



THE POWER OF THE TONGUE: LIFE OR DEATH

Proverbs 18:21

As I sat in the crowded waiting room of the Doctor's office, I suddenly became aware of someone calling out.

"Ma'am, maaa'aaamm!" As I looked around, I noticed an older woman in a wheel chair who was smiling at me as she waved her wrist, showing me her bracelet.

"Our pearl bracelets – they are the same," she exclaimed. I smiled back as I glanced down at my wrist. I nodded, too, not sure if I should reply or my simple acknowledgement by smile and nod was sufficient. However, my new friend with a similar bracelet had a different thought as she took my visual engagement as an invitation to launch into a full story. Wanting to be polite, but not fully involved in the conversation, I continued to nod and smile in all the appropriate places. Inwardly it was a different story as I groaned, hoping my husband's regular checkup would be quick. I needed to be rescued!

I continued to long for escape as her first story led to another, without so much as a pause for breath. And if the abundant words were not enough, I cringed because her words were LOUD. Only two rows of chairs away from me, everyone within a thirty foot perimeter could hear everything she said.

I chided myself at my irritation. Hadn't I just been asking God for a chance to show Him to someone while I waited? So, determining to truly listen, I checked myself back into her story. And with her next sentence, I was so grateful that I did.

"And although they have told me I am terminal...."

Fully engrossed now, I forced an interruption. "Wait! Did you say you are terminal?" I asked. Stopping her narrative for a moment, she replied, "Why, yes, Hon. That is what they tell me."

"But you are so happy," I said, disbelievably.

Now, the entire, captive audience in the waiting room seemed to be listening intently. All phones were laid aside as well as magazines and everyone waited for her next words.

Without taking her eyes from me, she said, "It is going to happen to all of us at some point. Having a timetable gives me an opportunity to ask God every morning to show me His Goodness so I can show it to others."

She continued, never losing her pleasant smile. "I am Catholic, and my faith has really deepened since all this," she explained while gesturing to her wheelchair.

"I'm not perfect; sometimes I have negative thoughts. But now, I don't let them come out of my mouth. That is one thing I do have control of, is what I speak."

A man near her dropped his crutch. She stopped what she was saying as he picked it up and nodded when he said, "Please continue. I want to hear."

"If I have negative thoughts inside me and I don't let them come out of my mouth, they have to go somewhere. So I ask the Holy Spirit to open His Hand and I drop them right in. I let go of them. Then they are not mine anymore, even if I was justified in thinking them. So far, He has taken everything I have given Him."

She continued, "Hon, it is like these pearls." She shook the bracelet again. "These were each formed because of something that the oyster thought was bad, something that was not supposed to be there, something that was not comfortable. But instead of giving up, that oyster made a beautiful pearl."

She shook her wrist one more time.

"I hope that on that day when I get to Heaven, all the challenges in my life here will have become like beautiful pearls on a lustrous necklace I can present to Him."

My eyes misty, I silently nodded. Nearly everyone, including the receptionist, was now listening to her.

"I can't control much in my circumstances but I can control my response to them. And I count my response as my offering back to Jesus. That is the very best I can do. And we have that choice in everything. Every. Single. Thing."

Although I had been the one wanting a rescue not ten minutes earlier, my new friend with pearls on her wrist and pearls in her heart was boldly and sweetly doing the work of a rescuer to all in the waiting room. Everyone was taking an inward inventory of their words, their actions, and their responses to life situations. I had come in to that waiting room hoping to be a blessing and instead received the blessing of having my outlook refocused. God is faithful in all His ways.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

During the 2017 International conference in Richmond, VA, Aglow was re-mantled to finish the work God has given us in the earth. It was said that we have been re-mantled with His Glory that will shift our mindsets to see and think like God sees. Also, think of the truths we have been learning through *Game* and *LifeChangers*.

1. Thinking of this story coupled with the re-mantling with His Glory to shift mindsets, consider the message that is portrayed by Aglow in your community to those who attend the meetings. Take time to have an honest discussion that gives examples where you are excelling in having a right mindset as well as giving examples of places where a new mindset is needed. Make sure to listen to those who attend the meetings, not only those in charge of the meeting.
2. Galatians 5 is an important chapter to us. Verse 16 says, *Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*. If we are not present each moment of the day, it can be easy to 'check out' and not truly engage with those around us. That disengagement can give an impression that we do not want to give in our community. We want to continually be a visual aid of those who live out of the fruit of the Spirit. How can you agree to partner together to express the nature of the New Man in your community so that people are drawn to God within each of you, rather than express the uncaring nature of the Old Man who is often selfish, negative, and judgmental?

3. Proverbs 18:21 is clear in its message that there is power to produce life, as well as power to bring forth death according to the words that we speak out into the atmosphere. *The inner man of the Spirit* – your new man where you are a new creation – *only lives in the Presence of God and only hears the voice of God.*

On the other hand, *the outer man of the soul draws his information from the world around him.* He is easily influenced by negative comments, information, and perceptions. We cannot know the life and the peace of God if our natural, soulish man controls our thinking and our lifestyle. When he is in control, we become vulnerable to worry, to fear, to stress, fretting, and torment. The flesh is vulnerable to the external world where the enemy and the opposition are prevalent. As you begin to understand this, you can see the opposing voices that want to rule your spirituality.

Take time to talk about common phrases that you use daily and determine whether they are from the inner man of the Spirit or the outer man of the flesh. Here are a few phrases to start your thought process:

It has rained for 3 days. I'll be happy if it doesn't rain tomorrow. _____ Soul _____ Spirit

Every time you say that, it makes me mad! _____ Soul _____ Spirit

Yes, I know I'm in a rush, but I have time to listen. _____ Soul _____ Spirit

I am never going to make any progress on this project. _____ Soul _____ Spirit

No matter the obstacles I see, God will make a way for me to be in the meeting. _____ Soul _____ Spirit

My mother suffered from depression at her life. I guess I will, too. _____ Soul _____ Spirit

When I speak out my inheritance scriptures, faith and confidence rises in me. _____ Soul _____ Spirit

Oh brother! Did you hear that news report? Things never change. _____ Soul _____ Spirit

No matter what my circumstances appear to be, I believe what God has spoken. _____ Soul _____ Spirit

Now try a few as a group and see what you can discover about the power of common phrases spoken daily.