

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

(Learning the Power within Our Words)

Ever since I gave my life to Christ on 1 January 1979 I have witnessed a sometimes hostile debate surrounding the *power* of words. Some believe that words are very powerful and therefore should be chosen carefully. Still others believe that our words have little or no effect upon the outcome of our goals in life. Hence, this subject has always been of great interest to me, but also a source of confusion. Then I received a revelation! "Why don't you do some Biblical research to see *what's in a word?*" I desired to know what God's Word says about words. I hoped that this would alleviate my confusion. I thank the Lord that I was obedient to His Voice.

Before we go further, I want to define what is meant by the question, "*What's in a word?*" A word is not simply one word that you or I speak in a day. A word, (my word), is the whole course of words that I speak each and every day. In this sense, we can call a word our *daily testimony*. Who am I praising the most? Am I praising the devil for his attacks on my life, or am I praising God for His strength that has made me more than a conqueror even in the face of defeat? **Whatever** we glorify the most in our daily conversation **will be** the very thing *that controls our thoughts and actions*. On that account, *what is in a word?*

A man's [moral] self shall be filled with the *fruit of his mouth*; and with the **consequence** of his words he *must* be satisfied [whether good or evil]. **Death and life** are in the power of the tongue, and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it [for death or life].

(Proverbs 18:20, 21)

According to Proverbs chapter eighteen in *The Amplified Bible*, we will be filled by the fruit of our mouths; and by the consequence of our words we **must** be satisfied. This says that if I do not want to be filled and satisfied with evil consequences, then I must pay attention to the words that I speak. Also, this tells me that I am the one who has control over my words, and hence control over the kind of fruit that my words will produce. God our Father has given us His Word to help us control our thinking and henceforth our speaking. We are not expected to be the ones to do it all alone. He has given these tools to us in His Word, but we must use the tools. God will not force us to change our vocabulary. He has simply given us His Word and left the choice to us. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman—He will not come into our lives without our invitation and cooperation.

The previous passage of Scripture clearly states that *death* and *life* are in the tongue. Moreover, please consider what James said about the power of our word.

For we all often stumble *and fall and offend* in many things. And if anyone does not *offend in speech* [never says the wrong things], he is a fully developed character *and* a perfect man, **able to control** his whole body *and* to **curb his entire nature**. If we set bits in the horses' mouths to make them obey us, we can turn their whole bodies about. Likewise, look at the ships: though they are so great and are driven by rough winds, *they are steered* by a very

small *rudder* wherever the impulse of **the helmsman determines**. *Even* so the tongue is a little member, and it can boast of great things. See how much wood or how great a forest a tiny spark can set ablaze! And the tongue is a fire. [The tongue is a] world of wickedness set among our members, *contaminating and depraving the whole body* and setting on fire the wheel of birth (the cycle of man's nature), being itself ignited by hell (Gehenna). (James 3:2-6)

Here in the book of James we have a much more detailed description of the productive as *well as* destructive power of our word. He clearly tells us that if we do not cause offense with our tongue we are perfect or **mature** in God's eyes, able to control or determine the actions of our bodies. In other words, we will stop being *body dominated*, which is the instrument of sin (Rom. 6:6 TAB). Domination by our bodies keeps us in slavery to sin. James said that the tongue is **the key** to curbing the nature of man. He is not referring to unregenerate man; because he goes on to say that *no man* can tame the tongue. Please realize that James didn't say the tongue **cannot** be tamed. He said that man *in himself* could not do it. However, a child of God who is living in the Word, with the Word *living* in him, **can** surrender to the direction of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit has the power to keep our tongues operating in line with the will/Word of God.

Evangelical & Charismatic Differences!

In, *Quenching the Spirit*, author William DeArteaga gives us some powerful insight into the Evangelical line of reasoning concerning its opposition on the teaching of the *power* of words.

"Evangelicals have a difficult time facing the issue of the power of words and thoughts to influence the natural world...This theology of total depravity of the soul has been updated by the influential Chinese theologian Watchman Nee, who died in 1972. In his works especially *The Latent Power of the Soul*, he elaborated on Calvin's suspicions and concluded that the fall caused the powers of the soul to become tools for *demonic use only*. Thus, words and thoughts have no legitimate power over natural circumstances. There seems to be biblical and practical exceptions to this theory. In the Bible both believers and heathen are shown to have quite legitimate and God-directed 'soul' experiences. Pharaoh's prophetic dream...or the dream of Pilate's wife that Jesus was a just man are but a few examples. It may be true that the soulish powers of man were *damaged* at the fall, but there is no evidence that this damage was so total that God does not speak to man through them or that their use is *only* for witchcraft."

"Certainly words and thoughts have more legitimate power than Calvin-Nee (materialist-realist) theology understands. Scientific research has proven, for instance, that the mind, can be trained to stimulate the body's immune system, and help in the healing process. Yet it is also obvious that the belief of the idealist cults, that powers of mind were god-like and needed only cultivation,

were a gross exaggeration...America was not transformed by positive thinking into a paradise on earth...Yet the biblical promises that Jesus made in regard to faith and its ability to move mountains and uproot mulberry trees (Luke 17:6) by verbal command are even more incredible than any New Thought claims of business success. Herein lies the core issue. If the power of the mind (through thoughts and word confessions) is only very limited by itself, then the real power of the mind comes through making the choice of faith. By faith the mind acts in the power of God and can move mountains. Thus we should be cautious in judging the Metaphysical movement's techniques of positive thinking, visualization, and affirmation. Certainly all those activities are capable of demonization and witchcraft, but they are not, as Calvin-Nee theology holds, *necessarily witchcraft*. They all may have a legitimate place in the uses of thoughts and words as God originally intended."

I believe that DeArteaga's comments give one a precise understanding of where typical Evangelical Christians get their understanding, and hence, opposition to one teaching that human words have power for good as well as evil, *similar* to that of God's words. The words we are powerful **especially** when we speak God's Word in faith!

In some of my earlier writings the Holy Spirit stirred within me some powerful revelation concerning the power of the spoken word, and I would like to share some of these insights with you.

"Words are very creative tools. They can be used to paint a mental picture of love and peace or one of *fear* and *abuse*. Verbal abuse is one of the most common forms of abuse in relationships today, and a leading cause of divorce. Countless relationships are damaged beyond *human* repair simply because of the way someone used words to destroy another person's self-esteem. On the other hand, words can also be used to paint mental pictures of good things. If I were to say, "flower," instantly a picture of a flower would form in your mind. The more that I defined that picture, the more your mind would create the kind of picture that I perceived. Thus if I said, "long stemmed flower" or "long stemmed red flower;" or even more detailed, "a long stemmed red rose," you would know exactly what kind of flower I was thinking about."

Moreover, I've always loved the words of the centurion to Jesus in Matt. 8:8,9.

The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but **speak the word only**, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant Do this, and he doeth it.

This centurion realized that Jesus was a man under God's authority, as *he* also was. He also understood the power of the spoken word (verse 9). In that when Jesus

spoke *the Word*, all power and authority in heaven (and earth) was behind the Word that He spoke. This is the reason that Jesus was so amazed when He heard what the centurion said. Jesus replied with: "I have not found **so great faith**, no, not in Israel."

Jesus was amazed that the centurion understood the authority of the spoken word, and that he also had *the faith to believe* that his servant would be healed even though he couldn't physically see him.

In, Matthew 8:8&9, Jesus was telling us that the Centurion's faith was the **greatest type of faith** (so great faith). In this passage, Jesus was teaching us (1) To speak the Word of God in faith. (2) To expect the answer we have believed Him for without physically seeing any manifestation. The Bible also records that Jesus told Thomas that he was faithless because he refused to believe unless he could see results (the Lord in physical form).

1. **Faithlessness** = Having to see physical results *in order to believe*.
2. **Great Faith** = Speaking the Word **knowing** that the answer was granted **when** we prayed **and confessed** the Word of God!

The Conclusion

Despite the controversy surrounding the inherent power within our words, I believe we now have a greater understanding of why the Church differs so greatly on this issue. Evangelicals still see us as possessing two natures: one godly and one devilish. They concluded that the fall caused the powers of the soul to become tools for *demonic use* **only**.

However, the Bible clearly teaches us that once we are born-again our old nature (old man) is crucified with Christ (Rom. 6 &7). This means we no longer have the nature of the devil. Once we are born-again we have the nature of God living within us. God's Word also teaches us to use His Word to keep our flesh (body) and soul crucified and in submission to the will of God.

Therefore, God has restored the Church to its original standing before the fall of man. We once again have His authority to take dominion over this earth, and speak His Word in authority to keep our lives and this planet in line with God's will.

God **has not** called us to turn this earth into some "Christian" *cult*, but rather to use our authority (*given by the Lord Jesus Christ*) to change the spiritual climate of our world. God holds the Church accountable for the spiritual condition of this planet. It is our job to pray **in line with God's Word** that His will be done on earth as well as it is in heaven!

Proverbs 18:20-21 (Amplified Bible)

A man's [moral] self shall be filled **with the fruit of his mouth**; and with the **consequence** of his words he must be satisfied [**whether good or evil**]. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it [for death or life].

Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by [The Lockman Foundation](#)



AMPLIFIED
BIBLE

ZONDERVAN

