

## **Building A Strong Word-Life (Part 2)**

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Psalm 39:3 which reads, *“My heart grew hot within me, and as I mediated, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue.”* The three principles derived from this text are:- 1) revelation; 2) meditation; and 3) confession of the Word. In part 1 of this message I elaborated on the first two principles, that is, how to receive revelation and thereafter how to meditate the revelation. Today I wish to speak on the third principle which is how to confess the Word.

What does it mean to confess the Word? To confess is to speak forth. Therefore to “confess” the Word means to “speak forth” the revelation from Scriptures. Proverbs 18:21 explains why it is so important for us to speak forth the revelation. This verse says, *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”* This power comes from God and it is to be exercised via the tongue.

When God created man, He gave man dominion (authority or *“exuusia”* and power or *“dunamis”*) over the earth (Genesis 1:28). The implication is this – God has already delegated the domain of earth to man. God’s Word is Law and even He will not violate it. Therefore God will not intervene in the affairs of earth; He will not act unless it is to be done through His people. Likewise God will do nothing for the church unless His people are moved to pray (this involves the use of the tongue). Our prayers are like us laying the tracks for the locomotive of God’s will.

How are we to understand the meaning of “death and life” in Proverbs 18:21? Think with me on what are some proxies of death? Isn’t it discouragement; division, doubts leading to depression and ultimately to suicidal thoughts? What then are proxies of life? It includes blessings, encouragement, favor, provision, protection, peace and joy. Hence the words that are spoken by our tongues to others have far-reaching consequences and implications. The power of the spoken word cannot be understated.

Moreover as believers, we are human vessels or channels carrying His Word and message. Therefore for those who hear and believe the Word of God spoken and lived out by us, we are like the fragrance or aroma of life to them through which God *“diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place”* (2 Cor.2:14-16). However for those who rebel and reject the Word of God, this message in and through us is liken to the aroma of death to them. You and I are carriers of the Word of God, who is the Lord Jesus Christ dwelling in us and manifesting life, goodness and blessings through us to people we come into contact with.

## Why Confess The Word?

Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us that in previous times God spoke to us through the prophets but in the end times, the finality of all revelation from God came through the Lord Jesus, The Word. Hebrews 1:3 reads “*...and upholding all things by the Word of His power.*” This verse, taken from the New King James Translation, says that Jesus upholds all things in creation, in the universe by the Word of His power. What does this phrase “*upholding all things by the Word of His power*” mean? The best analogy I can think of to illustrate this concept is to think of water in the ocean. The ocean is vast and inexhaustible. One cannot tell where it begins and where it ends. Similarly the power of God is likened to the ocean. He is ALL powerful, just as He is ALL glorious and holy. 1 Timothy 6:16 says that “*He alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power.*” God’s Word is likened to a barrel, a container immersed into this vast ocean. The water enters the barrel. The barrel becomes the container carrying the water. The Word of God is likened to this barrel, a container of His power.

I prefer the translation of this verse in the New King James Version to the translation rendered in the New International Version. The NIV translate this as “*...and upholding all things by the power of His Word.*” The translation means that God’s Word is very powerful and that we already know. This verse (1 Timothy 6:16) tells us that there is no way we can come to God but thanks be to God, He alone has provided the way for us to come to Him. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the way. What the Lord Jesus Christ did as the Son of God is to speak forth the Word. The Word that He spoke is so filled with power that it will and can “*uphold all things,*” meaning to sustain the entire universe.

It bears repeating that *the Word* is the vessel, the container of His power. If you are able to grasp this principle then you will understand what it is that God wants you and I to do. We are to confess, to speak forth the Word. The Lord Jesus Christ alone has absolute authority and power; not us. But depending on our faith and our walk with God, Hebrews 3:1 tells us that as believers of our Lord Jesus Christ we have become *partakers of the heavenly calling* and therefore we can exercise a measure of the power of God on earth when we confess, declare, pray and proclaim His Word. When we do this, the Lord Jesus Christ who is *the Apostle and High Priest of our confession* goes before the Father God and the Word is accomplished in heaven and then on earth. Can we be certain that it will always be done? Yes because God’s Word is always true and it will always come to pass and because the Lord Jesus is always just, always righteous.

Hence the exhortation in Hebrews 4:14 that we should always “*...hold firmly to the faith we profess*” and in Hebrews 10:23 to “*...hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*” God

is faithful. That is His character. He cannot be otherwise. We have absolutely no reason or excuse to doubt. We just need to press on in faith.

## **The Principle of Confessing The Word**

The principle is for the heart and the mouth to agree. The mouth must speak to confirm what the heart believes for it is not a mere regurgitation of words and phrases without the conviction of the heart. Any parrot can merely repeat words. The so-called “Name it, Claim it Movement” started right but along the way the principle got distorted and it ended up wrong. Faith in God and in His Word needs to be built into and strengthened in our hearts and spirit before we can speak it forth. Romans 10:9-10 reads, *“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

Hence when you minister or pray for someone, you must speak audibly (even if it is softly). It is important for you to verbalize your words. God hears what you say. Therefore take heed what you say. When what we confess, say or speak is from the Word of God and our hearts are in total agreement with both the Word and the Holy Spirit, there is power.

Furthermore Mark 11:23 states with absolute certainty, *“For assuredly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.”* This mountain is whatever obstacle, problems, struggles that constitutes a hindrance to the flow of the grace and goodness of God in your life. God desires for His children to live victoriously. Are you facing a mountain, an obstacle or a set-back in your life right now? Don’t allow these things to remain in your life.

Nothing in our lives occurs by chance or without the Father’s knowledge. Go before God and search from His Word to find out why something has happened. If your mountain is a financial problem, ask if you have violated some of God’s financial laws and principles. Have you neglected tithing for example? God has created this world to operate on laws and principles, both physical and spiritual. Once you have identified the cause(s), understood and believed the Scriptural principles affecting your situation, the key to victory is for you to confess, declare, pray and speak forth the revelation. How long does it take before the mountain or obstacle is removed? It varies. For some it is removed in days, while for others it takes weeks and yet for some others it takes years. You maybe wondering why years? The reasons vary as well. Is there ignorance? Rebellion? Is pride another unidentified issue? Perhaps there is still a root of bitterness and unforgiveness. When we hear the Word of God, we must not only believe but we are to act on it as well.

## How To Confess The Word?

We confess the Word in three ways:– a) vertical; b) horizontal; and c) to the spirit realm.

**a) Vertical** – We confess the Word in our relationship with God through prayer. This first aspect concerns our confession of sins. 1John 1:9 says *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”* This verse assures us that when we confess our sins, God hears us but we need to be specific. To the degree we are aware; we need to name our sins, for example, ‘Lord I have lied,’ or ‘Lord I have stolen,’ or ‘Lord I have cheated.’ We must name our sins and wrong-doings specifically. After we have confessed our sins, there is no more condemnation, no more guilt.

Why is it that some people continue to be plagued by guilt even after they have confessed their sins? The Bible calls Satan the accuser. He loves to accuse and condemn those especially vulnerable and these are Christians who are double-minded or who are doubtful about God’s Word. These ones continue to be gripped, entangled and stumbled over this whole issue of guilt. What do we do? When feelings of guilt well up, the first step is to ascertain the source of this guilt feeling. Is it a conviction of the Holy Spirit? Remember that the work of the Holy Spirit is always to bring us in reconciliation and relationship to the Father God in the name of Jesus. So when we confess our sins (with our mouths) and believe in our hearts through faith God’s assurance that *“...there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1), we know that God has forgiven us. If the guilt and hopelessness continue to perpetuate, then we know that this cannot be from the Holy Spirit; it is from the devil whose aim is to kill, steal and destroy our joy in the Lord. We must boldly declare that we have been forgiven and then to live it out. When the evil one sense we know and believe what our mouths confess he will stop his harassment and the feelings of guilt will be quickly replaced by God’s peace and joy.

The second aspect of confessing the Word in our relationship with God is through learning to stand in the promises of God. For example this whole issue about provision is something we all struggle with in life. We fear we do not have enough. We fear inflation will overtake our nest-egg. We fear depleting our savings and so on. How do we appropriate and stand on the promises of God with regards to our provision? There are many promises that God has given to us in Scripture. In the matter of provision, I constantly claim Romans 8:32 which says *“He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?”*

How do I appropriate this promise for myself? I confess it with my mouth and believe in my heart. I remind and thank the Lord for His promise - *“Lord, you did not spare Jesus, your beloved Son but gave Him up for me. It is inconceivable that You will not graciously provide for me and my family. I*

*believe you will do so and I thank you for the provisions that I have not yet seen. I will not be anxious but trust in Your gracious promise.”*

Some struggle with *loneliness and sickness*. I love God’s promises in Psalm 23:4 which say *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For you are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me”* and Psalm 31:15a – *“...My times are in Your hands.”* A relative of mine living in Australia went for an operation in January. What was to be a simple procedure turned out to be a complicated one and she almost died as a result. She was traumatized physically and psychologically from it. My family had been praying for her. One day when she called to bid me good-bye, I realized she was entertaining thoughts of suicide. For the next hour or so I led her in prayer on the phone. I had sensed that this was not a sickness that was to end in death. She had Roman Catholic exposure but did not really know the Lord. I led her in a prayer to receive the Lord Jesus as Savior and Lord. Then I continue to pray over her on the telephone, speaking life into her, speaking the Word of God into her. Using all my understanding of the authority and power that God has given to me, I came against the spirit of infirmity and death which was hovering over her. After about half an hour of praying, she said she felt better. I told her I was going to call her everyday to give her a bible verse and she was to believe and confess it herself. She recovered, got saved, healed and is walking vibrantly with the Lord. Weeks later, she shared a verse which ministered powerfully to her and to which she clung onto for her dear life is Psalm 28:7 – *“The LORD is my strength and my shield, my heart trusts in Him and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to Him in song.”* She regained her strength and as soon as she was well enough she asked God to direct her to a church. She searched the local newspaper and decided on one near her home. Today she is growing and serving in that church with her two teenage children.

The third aspect of confessing the Word in our communion with God is to pray the Word for our own spiritual growth. I like this verse in Colossians 1:9-10. I pray this for my own spiritual growth daily and I use this verse to pray for people very often. Colossians 1:9-10 says *“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”*

There are many issues that confront us in life and we will always need these three-fold truths of knowledge, understanding and wisdom to make good and wise choices. Knowledge here refers to specific, factual knowledge regarding that issue. Understanding and especially spiritual understanding means discernment, that is, the ability to know what is from God and what is not from God; and to be able to distinguish good from evil. Evil can sometimes

masquerade as very good and spiritual understanding will help us discern evil though it may appear as something good.

Wisdom is applied knowledge. Where do we get wisdom? Proverbs 9:10 tells us that “*The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.*” Needless to say we need to grow in increasing wisdom. Christ has all the wisdom. He is our wisdom and we are to seek after wisdom as we seek for gold and silver. Besides these three foundational truths for spiritual growth, I also pray daily for God to grant me discretion; favor with Him and with man, the ability to communicate effectively and the fear of God. Do you know that God has promised us favor? Psalm 5:12 says “...*you surround [us] with your favor as with a shield*” and Psalm 84:11 says “*The Lord bestows favor and honor.*” Each time I travel I pray these two Psalm asking God for favor as I pass through immigration, favor so that there will not be unnecessary delays in connecting flights, favor with the people whom I will be meeting and so on.

The last aspect of our confessing the Word with regard to our relationship with God is singing the Word in praise and worship. Hebrews 13:15 has this exhortation that “*Through Jesus, therefore, let us offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess His name.*” Sing the Word. There are many portions of Scripture that have been put into song and we are to sing it, declare it and proclaim it.

**b) Horizontal** – The Bible exhorts us to confess the Word to minister to one another. Jesus was the Word made flesh and He was full of grace and truth (John 1:14). So when we speak to another about Jesus we are ministering the grace and truth of God to that person. The Lord Jesus tells us His earthly agenda in Luke 4:18 - “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are opposed.*” As Jesus Christ’s disciples we have to do the same. One of the goals for this church is for every member to be able to share the Gospel, the Good News. We all need to learn to share the gospel and to actually do it. I met two security guards when I sent my car for servicing. Whilst waiting, a funeral procession went by and one of them turned to me and asked, “Sir, can you live in a house built on a piece of land that had been used as a cemetery?” I don’t know why he asked me that question but my reply to him was “*Sure! What’s the problem? Once you know the Most High God and His name is Jesus Christ. When you believe in Him with all your heart, you fear nothing.*” He was stunned with my answer but his question gave me the perfect opportunity to share the gospel. After that he was called away and the other security guard came and it was another opportunity for conversational evangelism.

You and I are God’s channel or God’s instrument through which the sick can get healed and be saved. I met a man of God, an American-born Chinese

who spent nine years in West Kalimantan sharing the gospel, healing the sick and delivering those who had been demon-possessed. These days he travels to the nations to teach Christians how to minister healing to the sick and to challenge those who come for healing to believe in the God of Elijah. Does it mean that everybody you pray for gets healed? No! Because some of these people have violated laws and principles that God had laid down when He created man and the earth and which we are not aware of. However this should not stop us from praying for the sick and challenging them to put their trust in God. We have various people looking after those who are brokenhearted and our ladies' ministry is doing a great job. We also have a deliverance ministry but I think as a church we need to do much more. More people need to be trained. Would you volunteer yourself to serve God in these areas?

How else are we to minister to one another but by the confession of God's Word? 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us these four things *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."* The Word of God is good for teaching. To teach means to tell someone from God's Word the truth about God, the truth about themselves and the truth about life. Teaching can be done in a formal or informal setting. It can be done to a group or to an individual. For example you can teach someone during a casual conversation that God loves him and God cares for him. Therefore he can learn to literally cast off all anxieties onto God because God cares deeply for him (1 Peter 5:7).

Sometimes the other person needs to be reprimanded or to be rebuke and if we do not do that we are sinning against God. For example you may know of a brother or sister who has been dating a non-believer and over the past few months you see both of them becoming special friends. You have the duty to rebuke this brother or sister. The Scriptures very clearly warns against being yoked together with unbelievers (2 Cor.6:14).

Another passage from Scripture which is a rebuke from the Lord Himself is found in Haggai 1:5-6. The rebuke from the Lord is this – *"...Give careful thought to your way. You planted much, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."* I know of a man who used to earn \$20,000 a month and at the height of his career he has amassed easily \$5 million. However much of it went into investments which have "holes." Today this amount has dwindled to a fraction of this sum. Over the years our relationship strengthened to a comfortable level and having earned the right to rebuke him from this verse. I urged him to get his life in order; to align his life with God's Word and not short-change God in his tithing; warning him that otherwise the remaining monies will be gone.

There are Christians who misunderstand God and who have a warped idea of who God is. Many think God sends illnesses to discipline them or to

make them rest and be quiet. We need to correct all these misconceptions. In Jeremiah 9:24 God categorically says *“Do not misunderstand me. I am the Lord who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth.”* He is not the Father who delights in seeing if you can guess what is on His heart and mind or waits to hit you on the head if you transgressed one of His laws. On the contrary He is the loving, compassionate Father, slow to anger and abounding in love. He is pictured as the loving father looking out all the time for the prodigal son to return. He says to you and me *“Draw near to me and I will draw near to you.”* Would you begin to turn to Him, to return to Him and repent of your sins? Do you believe that the moment we do these things He moves exponentially to our side? Whoever calls on the name of God will be saved. This is our God. Do not misunderstand Him. On the other hand, if we choose to remain in our rebelliousness and our stubborn ways, we will reap what we sow.

Finally the Word trains, instructs us how to live holy lives. 1 Peter 1:15 instructs us to *“be holy in all your conduct.”* Hebrews 1:9 says we are to *“...love righteousness and hate wickedness.”* The entire Bible contains instructions on what holy living looks like.

**c) The spirit realm** - We are to confess the Word to resist the evil one. 1 Peter 5:8 confirms that there is an enemy, the evil one. It warns *“Be self-controlled and alert, your enemy, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”* We have to know and understand that there is a spiritual dimension in this world which is totally different from the physical dimension. Even though the spiritual dimension cannot be seen it is no less real. To illustrate its reality I think of the zillions of bacteria and viruses that are in the air but cannot be seen with the naked eye. If your immunity is weak the probability of you falling sick is extremely high especially if you are exposed to someone who is unwell. However if your immunity is strong, your body will be able to withstand the attacks from these bacteria and viruses.

Likewise we are to build our spiritual immunity and to strengthen it. How do we do that? It involves the exercise of our will. We have to make up our minds to want to resist. The decision to resist has to be done by us. God will not make the decision for us. However before we can even resist it is imperative for us to submit to God (James 4:7). We have to come under God’s covering and receive His instructions. Following which we must be careful to do exactly as He says. The second half of 1 Peter 5:8 tells us to resist the evil one by *“...standing firm in the faith.”* We exercise faith by believing the Word, standing upon it, confessing it in our prayers and finally acting upon it by commanding the evil one to get out of our lives. The power to do this is from God. The authority to do this is also from God. The Lord has appointed each of us to be priest and king. As priest we pray, we confess God’s Word and exercise our faith in the power of the Word. However having prayed we are then to exercise our kingly authority by issuing a command and rebuking the evil one to go.

Recently I met up with a person who had just come back from a missionary trip. While on this trip he met a missionary couple known to the both of us. He reported that the wife whom I had ministered earlier this year is doing very well health-wise. She no longer suffers from irritable bowel syndrome. There has been a breakthrough spiritually as she confesses God's Word in resisting the evil one and commanding the pain to go each time it comes. In my ministering to her; I had found that her mother and several of her siblings have this ailment. It was clearly a consequence of generational sins. She also recalled a time when she went to a particular village in that country where spiritism and witchcraft were being practiced freely. Since that exposure she had been defiled without her knowing. At about that time she and her husband were also rather "dry" spiritually. I led her in repentance, prayer and commanded this illness to go. The healing was progressive and I am very glad to learn that she is doing well both physically as well as spiritually.

Illness is not the only thing that the evil one throws at us. 2 Cor.10:5 tells us to cast *"...down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God ...we take captive every thought in obedience to Christ."* This verse says that the casting down of an entrenched mindset, arguments and every thought which exalts itself against God's Word is from the evil one and we must resist them. Let me tell you this experience I had when I preached at a meeting recently. As I was speaking I noticed this guy sitting at one corner who persisted in talking to his girl friend. It was not easy for me. This was not the first time I had to face this kind of resistance. So I prayed and took authority over the situation saying, *"In the name of Jesus, I tear down the stronghold in that person's life. I tear down that argument, that high thing."* I know this guy to be a believer and so I prayed subsequently for the blood of Christ to cleanse him and her. I prayed for their ears to be consecrated to hear the message which I was preaching and for their hearts to be receptive to God's Word. When I gave the altar call at the end of the message, this couple was one of the first to come to the front to be prayed for. This is the realm of spiritual warfare; of learning to speak forth the Word of God. However there is a price to be paid. The price is diligence in knowing and living out the Word of God. When you live a life that is rooted in the Word and sensitive to the Holy Spirit, the Scripture promise in Matthew 16:19 that *"...whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."* God has given us this key to reclaim our dominion on earth.

## **Conclusion**

Let me summarize by reminding us of the necessity to confess the Word firstly in our relationship with God; secondly as we minister to one another and finally to resist and rebuke the evil one. Each one of us must endeavor to be like

the prophet Samuel. We are told this in 1 Samuel 3:19 – *“The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up and He let none of His Word fall to the ground.”*