

Hardness of Heart
Part 8
Hardness of Heart in Respect to Affections
The Tongue – Our Source of Life or our Source of Bitterness

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV)

²¹Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

- *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue” - The word “power” in the Hebrew is יד (yd) and it literally means “hand” and thus it is rendered power because with our hands we are able to accomplish many things and with our hands we are able to hold onto things and possess things.*
- *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue” – It does not mean our words necessarily have power over others, unless they allow them to, but it does mean that our words have power over the course of our lives.*
- *If we are continually complaining and mourning about how life is so tough and things are not fair it is guaranteed we will not be happy.*
- *We will become more and more bitter as the negative words we speak reinforce those lies.*
- *If we continually profess the faithfulness of God and we are speaking words of thankfulness then it will help produce an atmosphere in our hearts that will be filled with contentment and thanksgiving.*
- *We will become sweeter and sweeter as our words agree with the Word of God.*
- *We will either overcome bitterness by our words or spread bitterness by our words.*
- *If we confess words that agree with God’s Word it then releases God’s power to work in our lives.*
- *If we confess words that agree with the lies of the enemy it then opens us up to the enemy attacking us.*
- *Confessing words of faith will produce peace in our hearts.*
- *Confessing words of doubt and fear will produce fear and uncertainty in our hearts.*

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV)

²¹Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

- *We can either eat good fruit by speaking words of life or eat bad fruit by speaking words of death.*
- *Words of death are anything that is not spring up from our relationship with Christ.*
- *We must learn to constantly be aware of what we are saying and be willing to repent once we recognizing we are speaking death and not life.*

Mark 7:14–23 (NKJV)

¹⁴When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear Me,

everyone, and understand:

¹⁵There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.

¹⁶If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”

¹⁷When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable.

¹⁸So He said to them, “Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him,

¹⁹because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?”

²⁰And He said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man.

²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

²²thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

²³All these evil things come from within and defile a man.

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- *Christ is saying that food does not defile a man but a man’s own words defile a man.*
- *If we speak words of anger and hatred it will actually cause us to become angrier.*
- *If we speak words of unthankfulness it will actually cause us to become more unthankful.*
- *The power of our tongue not only can defile us but it also can defile those that choose to listen and receive those words.*

Mark 4:24 (NKJV)

²⁴Then He said to them, “**Take heed what you hear.** With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.

Luke 8:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸**Therefore take heed how you hear.** For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.”

- *The words of others do not have to affect us but it is our choice.*
- *We can choose what we hear and what we meditate upon.*

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- *Our words reflect the condition of our hearts and our words affect the condition of our hearts.*
- *This could be called the defilement cycle.*
- *If we allow the sinful thoughts and desires within our hearts to take control of our tongue it will actually cause those sinful desires to be strengthened and become more deeply rooted within us.*

Hebrews 4:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

- *The Greek word for “hold fast” is κρατέω krateō and it means to “hold onto, to seize, to retain in the hand, to exercise power over something”*
- *The Greek word for “confession” is ὁμολογία homologia and it means “an agreement, a pact, a profession, an acknowledgment”*
- *Seeing we that our great High Priest Jesus Christ the Son of God has passed into the heavens let us take hold and seize and exercise power over our confession (what we choose to agree with and be bound to) and let us our confession line up with God’s Word.*
- *Let the words that come out of our mouth not be in agreement with the flesh but with Jesus Christ the Son of God.*
- *The words that we speak will either produce life or will produce bitterness and hurts in both ourselves and those that hear us.*
- *If we have bitterness in our hearts then our words will express that bitterness and spread that bitterness.*
- *There must come a time when we no longer allow the bitterness or resentment in our hearts to control our tongues.*
- *We must begin to speak words that are controlled by the Spirit and produce life.*

James 3:1–11 (NKJV)

¹My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

- *“knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment” – If we take this advice to heart it will help us to be more slow to speak and more quick to listen.*

²For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

- *“If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man” – The depth of spiritual maturity that is required for one to control one’s tongue is seen in this statement.*
- *If you want to be perfect just control your tongue.*
- *Why would the Bible say if you control your tongue you are perfect or completely?*
- *Firstly our words reflect the true condition of our hearts.*
- *“able also to bridle the whole body” – Our words set the course of our entire lives and if our words are wholesome then the direction of our entire lives will*

be wholesome.

³Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

- **Indeed** – *The Greek ἰδοῦ idou means “look, behold” and is used three times in the follow three verses in order to direct out attention to three very important examples about the tongue. In verse 3 it is translated as “indeed”, in verse 4 as “look” and in verse 5 as “see”.*
- **“Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us”** – *The first behold is in reference to horses and placing a bit in their mouths.*
- *The same way we must deliberately place a bit into a horse's mouth we must do the same for our mouths.*
- *A horse will naturally initially resist having the bit placed in its mouth but it must be persistently and patiently trained until it does.*
- **“that they may obey us”** – *the Greek word for obey used here is πείθω peithō and it means “to convince, persuade, to induce one by words to believe, to trust, have confidence”*
- *We are to take control of our mouths and place words of faith and truth into our mouths and these words when spoken and heard will persuade us and direct us to walk according to God's ways.*
- **“and we turn their whole body”** – *the words we speak and the words we listen to actually set our direction.*

⁴Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

- **“Look also at ships”** - *This is the second time the Greek word ἰδοῦ idou is used and it draws our attention to the second example – that of a ship that is being driven by a fierce storm.*
- **“they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires”** – *the word desire is actually two Greek words that together are translated as “desires”. The first word is ὁρμή hormē and it means “impulse, a swift and even violent motion, a hostile movement”.*
- *The second word that comprises the English translation of the word “desire” is the Greek word βούλομαι boulomai and it means, “to will deliberately, have a purpose, to desire”.*
- *Therefore the picture of how a captain steers a ship is not one where he is sitting in a nice warm and dry pilothouse holding his hydraulically powered ship's wheel but of a man in an open boat grabbing hold of the wooden member that is connected to the rudder and with all his might he violently jerks the rudder in the direction he wants the ship to go in, as he braces himself against the full force of the storm that is trying to move the ship in the opposite direction.*
- *When we are caught in the middle of one of the fierce storms of life our tongue wants to complain and blame and murmur but we need to use all our strength and with great violence take control of our words and begin to praise and give thanks to God.*

⁵Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

⁷For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

- *“See how great a forest a little fire kindles!” - This is the third time the Greek word ἰδοὺ idou is used and it draws our attention to the third example – that of a small flame that can cause a huge fire that can produce great destruction.*
- *A few careless words can cause great damage and a raging fire that is very difficult to put out afterwards.*
- *The first example of the horse with the bit emphasizes the discipline needed to control our tongue.*
- *The second example of a ship and the rudder shows the effort and strength that is required to control the tongue.*
- *The third example of a fire shows the havoc and destruction that an undisciplined tongue will produce.*

⁸But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

¹⁰Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

¹¹Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?

- *“But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” – No man can tame the tongue but as we yield to the Holy Spirit the life of Jesus Christ in our reborn spirit will transform our tongue to be an instrument of righteousness that brings life and peace.*
- ¹¹Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? - *Our tongues are meant not to be a source of bitterness but a source of refreshing words.*

2 Kings 4:38–41 (NKJV)

³⁸And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.”

³⁹So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though they did not know what they were.

⁴⁰Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, “Man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they could not eat it.

⁴¹So he said, “Then bring some flour.” And he put it into the pot, and said, “Serve it to the people, that they may eat.” And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

³⁸And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.”

- “there was a famine in the land” – *When there is a spiritual famine in our lives and we are not filled with the Word of God we begin to gossip and say things that are not edifying.*
- “Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.” – *When we are spiritually dry or weak we need to have fellowship so that we can be filled and refreshed.*

³⁹So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though they did not know what they were.

- *The Hebrew word for “herb” does not only mean an edible plant but also has the meaning of “light” and metaphorically “light of happiness and joy”.*
- *This one particular person went out in search of herbs but instead came across some wild gourds. The wild gourds can be a picture of the product of our untamed fleshly nature.*
- “gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds” – *In his robes, as one of the sons of the prophets, he was carrying wild gourds. There are times our words of gossip may appear clothed in religiosity.*
- “came and sliced them into the pot of stew” – *Not only do we bring gossip to the table but we open it up, slice it up and try to get ever juicy detail and all along while dressing it up in religious garb.*
- “though they did not know what they were” – *All along these “sons of the prophets” were totally undiscerning that they were putting into the stew was poisonous.*
- *Many times our conversations are not edifying and we are not even aware of the content of what we are digesting.*
- *The acid test is: after the fellowship time do we feel built up and closer to God?*

⁴⁰Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, “Man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they could not eat it.

- *The result of adding these wild gourds to the pot is that the fellowship was producing death.*
- *Are we adding wild gourds to our marriages, friendships, family relations, and our local churches?*
- *How many times marriages, families, friends and churches fall apart because of gossip, slander, backbiting, unkind words.*
- “And they could not eat it.” – *The result was that they could not eat. Their fellowship was broken.*
- *What is the solution?*
- ⁴¹So he said, “Then bring some flour.” And he put it into the pot, and said, “Serve it to the people, that they may eat.” And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

- ***“Then bring some flour.” – Bread is a picture of the Word of God and flour is the main ingredient from which bread is produced.***
- ***“Take eat, this is My Body which is broken for you” - The flour can also picture Christ’s sacrifice for us.***
- ***Begin to speak the Word of God and meditate upon the Word of God and Christ’s sacrifice and it will transform the death that we have sown into our relationships and bring life.***
- ***We need to humble ourselves and say, sorry for things we have said and done and we need to begin to speak words of life to one another.***
- ***“And there was nothing harmful in the pot.” – The end result is that all the harmful things were removed so that fellowship was restored.***
- ***“And there was nothing harmful in the pot” is more precisely translated as “and there was no harmful thing in the pot”***
- ***The Hebrew word for “thing” used here is דָּבָר, dbr and it means "word, speech דָּבָר ."***thing
- ***A valid translation of “And there was nothing harmful in the pot” is “There was no harmful word in the pot”.***
- ***When we repent and begin to speak God’s words of life it removes the death that we have spoken and produces life.***

Let us ask God to help us to stop speaking words of death whether it is gossip, criticism, uncleanness or just plain mean things.

Let us ask God to teach us how to fill our hearts, minds and mouths continually with His Word.

Let us also be thankful that He is able to take the things that we have spoken that has brought pain and sorrow and bring healing and restoration.