will exclude, out of our minds, much of the truth that God wants us to receive and which can bless us and help us.

For instance, some churches teach the age of miracles is past. I have never been able to find any basis for that statement in Scripture. I can think of dozens of Scriptures

which indicate the exact opposite. But if you approach with the attitude, the age of miracle is past, then when God promises you a miracle, you probably can't hear it. Or, some Christian groups suggest that in order to be holy, you have to be poor and that being anything but poor is in some way almost sinful. Well, if it's God's purpose to bless you with prosperity, as He indicates many times in the Scripture, it can be His purpose. Then when you have that attitude, you're not able to receive the blessing of prosperity which God is offering you on the basis of Scripture. You see, there's a Scripture, the third Epistle of John, verse 2, which I think most of really need to lay to heart. It says:

> "Beloved, I wish above all things, that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (KJV)

I remember when I started to read that verse, it just knocked me over and my old prejudices and preconceptions rose up. I thought that's impossible. It can't mean what it says. But you see, God said, "Incline your ear; don't come at me with your arguments, your prejudices, your preconceptions; bend that stiff neck of yours and let me teach you." And so, that's an essential requirement for receiving healing through the Word of God. It's laying down preconceptions, prejudices, bending our stiff neck, opening our ears, and listening carefully to what God says, and not rejecting it because it doesn't agree with something we thought God ought to have said. God is a lot bigger than any denomination. He's a lot bigger than our understanding. He's a lot bigger than all of our prejudices. Don't make God so small that He can't help you. Incline your ear and let Him tell you how much He's willing to do for you.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll go on to the third direction on God's Medicine Bottle.

Radio Program

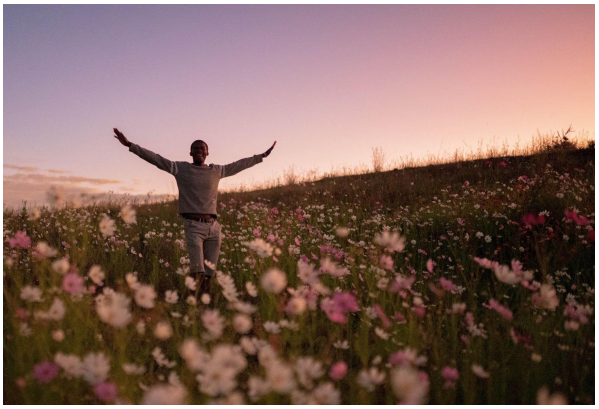
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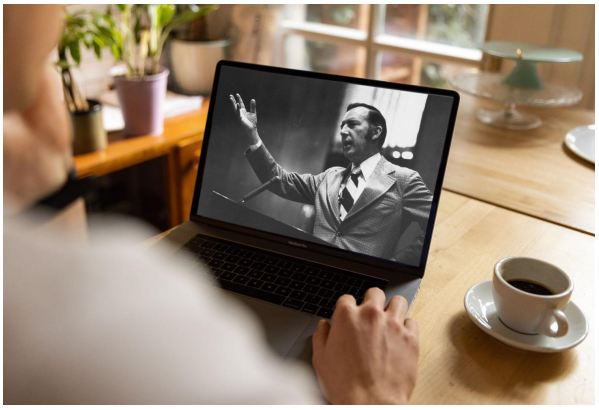
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