



Inner Growth - The Word

Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

1 John 2:7

Think - Proverbs 23:7

Hear - Matthew 13:9

Eyes - Proverbs 21:2, 23:26

Ways - Proverbs 4:26, 16:7

Opinion - 1 King 18:21

Render - Luke 20:25

Defile - Matthew 15:18

The word. People today do not realize that conversations or discussions, chit-chat, small talk, and other forms of communication have brought them to this point in life. The first thing that would come to mind is, "What does that mean?" Whether married or single, rich or poor, good or bad, happy or sad, it is words that brought your life to where you are now. Think about that for a moment: believe it or not, it is true.

The time we were born: the place we come to know, our parents or guardians had to choose and cooperate with the environment we live in and experience right now. All the people we encounter in the past become our friends or enemies, neighbors or strangers. Meeting our

relatives, loved ones, and other family members contributes the most to creating our character. What is the point of all this history lesson? The word influences us when making important decisions in life: not only for the short-term but long-term. The question is: what word are we talking about here? The talk that either leads us on the right path or the wrong path. The word we gain from others through advice, discipline, counseling, meetings, and seminars will all play a role in our daily decision-making. The knowledge of good and evil brings us back to the very beginning with Adam and Eve. They were on the righteous pathway with God in the Garden of Eden until deception and persuasion drastically made things different for humanity.

For believers, the word either builds us or breaks us. That means God's Word will draw us closer to Him or complain and rebel, which turns us away. The Israelites receive deliverance from the Egyptians in Exodus chapter fifteen, verse twenty-two, where Moses brings them from the Red Sea into the wilderness of Shur and discovers after three days: they went without water. They came to Marah, and the water was bitter. Moses cries out to the Lord and provides a tree to cast into the waters to make it sweet. The Israelites receive the word through Moses from God, who provides the water to drink. The word from God came at a crucial point in time for the children of Israel. Even though their first response of murmur came from the Israelites, God knew their ways and conveyed the word through Moses in verse twenty-six of the same chapter. "And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee." This verse

indicates that God was preparing them an opportunity to follow His word from now on by obeying it and taking heed to the example of Pharaoh and the people of Egypt when they decided not to comply: you lose out with God.

The word involves thinking that begins when God's Word is received. What happens now? All the processes and activity operates from the mind. After the reception, inside our intellect is where the examination, evaluation, and development occur. The results are we accept or reject, use or refuse, take it on or take it out. An example is someone receiving a gift from another person. The first thing we do is examine the present: we look in detail to determine if the item will benefit us now or later. If we approve, the plans and organizing will develop and operate for us to benefit from it. However, if not, the pursuit will not go further, and the item will be stored or given away to someone else. Nehemiah prayed to God concerning building the walls of Jerusalem and presented this project to King Artaxerxes. Praying for something and the timing of it requires patience with God, for He knows all things, and His timing is always perfect. However, in chapter two, verses four through five, the evidence of Nehemiah's thinking and speaking to the King about the matter came to fruition. Eventually, he puts his thoughts into action and visits Jerusalem, as proven in verse eleven. Then Nehemiah continues in faith and begins the preparation in verses twelve through fifteen.

Nehemiah's approach included God at the beginning of his mission. He was no lone ranger trying to do something on his own. Nehemiah seeks the Creator from the start, which helps create the situation for God to intervene on his behalf. Despite this rebuilding of the Jerusalem walls, sometimes there will be an opposition that attempts to hinder what God already ordains, as stated in verse nineteen: with

the faithful response from Nehemiah in the last verse of the chapter.

The word is hearing what is said. In the first part of Exodus fifteen, verse twenty-six, as mentioned earlier, God addresses the Israelites through Moses, "If they earnestly hear His voice." For believers, it is a choice. The benefits will enable the believer to do right in the sight of God. Giving the ears to listen will help keep the commandments and His statutes.

There is an old saying when parents speak to their children in the West Indies, "Why are your ears so hard?" Meaning they are so solid that no one can get through them. That is how former believers become backsliders because they did once listen to the word until they stopped listening. We have five senses and four functions on our face: eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. However, the ears out of the senses cannot close even if we use our hands to cover them.

In the New Testament, several similar verses include "ears to hear, let him hear." Two are in Matthew: eleven fifteen and thirteen nine. Three are in Mark: four nine, four twenty-three, seven sixteen, and Revelation thirteen nine, respectively. These verses act as the matching bookend to the introduction of the parable. In several, Jesus starts with the command to listen and ends with the directive to hear. Listening is to catch the words of the speaker: hearing is to have the words in hand so you can analyze the message. The word involves the eyes, which are the window to our soul. What we let in through the eye gate could impact our relationship with God. Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, enjoying the creation of what the Creator provided. The sin occurs after the serpent deceptively responds to her about the tree of good and evil. However, the top part in verse six of chapter three declares what happens: "And when the woman saw that the tree

was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes."

Some people see things in their life pathways and attempt to follow through with them instead of using the word that would prohibit them not. For example, those who have broken the law may face incarceration for robbery, fraud, or harassment. They know the word in terms of the law, but their eyes deceptively lead them into wrongdoing, jeopardizing themselves. Samson, in Judges chapters thirteen through sixteen, knew the word but did not have regard for it. Instead, his eyes led him to meet Delilah, who made him lose them.

The word is the way. When walking, a person who deliberately considers where they step is far less likely to stumble or to fall into a trap. Believers in life are on the path and should follow in scripture beginning with Proverbs four twenty-seven. We should not make hasty decisions but discern the Lord's will before doing anything. In the first part of John fourteen verse six, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." As believers, God's word must lead us and not vice versa. In Exodus, chapter eighteen, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, the priest of Midian, came to visit him after the victory God gave them against Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The following day, Jethro got to see and experience how Moses managed the people that sat before him from morning until evening. In verse seventeen, "And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone." God helps Moses through Jethro's advice to conduct the people in the way that would preserve him.

The word could be in the form of two opinions. There will always be two opinions that will come to us: one that will

come to our mind, the other through our spirit. In other words, people refer to the cartoon with the little angel coming on our right side while the little demon is on the left. The enemy will use his words to persuade us with temptation through the flesh to submit to sin. On the other hand, God will help believers through His word via the Bible or the Holy Spirit to connect to us through the inner person.

In First Kings, chapter thirteen, one through thirty, the man of God from Judah experienced where he received the word from God. King Jeroboam offers the man of God to come home with him after the miracle he receives. However, the man of God responds in verse nine, "For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest." Little further in the chapter, an old prophet heard the works of the man of God from Judah did and ask, which way did he go? The old prophet finds him, and after conversing with the man of God, he replies, "He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.

The word will present itself, and the person will decide whether to accept or reject it, which could lead to an unexpected path. In chapter thirteen of First Kings, the man of God had to make a decision. Either to go with the old prophet or not. What led to his contemplating might be the influence of the old prophet's lie. "He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water." What convinces the man of God to go back with the prophet? The fact could be the old prophet mentioned being a prophet himself, and the angel speech could have

persuaded the man of God to go with him. The incident might not seem fair, but God did manifest the word earlier to him about stopping to go to someone's home to eat during the journey.

The word that comes out of the mouth has the potential to contaminate the soul. Remember, our conversation can help or hurt us in the long run. Every person, especially Christians, will hear profanity, gossiping, and arguments in the form of words that would be difficult to tolerate. The main thing is not to mimic or say anything out of the mouth when temptation arises to force you to commit. Many people encounter disagreements, disappointments, letdowns, confrontations, and other situations where the person wants to fight. Any verbal expressions coming in through the ears and words between two people get out of control.

The old saying, "Sticks and stones will break our bones, but names will never hurt me." Wrong! They will hurt. Many couples get destroyed over words exchanged, and the sad part is no one can take them back. Apologies are bandaids over a wound. However, it will eventually heal, but the scar will be there.

Words brought us and eventually will take us somewhere. Our speech we are justified, and through the word condemnation. Still, where will it take us eternally in the end?