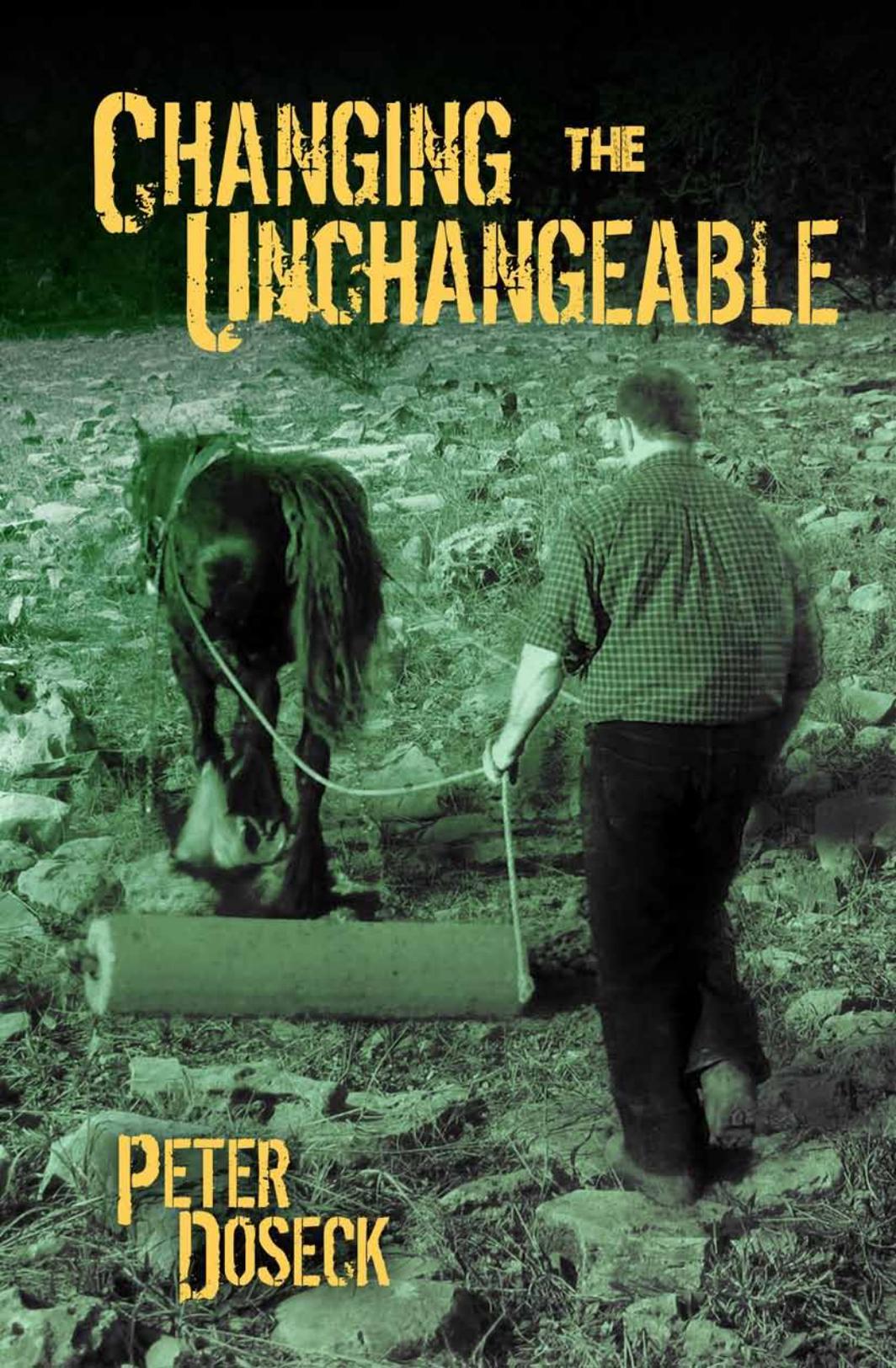


CHANGING THE UNCHANGABLE

A man in a plaid shirt is seen from behind, leading a pack animal (possibly a mule or horse) on a rocky, uneven trail. The animal is carrying a large, rectangular object on its back. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment with sparse vegetation and many rocks.

PETER
DOSECK

*Changing
the Unchangeable*

*by
Peter Doseck*

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PETER DOSECK

PETER DOSECK MINISTRIES
13815 BOTKINS RD
BOTKINS, OH 45306

937.693.3554
PETERDOSECK.COM
CONTACT@PETERDOSECK.COM

Peter Doseck

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CHAPTER ONE

WORDS ARE SPIRITUAL CONNECTORS

There is nothing more frustrating in life than when we run up against an obstacle that simply will not budge. It's the kind of thing that can make us question our purpose and begin to wonder if we are on the right track. Surely, if we were doing what God wanted us to do everything would be going great, right? Not necessarily.

We can be on the right track and doing all the right things, but still unnerving obstacles and difficult circumstances will seem to drag us down. Why is this? Can we overcome such things, or do we have to accept our fate and live with problems as if nothing in life can ever change?

Here's the good news - everything in your life is changeable, if you know the secret to change. Change does not come easily, and it does not come for those who sit idly by expecting someone else to deal with their issues.

Change comes to those who go after it, to those who know the principles behind it, and to those who will be relentless in their pursuit of it. Does this describe you? I certainly hope so!

Change is a wonderful thing when you discover the keys are at your fingertips. No one wants change in your life right now more than God does, and when you come to this revelation, a peace that passes

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understanding will guard your heart and your mind as you face the challenges ahead.

God has great things in store for you, and He is eagerly awaiting that first and hardest step, the one which will launch you on a journey of transformation. Are you ready? Let's go!

The Power of God's Word

God's Word is amazing. It shines forth in our lives as an evidence-producing statement of faith for all the world to see.

The Word was the dynamic force behind the creation of the earth in Genesis. It was the supreme covenant that provided for the patriarchs of old. It was the miracle-producing power that confirmed every word Jesus ever spoke. And most importantly it was the resurrecting authority that brought Him back to life on the third day.

Jeremiah 1:12 says: "Then said the Lord unto me, You have well seen: for I will hasten My Word to perform it."

The Word of God has the capacity to change your life. It's not just a theoretical capacity, but an actual power and authority. God is personally watching over His Word to perform it because He desires more than anything to bring every promise to pass in your life. His intended purpose is that every promise would produce in you through faith in His living, breathing, life-giving Word.

Not one of God's words, not one of His statutes or judgments, and not one of His decrees or

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proclamations will remain unfulfilled in your life, as long as one vital condition is met. You must know how to unleash the power of the Word, and in order to do that you must understand how it works.

To unveil this understanding, let's begin by looking closely at the most basic record of God's Word producing in your life.

It was a great and notable day. There you were, living between Heaven and hell, blissfully unaware of your precarious state. It was in this moment of your greatest uncertainty that you first heard the message of salvation.

An amazing thing happened. You heard the Word preached, and you received it by faith. "Wow! Jesus really did die for me!", you thought.

The next thing that happened was even more remarkable than the first. After you believed, you confessed with your own mouth that Jesus was the Son of God, that He died for your sins and was raised up on the third day, and that He was the Lord of your life. When you did these things together, you were saved!

Before this moment you were cursed, but afterward you were blessed. At the precise instant of your salvation the Word changed a liar into a truth teller, a taker into a giver, an evil intent into a kind heart, and a foolish mind into a wise one. You received the abundance of God's grace and glory, and you were brand new. Talk about change!

A powerful transformation came about because you were born again by a force untamable, by a power unseen, and by an authority not granted by

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mankind. You were born again by the unlimited, immutable, and incorruptible seed of the Word of God. You went from death to life, from cursing to blessing, from unsaved to saved, and from an enemy of God to a child of the King.

This transformation made you a new creature in Christ Jesus, someone who never existed before. Your heart that once seemed made of stone was molded into a soft, pliable putty in the hands of God.

How did this wonderful thing happen? How did you, a mere mortal, merit this awesome experience? It came to you because of a simple seed.

What if you had a whole bunch of seeds like this first one? But wait, you do! It's called the Bible, and it is jam-packed with life-giving, God-empowered, faith-infused seeds.

What do you suppose the potential would be for a man who sowed this kind of seed in his life? What could he accomplish? What could he change about his existence? Could he transform only one thing, or could he be a continual sower of the Word, and therefore a continuous reaper of God's grace, glory, and transformation?

2 Corinthians 9:6 says: "He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

Here's the question of the day. Do you sow the Word much in your life, or do you sow the Word little? What are you doing with what you have been given since the great and notable day of your salvation? Can your first successful sowing experience, the one that came about before you knew a thing about spiritual

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matters, ever be truly duplicated? The answers may surprise you.

We Speak, We Sow

Romans 10:8 says: "The Word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." Notice the Word is in your mouth.

So far you have learned two important things about the Word. You know it is a seed, and now you know it is in your mouth. If this is true then it stands to reason that you sow the Word when you release it from your mouth by speaking it. You literally sow the Word of God when you say it, just as you did when you got saved.

This is powerful stuff, which begs me to ask, what kind of things are being sown from your mouth? Are they the life-producing seeds of the Word of God, or are they the death-producing seeds of the world? Are your words born of the multiplying power of your Heavenly Father, or are they born of the deceitfulness of riches, the lust of other things, and the cares of this life entering in?

Deuteronomy 30:19 says: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live." The choice between life and death for you and your seed is up to you. The sowing is up to you, which means the harvest and the outcome are also up to you.

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The truth is you always sow seeds when you express words. They can be words of life from the scripture, or words of death that merely repeat the facts of your circumstances over and over again. The Bible calls repeating the facts of your circumstances murmuring, and if you check the record of the Israelites in the wilderness, God does not tolerate murmuring very well.

You can let go of murmuring with one decision and instead choose to release the seed of the Word with your mouth, just as God did in Genesis 1:3 when He said, "Let there be light!" You can release the seed of the Word with your mouth just as God did when He promised the seed of the woman would someday crush the power and authority of the devil. You can release the seed of the Word with your mouth just as Jesus did when He calmed the storm.

Jesus said something very strange one time, but it is the first of many keys when it comes to understanding how we can change things in our lives. He said you can move a mountain if you will "say to the mountain".

Let's read the whole thing. Mark 11:23 says: "For truly I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be removed, and be cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he says shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he says."

Notice He didn't say to pray to God about the mountain, or to wish for the removal of the mountain. No, He said you have to say something to the mountain yourself. This is powerful. If we are to

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believe Jesus, we have to believe that the choice to plant or to withhold the seed of the Word is ours to make, just as the choice to “say to the mountain” or to simply keep still is also ours to make.

Making Connections

Since our words seem to be so powerful, then we need to look carefully at what we say and why. Words are designed with a purpose, and that purpose is to make connections. Sometimes those connections are earthly or physical in nature, and sometimes they are spiritual. No matter the connecting point, every spoken word crosses a threshold to an important area in your life.

Words can open doors, and they can also close them, such as when a soft answer turns away wrath. In contrast, a harsh word will ignite anger, which will open a door for an outcome that you do not want. This is why you must choose your words carefully.

1 Corinthians 14:10 says: “There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.”

Every verbal expression has a purpose behind it. Sometimes the purpose is your choice, but sometimes the purpose is more obscure, such as when the devil tempts you to say something to sow trouble in your life. His desire is to get you to plant a seed which will bring a harvest you do not want.

This is why the enemy is constantly trying to get you to say something off the cuff without the instruction of the Lord. His goal is not only the

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immediate offense of the one hearing you speak, but the seed planting that will manifest future trouble.

Proverbs 18:20 says: "A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled." Words produce the fruit of your mouth. They are spiritual connectors that bring things to pass in your life, either good things when used wisely, or evil things when used unwisely. If you are wise, the fruit of your mouth will come from the seed of the Lord, which is His Word, and you will speak what God tells you to say.

But what does God tell you to say? Does He come down in the morning and give you a script for the day? In a way, He does, because God gives you words to say in His Word.

You can certainly rise up every morning and reach for the Bible, understanding that as you speak what God has said in His written Word, you will be sowing His spoken words. When you speak the Word, you will say what God would say if He was standing in the room with you. When this happens, get ready, because something outstanding is about to take place.

Psalms 45:1 says: "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." This is a big truth, and the quicker you grasp it the better off you will be. Here's my interpretation of this verse: "Your tongue writes directives in the realm of the kingdom of God, in the realm of the kingdom of darkness, or in the realm of humanity. When you say something, you are writing out instructions which will produce a future outcome."

This is important, so let me explain it. When

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you read God's Word, and then you speak it, you are writing a decree in the heavenlies. You are saying, "God is my supplier and my master, and you, circumstances, will not dominate me. God will fulfill what He has said about my life!"

In contrast, if you don't speak the Word but you instead speak fear, you are writing this note to the devil: "Faith is not here. I want to be separated from God and dominated by you."

I don't ever want to be caught in the trap of the enemy. I want to speak the Word, expect the results of the Word, and experience the outcome of the Word every single day of my life!

CHAPTER TWO
THE SEED PROCESS

Early spring is a great time of year for me. The trees bud, the first flowers of the season break open the soil and bloom, and all around there is a feeling of blessing and regeneration. It's kind of like the earth takes a deep breath and sighs in relief for the passing of winter. This by far is my favorite kind of change.

I'm not a big fan of winter. It's not so much the snowfall or the darkness that comes too early in the evening that bothers me, but it's the sense of deadness I don't like. I don't like empty branches in the trees or dormant grass in my yard. I like things to be green and full of life. In other words, I do not like barrenness.

In the Hebrew understanding of the word to be barren is to be sterile, to be impaired as if one cut a hamstring, or to disable God-given potential. Barrenness is a crippling state set in motion by an enemy. It is an undoing of the process a seed has started, striking at the root in order to form a stronghold of destruction. No matter how you describe it, barrenness is not a good thing.

Here's what God says about barrenness: "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if you hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord your God shall keep unto you the covenant and the mercy which He swore unto your fathers. And He will love you, and

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bless you, and multiply you: He will also bless the fruit of your womb, and the fruit of your land, your corn, and your wine, and your oil, the increase of your kine, and the flocks of your sheep, in the land which He swore unto your fathers to give you. You shall be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle." (Deuteronomy 7:12-14)

God promised the children of Israel there would be no barrenness in their lives if they would simply comply with His judgments, His statutes, and His ways. This promise is not just for them, but it is also for those of us who are His children today.

Barrenness is the exact opposite of God's nature. He is a seed producer, while barrenness is a seed destroyer. God is a seed multiplier, while barrenness is a seed eliminator. Since we are God's offspring, He desires for us to be as He is - productive and fruitful, not barren and hopeless.

The Power of the Seed

Mark 4:14 reveals the most powerful seed ever sown. It says: "The sower sows the Word." We already learned that God's Word, spoken by you, is a seed that is planted in your life. Now let's expand what we know.

Later in the passage in verse 20 Jesus said: "And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the Word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

The Word that you plant in good soil will bring

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forth fruit according to your capacity. 30-fold is good, but 100-fold is better. The difference between the two has to do with your faith, your understanding, and your persistence. The seed is the same, God's Word, but the results are entirely up to you.

Much to our dismay, the seed process is a two-sided coin. Just as it works on the good side, it also works on the bad side. What God desires for your life will come to pass through planting His Word. By the same token what the devil plans for your life will also come to pass by planting seeds.

Jesus described this principle in the parable of the wheat and the tares. In His teaching a man sowed a field with good seed, expecting a good harvest. While he slept, however, his enemy sowed bad seed. At harvest time not only did the good seed bring forth fruit, but the bad seed also sprang up for a harvest in the very same field.

This reveals an important fact. Your field is under attack. Just as an enemy had sown tares in the night while the man in the parable slept, the enemy is attempting to sow bad seed in your life while you slumber. In places where you are unfocused or unaware, he is creeping in, looking for untended soil where he can plant.

Often barrenness is not about empty land; it's about soil that has been planted with the wrong seed. Barrenness is a state of unfruitfulness as far as the kingdom of God is concerned. Unfortunately, it is possible for you to be unfruitful in Kingdom principles while at the same time you are very fruitful in the world system.

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To break the power of barrenness you must put something in your ground that is greater than what is there now, because barrenness refuses to relinquish its hold unless forced to by something greater than itself. The process is really very simple. You need to plant the seed of the Word of God in your life daily because the Word is powerful enough to overcome the barrenness produced by every bad seed, if it is planted consistently.

You need to put the Word in you every day. Every day! Not once a week when the pastor gives a message. Not once in awhile when you feel like it, but every day!

The enemy knows full well that he does not have to attack and overpower you in every area in order to get you to fail. All he has to do is keep you from reading the Word.

No matter how mature in the Lord you are, your pathway to fruitfulness and your ability to stay free from the devastating effects of barrenness are found in the Word of God. Prayer is great, but it is the seed of the Word that produces fruit. Counsel and wisdom are necessary, but they do not come from fellowship alone; they come from the scriptures.

Anytime you believe God spoke to you in prayer and told you to do something, you must immediately check it with the Word before you act because the Word is the voice of the Lord. The voice of your own conscience, your own will, and your own desire can come through your mind in a time of prayer, masking itself as the voice of God, but the Word will keep you on the straight and narrow path.

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Don't get me wrong. Your fellowship with the Father and your prayer time are crucial, but you should always check everything you think you hear with the Word, because God will never contradict Himself. What He says in prayer He has already said in the Word. Anything else is likely your mind entering into the conversation in disguise.

Get Rid of the Weeds

If you look at your life and see things that are producing the wrong kind of fruit, don't panic. We all have to judge ourselves, assess what we find, and prayerfully reconsider our ways.

When you find areas of need, you cannot waste your time focusing on how you got where you are, on the weaknesses that are active in your life, or on the sense of disappointment that seeks to overwhelm you. Concentrating on what is wrong will do nothing to reverse the barrenness that has gained a foothold in you any more than being sad over the weeds in your lawn will uproot them and get them out of your sight.

Getting the weeds out of a lawn and getting barrenness out of a life takes work, lots of hard work. And here's an important key: when you uproot something you have to immediately put something else in its place; otherwise, the weeds will shoot back up and seek to overtake the empty spot again.

Lawn care experts will tell you the best way to have a healthy lawn is to sow good grass seed and feed it so that it will grow up thick. Your grass needs a

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strong root system to help keep the weeds down. You can kill dandelions a thousand times, but until you increase the root system of your grass and eliminate the space for the dandelion, it will be back the first time a tiny, unwanted seed comes wafting by.

The same is true for you. You cannot allow an empty spot to have a place in your heart. When you uproot bad seed, you've got to plant good seed right away.

Instead of concentrating on the barrenness the bad plantings in your life have caused, you need to focus on planting good seeds that will build strong root systems in the soil of your heart. If you sow good seed in your life, the seed of the Word of God, the unwanted growth will be choked out eventually. It won't happen overnight, so you'll need a good dose of faith and patience, just as the homeowner needs lots of patience to get the manicured lawn he desires.

You also have to understand why the enemy plants weeds in your life. The truth is, you are unimportant to the devil without seed, but the minute you drop the seed of the Word into the soil of your heart you become a danger to him. You become a potential stronghold of the Word in the earth, a "Junior Jesus" if you will, and Satan cannot tolerate the thought of it.

This is why he will launch an attack, and he will plant seeds of discord, trial, hardship, lack, sickness, weariness, distractions, the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches. He will dump the kitchen sink in your life garden, and he will wait to see what takes root. His plan is not to choke you per se, because

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he really does not care about you one way or another, but he is dedicated to creating an environment that will choke the Word.

It's the good seed that makes you fruitful or the lack of the good seed that makes you barren. When attacks come, you must keep planting the Word, keep sowing the seed, keep watering it, feeding it, and watching over it. Keep planting day in and day out because it is the seed process that will transform you. It is the seed process that will produce dramatic change.

The seed process will provide blessing, health, deliverance, freedom, joy, unity, and victory in your life. Keep planting the Word, and eventually, the good seed will overpower every evil seed the enemy has sown.

Overcoming Barrenness

The story of the birth of the prophet Samuel is one of my favorites. His mother Hannah was wise beyond her years, and though she was barren, she understood one of the great mysteries of the seed process. You can read the whole story in 1 Samuel 1:1-20, but I'm going to give you my paraphrase here.

Hannah was the wife of a man named Elkanah, and he loved her dearly. Hannah brought so much to the marriage; everything it seemed that Elkanah could want, except for children. Hannah was barren, and it grieved her greatly. To make matters worse Elkanah had another wife who had given him children, and although he showered Hannah with gifts, he could

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not seem to convince her that she pleased him.

There came a time when Elkanah and all of his family went to Shiloh to offer the yearly sacrifice. His other wife was making Hannah especially miserable on the trip, and one day Elkanah found Hannah weeping. He asked her why she was crying, and when she explained how bad she felt about her barrenness he tried to reassure her by saying, "Am I not better to you than ten sons?" But Hannah was not comforted.

Later she went to prayer, and the Bible says she wept bitter tears. Eli the priest was sitting nearby as Hannah prayed, and he watched as she made a vow to the Lord. She said, "O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Your handmaid, but will give unto Your handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."

Imagine the heaviness of heart and the deep longing that would make a woman who wanted children so badly decide to offer her firstborn to the Lord in exchange for His blessing. Hannah was asking for more than a son; she was asking for a divine seed.

As Hannah prayed, Eli managed to make matters worse by accusing her of being a drunkard. He saw her lips moving as she prayed silently, and so he growled, "How long will you be drunk? Put away your wine from you!"

Hannah had to defend herself and explain what she was doing. Eli reluctantly replied, "Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant you your petition that you

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have asked of Him." Hannah then said, "Let your handmaid find grace in your sight." When she left, the Bible says she was no longer sad.

It wasn't long before Hannah conceived, and nine months later she gave birth to Samuel who would become a mighty prophet before the Lord. Samuel was sown as a sacrifice, and he was multiplied in grace. It was much the same way when God sowed His firstborn Son as a sacrifice, and He was multiplied in grace. Hannah's seed brought grace and favor to her household and to the nation of Israel, while God's seed brought grace and favor to all of mankind.

Hannah overcame barrenness in her life by sowing a seed. In a show of love and mercy that only God can give, after Hannah fulfilled her vow to dedicate Samuel to the Lord she went on to have five more children. Five just happens to be the number of grace. What a tremendous blessing!

We can learn from Hannah's example. If we will sow seeds, even in our desperate times of lack and famine, our barrenness will be broken, and we will move into an area of grace and blessing. We have a choice. We can ask for seed, and when we sow it we can expect a graceful harvest just like Hannah's. Or we can withhold our seed and be dependent on what our own strength can provide. I think I like Hannah's way better.

The Time Factor

There was a seed race in the earth one time. The devil planted a seed in man in the Garden of Eden

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that promised to grow up to produce destruction and eternal damnation. At the same time God made a covenant with man that guaranteed the seed of a woman would one day crush the head of the devil. God's seed was planted by His words, and the enemy's seed was planted by Adam bowing the knee to sin.

The race was on, and the plantings of each tussled back and forth over a 4,000 year period. It seemed at times as if God had left the race and given mankind over to the enemy. But then one day the seed of God, also known as the Word, was made flesh. He came and dwelt among us. He grew up, gave His life as a ransom, and then sprang to life out of a seemingly irreversible death. At last the planting of the Lord overcame the planting of the devil.

It did not matter how long it took for the seed to produce a harvest. I'm sure to the casual observer God appeared to be long gone from the scene, but His Word was still growing, still digging its root system deeper and deeper into the earth. When on the outside it seemed as if nothing was changing, on the inside, in the realm of the Spirit, God's Word was destined to prevail.

The same is true for you. No matter how long it takes, God's Word will always prevail. No matter what it looks like to the untrained onlooker, behind the scenes God is moving, His Word is producing, and the enemy's planting is about to lose the battle.

Isaiah 55:10-11 says: "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread

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to the eater: so shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Notice there is no time limit in this scripture. There's no reference to a clock, a day-timer, or a calendar app. Time to God means nothing. He is prepared to stay the course for as long as it takes. He is ready to watch over His Word forever, if that's what you need to reach the victory. He is ready for the battle, but the question is, are you?

It's time for you to put seed in the ground and let it produce after its own kind. Let it do what God created it to do while you keep your faith pressed toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. You are called to bear much fruit. Let your call arise!

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CHAPTER THREE

CONTROL OF THE SEED

In Genesis chapter 47 there is an unusual story. There was a famine in the land of Egypt. There had been no rain for some time, and there was overwhelming barrenness, lack, and need among the people.

Joseph was the second in command in Egypt, and as such he had control over the resources of the entire country. He controlled all of the public land, and he had wisely collected all of the money, cattle, and flocks in the nation in exchange for bread the previous year.

By the time Genesis 47 came around, the people were desperate. They had no food, no livestock, and no money.

Which brings us to verses 18 & 19 which say: "When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also has our herds of cattle; there is nothing left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands. Wherefore shall we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate."

I cannot fathom the desperation that would drive a man to sell himself and his land in exchange

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for something as simple as a seed. The people even offered to plant and work the land they were giving up, reaping a harvest as slaves instead of as landowners.

Joseph wisely bought up all of the privately owned farmland in Egypt in exchange for seed. He reorganized the people to his advantage, and he made the most of the opportunity. In a very short period of time Joseph became more influential than anyone in Egypt had ever been, simply because he was the only one who was holding seed in his hand.

This story reveals a powerful principle. The one who holds the seed determines what will happen in life. It's not the one who owns the land who rules, but the one who controls the seed. If someone can take seed away from you, they can determine whether you will live or die. They can decide whether you will thrive or fail. They can set the course for your life, and they can move you to and fro at their command.

This is why the devil comes after your seed. He knows if he can disrupt the seed process, or if he can plant his own weedy patch to overtake what is growing in your life, he can determine where you will live and what you will have. He can move you to his advantage, and he can own you in due time.

The Plans of the Enemy

There is a fight in your life that rages every single day. It is a fight for the control of the seed of the Word. We discover the key to this fight in Mark 4:13-20 where Jesus said: "Do you not know this parable?"

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And how then will you know all parables? The sower sows the Word. These are they by the way side, where the Word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan comes immediately, and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts.

"And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the Word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution arises for the Word's sake, immediately they are offended.

"And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the Word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the Word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

This passage of scripture lays out the battle plan for control of your seed. If you can grasp it and avoid the pitfalls the enemy has designed to ensnare you with, you can win the fight and retain control of what is most important to you, which is your ability to produce a harvest.

The first thing I notice about the devil's plan is that he "comes immediately" to take away the Word that is sown in your heart. The minute you sow the Word, look out. Get ready to rumble because the devil will race to disrupt the seed process before it has truly started. Don't let him succeed!

When you sow the Word, instantly set your

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mind to protect it. Put a guard on your heart, your mind, and most of all your mouth. If you know the attack is coming, you can withstand it, and if you can withstand the first wave, the next wave won't seem so bad.

The second kind of attack comes in the form of persecution and affliction. Notice they "arise for the Word's sake." This is significant because it shows you that Satan is out to destroy the Word, not you. He may take you down in the process, but you are not his priority. His purpose is to rip the Word out of your heart and to create a stronghold of barrenness in your life.

As we read on we see that persecution and affliction come to create offense. Notice the Bible says, "immediately they are offended." Not next week or even tomorrow, but immediately. Persecution and affliction enter your life to produce immediate offense.

The devil wants you to be mad at people, mad at God, or even mad at yourself. He couldn't care less about the target of your offense; he just wants you to be upset about someone or something because he knows if he can distract you this way, you will run down the wrong path targeting the wrong enemy, and he will be able to disrupt the seed process by getting you sidetracked and fighting a shadow foe. Don't let him get away with it!

Next, the devil will try to use "the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in" to catch you off-guard. These are the things that may seem normal to you,

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but they are very dangerous. You may have gotten used to living with them, but they are not from God, and you are not called to live in the midst of them.

Let me bring this down home. Why do you think your kids have soccer leagues that play on Sunday mornings? To choke the Word. I believe the escalation of moral decay in our country is a direct result of the increase of Sunday morning activities that take place when the Word of God is supposed to be planted, watered, and increased in our lives. He's after the Word, friend!

No wonder kids are dropping out of church at such a high rate after they graduate. They have been seeded with "family time" instead of with the Word of God. It looks good on the outside, but on the inside it is a care of this world or a lust of other things, depending on the hold it has on you, and it is choking the Word.

The cares of this world can be trouble and tribulation, but they can also be the simple busyness of life. Don't let yourself get too busy for the Word. Don't schedule so much in your day that it pushes the Word right out of the picture. Get in the Word, even on the busiest of days, and you will build a hedge of protection around your life and family.

The deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things can include money and riches. They can also include the pursuit of success, a desire for a more prominent career, the accumulation of things so that others will think well of you, and a host of other distractions. Don't let your desire for the good life choke the Word. The only truly good life comes from

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your connection to and dependence on the Word of God. Anything else is a poor imitation.

You have to understand that the devil is not after your stuff, but he is after your power source. The deceitfulness of riches is not so much a ploy to get your money; it is a ploy to disrupt the seed process. The cares of this life are not launched to simply distract you; they are sent to put a halt to the growth of your seed. Even the lust of other things is not sent just so you'll sin; it is sent to get you to abort the seed process.

The good news is found in the last portion of our scripture. The Word in seed form always carries 100-fold potential. The Word of God lacks nothing, but your harvest is dependent on how and where you sow it.

You can receive a 30-fold harvest, a 60-fold harvest, or a 100-fold harvest. You get to choose. God gives seed to the sower, but the harvest is dependent on your diligence to sow it, your commitment to water it, your persistence to uproot the weeds around it, and your steadfast faithfulness to see it through to the harvest.

God is the seed multiplier, but you are the seed planter. Remember, you sow the Word when you speak it. Sow the Word, speaking it consistently in your daily walk with God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. The fight is on, but now that you know the plan of the enemy, you will be equipped to win!

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Like Rain and Snow

Isaiah 55:7-11 says: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

We already read most of this scripture before, but it is so important, I wanted to approach it again from a different angle.

Consider this. Words are like rain and snow in the way they function. They fall on the just and the unjust alike. There are the words of God, the words of the enemy, and the words of man. All three are coming your way like rain and snow every day. You must discern each one and decide what you will allow to be planted in your life.

Galatians 6:7 says: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he

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also reap." You could say it this way, "Whatever a man allows to be sown, that is the harvest he will become and reap."

If you allow yourself to be seeded with criticism, you will become a critic. If you allow yourself to be seeded with fear of lack, you will become a well-spring of poverty. If you allow yourself to be seeded with condemnation, you will always be a condemned Christian, thinking yourself no better than "a sinner saved by grace".

The same is true for offense, unforgiveness, hatefulness, bitterness, anger, and confusion. Whatever words you sow or allow to be sown in you will bring forth a harvest in your life.

We all need to look at our lives and ask, "Who seeded me?" Whatever you were seeded with in the past is what you are right now. You must recognize where the seed was planted, by whom and when, and then you must reverse your course by planting new seed as soon as you can.

Proverbs 4:20-22 says: "My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh."

The three seed receptors described in this passage of scripture are the ear, the eye, and the mind. What your seed receptors allow into your life is totally up to you. You decide what words you will hear, what images you will see, and what thoughts you will consider every day.

Your seed receptors are connected to your human

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spirit. This is why the Bible tells you that you speak out of the abundance of your heart. Whatever you allow yourself to be seeded with will hibernate in your heart, germinate, and produce some type of fruit. When that fruit reaches a full manifestation, it will explode out of your mouth, and it will reseed your heart, much like grass that goes to seed and re-sows your lawn again and again.

You may think, "Oh, but people just say things, and I hear them. It's not my fault." I disagree. You control the seed receptors of your life. You decide what gets in, and you decide what you will keep out. You may not be able to choose who you sit beside at work, but you can decide if what they say will be allowed an entrance into your heart and mind.

No one ever wakes up one morning and says, "I think I'll be bitter today." If it was that obvious, we would all resist it. Bitterness begins with a seed. It begins with a single word that enters in by way of one of your seed receptors.

Maybe someone says a cruel word about a Christian acquaintance. When you hear it you should say immediately, "I am not going to allow this to remain in my heart because we don't do this as brothers and sisters in the Lord", but you don't. Instead you let the conversation linger in your mind, and you think on it later, forming a more complete opinion about what was said.

Then you think on it some more, and you begin to agree with what you heard. You even remember a time when the person did something you didn't like, and it made you uncomfortable to be around her.

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Suddenly, in your mind this person deserves what was said.

The evil words that were sown in you keep growing and growing, and you keep adding fuel to the fire, until one day you blurt out to your husband, "Do you know Sister DoLittle? Did you know she did such and such?" Now you've moved the thought from your heart to your mouth, and when you did you reseeded yourself all over again. Only this time the patch of land occupied by the weeds will be bigger than it was in the beginning, and it will soon overtake your heart if you aren't careful.

Go back to Isaiah 55:10. Words are like rain and snow. You can quickly go from hearing something to thinking on it, from thinking on it to saying it, from saying it to rethinking it, from rethinking it to saying it again, and from saying it again to spilling it over into the lives of others, contaminating their heart with the woeful words of your bitter mouth. Don't do it, my friend. Don't do it!

Protect your heart from the planting of bad seed by immediately rejecting evil words when someone tries to sow them in you. If you do, your heart will produce an abundance of joy, but if you fail to protect yourself you will become a carrier of death and destruction, and joy will be far from you.

This is serious stuff, and we would all do well to be more careful about what words we allow ourselves to hear, think upon, and say.

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Patience with the Process

If you are living in a level of success that you are not happy with, start reseeded yourself. Begin sowing the scriptures in your heart that you want to see manifested in your life.

Do you want to be healed? Start sowing words of healing. Do you want to be blessed? Start sowing words of blessing. Do you want your family to be saved? Start sowing seeds of faith for your family's salvation.

Have you become loveless, cold, and indifferent? Start sowing love scriptures in your heart again. Sow joy if you have none. Sow peace if you are worried. Sow strength scriptures if you are weak and weary. Whatever you want to harvest, you must first sow.

The natural seed process is a mystery to us, but we know it works. We plant a tomato seed, and a tomato plant springs up in our garden. We water it, we pull the weeds around it, we feed it, and we wait.

While we wait we go to work, take care of our families, and go to sleep every single night, having absolutely no clue how the fruit will grow, but we trust it will. Eventually, a blossom will turn into a tomato, and if we wait patiently it will ripen into something that will taste great on our summer sandwich.

Why is it that people are more than happy to be patient while they wait for a tomato to ripen, but they are too busy fussing and complaining to wait for the seed of the Word to produce in their lives? They are quick to defend the tomato plant and tell their children to be patient until the process comes to an

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end, but when it comes to allowing completion of the Word, they want to abort the process.

Sometimes it takes awhile for the things we are sowing with our mouths to come to fruition in our lives. I found this out early in my Christian walk.

My wife and I did not have a good marriage when we were young and unsaved. Even after we gave our lives to Jesus we still had a rocky road to travel. I remember vividly the day God told me to start saying I loved my wife. I replied, "But I don't love her." God said, "I know it, but do what I tell you to do."

Without fully understanding it, I began to sow seeds of love in our marriage. I began to say out loud, "I love my wife." It nearly choked me to get the words out in the very beginning, but over time it became easier to say, until eventually the words became true to me.

I said, "I am physically attracted to my wife", even though at first it felt like a lie. I said, "I am socially attracted to my wife, and we can communicate", even though we had nothing in common, and at times we barely said two words to one another. Before the seed took root in me, I could go for two or three weeks without even saying "Hello" to my wife. I was a miserable wreck to live with.

What came forth from my mouth as an act of faith in the beginning became a declaration of my undying love and affection for my wife. If you visit our home today you'll find us talking, laughing, and spending time with one another and with our family. We shop, we hunt and fish, and we share one another's interests. And most of all we love one another deeply.

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I know firsthand what sowing the words that God tells you to say will do in your life. They will bring forth fruit. They will produce an abundant overflow of grace and blessing, and they will change the changeable in your life.

Whatever you want for your future, ask God what to say about it. Ask Him what scriptures to speak and stand on, and then get about saying them. Say them every day, over and over and over again. Say them, write them, shout them, sing them ... do whatever you have to do to get the words of God in you. Seed yourself, and be patient with the process.

Remember, Proverbs 18:20 says: "A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled."

We can fill our mouths with an abundance of good seed, and guess what will come out of us? Good seed. Guess what will be planted in our lives? Good seed. Guess what will grow up and produce a harvest? Good seed. And what will good seed produce? Good fruit!

Purposeful Words

2 Corinthians 9:7 says: "Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver." Sowing money is like sowing words. The laws that govern both are virtually the same.

Notice God expects us to have a purpose behind our giving. He also expects us to have a purpose behind our words.

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When you speak, what is your purpose? We learned that your purpose should be to sow for whatever you want in life. Do you want peace, joy, love, health, victory, and success? These should be the driving force behind your words.

Do you want to be limited or unlimited? Do you want to be cursed or blessed? Do you want to be under the hand of the devil or over and above him in every way?

Choose the outcome you desire, and make that the purpose behind every word that crosses the threshold of your mouth. As you purpose in your heart, so let yourself say. How else will you obtain the desired outcome unless you sow what you purpose for your life?

2 Corinthians 9:8-10 goes on to show us the outcome of purposeful sowing. It says: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. (As it is written, He has dispersed abroad; He has given to the poor: His righteousness remains for ever. Now He that ministers seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness.)"

God makes all grace abound toward you through seed sowing. He makes you sufficient in all things so that you may abound in every good work. This is the abundance available to you through sowing and reaping; not just money, but also your purposeful words.

Notice that God not only gives you seed to sow,

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but He also multiplies your seed sown, and He increases the fruits of your righteousness. I like the words multiply and increase, because they remind me I don't have to stay where I am today. I can change my life and become something more tomorrow than I was yesterday.

God has given us the most powerful seed ever known. He is waiting for us to sow it so that He can grow it, multiply it, and increase it in our lives. He is waiting for a chance to watch over His Word to perform it. Will you put His Word in your mouth with a purpose today?

CHAPTER FOUR
THE COMBAT ZONE

Wars are raging around the world, sometimes one on top of another. When combatants are in the midst of a battle it is often hard to see the enemy because of the smoke and dust hanging in the air. But when the dust settles, and when the smoke clears, a good soldier can see where the bad guys are hiding, and he can see the weapon of choice in the enemy's bunker.

In our combat zone called life, the devil uses many things to try to derail our faith, upend our plans and purposes, and halt our spiritual progress. I'm going to blow away the smoke for a moment and wipe the dust from your eyes so that you can see the enemy clearly. He's not that far away, and his weapon of choice might surprise you.

James 3:8 says: "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Too many people are foolish, unwise, undisciplined, unrestrained, or uninformed when they speak. In this state they say things unwisely, and they open doors to the enemy. Trouble comes, and they blame God or look for another reason why they are not blessed. The truth is, the source of their trouble often rests approximately one inch below their nose, in the form of their own untamed tongue.

Your own tongue may well be the devil's weapon of choice in your life. Unbeknownst to you, he may

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score more points against you with your own mouth than you ever dreamed possible. It's time for all of us to consider our ways, to listen to our words, and to make changes where change is needed the most.

So many people speak unwise words every day, and they have no idea how terrible the consequences are until it's too late. For others there are secret satisfactions hidden in the unwise words that they speak. They are bound by an inner struggle, and they speak evil even when their words harm them.

There is the secret satisfaction of repeating a matter, for instance. This makes you feel better about yourself for a moment, but the end is your destruction. You might say to a friend, "Did you hear about Sister Soandso?" For a little while you will feel invigorated by the power of your words, but your repeating of a matter won't help Sister Soandso overcome a weakness or find a path to victory, and it certainly won't help you succeed.

There is the secret satisfaction of sorrowful words that bring attention. If you say, "Oh, woe is me", it may lead to a pat on the back, but it won't fix your problem, and it won't help the person listening to you. There is the secret satisfaction of words of self-loathing or constant murmuring about your circumstances. They may bring a temporary feeling of relief, but they will also produce death instead of life.

There is a kind of addiction that can come with the secret satisfaction of wrong words. People become more and more dependent on the evil communication that is a part of their everyday vocabulary, and more

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and more bound by the sin it produces. This should never be!

They That Love It

We must begin to love words of life more than words of death. If we don't we will find ourselves squarely in the crosshairs of the enemy's greatest weapon, our own untamed tongue.

Proverbs 18:21 says: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." Notice what I underlined: "They that love it."

We speak what we love, what we treasure, what we count as most important, what we know, and what we are addicted to. When we speak words of death, we reveal that we love what death brings.

You may say, "No, no. I hate death." Then why do you speak words that bring death? Why do you spread rumors? Why do you carry tales from friend to friend? Why do you talk down about yourself? Why do you question God's faithfulness? Why do you murmur and complain?

This is how generational curses begin. They come because a man loves words of death. He uses them so often, the people around him become familiar with his way of speaking, and they accept his wrong words as normal. His children talk just like daddy talks, and they pass it on to the grandchildren, until everybody in the family is living under the same bondage.

People pass diseases and financial problems from generation to generation this way because they

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talk the same as those who came before them. They respond to life the same way their parents did. They experience the same physical weaknesses and fall into the same financial snares because they say the same things about their lives that their parents and grandparents said. “We always run out of money before we run out of month” is what mama always said, and so the kids say the same thing, and they run out of money, too.

The only way to stop a generational curse is to allow God to give you a breakthrough. Allow Him to teach you how to re-sow your land with life-giving words. You have to change both what was sown into you by previous generations and what you have sown into yourself. You have to decide if you love life, or if you love being like your family. Do you love being like those who love death, or do you love being like your Heavenly Father?

Joshua said: “Choose you this day whom you will serve” (see Joshua 24:15). We are all in the valley of decision, and we will each eat the fruit of our own lips. We can’t blame former generations, but we also cannot afford to live like them if they have embraced death more than life.

When we love life, we will speak life-filled words, and when we speak life-filled words we will reap life and it more abundantly. We must choose what we will love. God is waiting to fill us with life, but the devil is waiting to fill us with death. What we love and choose to speak will be what dominates our lives and what will surely overcome us in our combat zone.

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Protect Your Flanks

We all know we have to protect our homes. We install locks and security systems, train guard dogs, and put up big iron gates to protect our physical houses, but what can we use to protect our spiritual dwelling in the combat zone? How can we ward off the enemy attack on the outer edges of our lives, what a good soldier will call his flanks?

Ephesians 6:17 gives us the answer when it says: “Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”

A sword is a powerful weapon. It is both a defensive weapon and an offensive weapon. The Bible tells us the Word of God is more powerful than any two-edged sword. It pierces us and cuts between our spirit and soul, and between our thoughts and our intentions.

The truth is, you don’t need an M16 rifle in the spirit realm; you need right words. You don’t need an M32 grenade launcher at the gate of Kingdom power; you need to say, “It is written.” You don’t need an M1 Abrams tank on the flanks of the heart; you need to watch the words of your mouth!

Psalm 107:20 says: “He sent his Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” God gives you right words to overcome every circumstance and to be delivered from every destructive situation.

With the Word of God you can protect your family and generations to come from hidden dangers. You can allow God to reverse a generational curse,

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deliver you, and put you in a safe place of abundant living.

You can turn toward the devil as he shoots fiery darts of negativity toward your home, and you can withstand his assault, even turning it back on him. You don't have to take what the devil throws at you!

Raise up the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Use it as a defensive weapon to block the firestorm of the enemy, and use it as an offensive weapon to strike back by speaking the Word of God in every situation.

Don't let the enemy get ahead of you, and don't let him sneak up on your unguarded flanks. Keep your sword at the ready, and be vigilant. Be watchful. Listen to the words of your mouth and the words of your family. When you begin to hear things that are contrary to the Word of God, make a stand, and turn back the wrong words.

Don't cave in during the heat of the battle, but reverse the heat back on the enemy. Watch God arise to scatter your enemies. You can win this battle, and you can be victorious in every situation. Choose life, and speak words of life. This is how you change, and this is how you win!

Dealing with Wrong Thoughts

If only we didn't have to think! This is what I feel like some days. If only I didn't have to deal with wrong thoughts, bad notions, and unproductive ideas, life would be much easier.

Let me give you a little inside information.

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In Matthew 6:31 Jesus said: “Therefore **take no thought, saying**, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?”

Notice what I marked in bold letters, “**take no thought, saying.**” You take a thought when you say it. I want you to get this, so I will repeat myself. You take a thought when you say it!

Until you take a thought, it is inactive in your life. Until you take it, there is no power in it. But when you say what you think, you take that thought, and you make it your own. You receive it, inherit its benefits, whether good or evil, and you become one with the thought, bringing the manifestation of it into your life.

Things come to your mind every minute of every day. They are formulated into thoughts, and then they must pass through your decision-making process before they are released from your mouth. You can turn thoughts into words, and in so doing affect your life for good or for evil, or you can cast thoughts down as vain imaginations like the Bible tells you to in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6. It’s up to you what you will do with each thought that comes your way.

You may wonder, "Aren't all of my thoughts from me, so they're mine anyway?" Not necessarily. Many thoughts are originated in your own brain, but some come straight from the devil whose goal is to get you to receive his thoughts and make them your own so that he can take you captive.

So often people fail to take a moment to consider the source of a thought before they blurt it out. Who do you think is behind this kind of behavior? The

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best thing you can do is make yourself stop and think before you speak. Slow down, and you will make right decisions.

1 Corinthians 2:15 says: “He that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.” 1 Corinthians 2:13 says: “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

You have a choice to make. You can think and then speak spiritual things, or you can think and then speak natural things. If you think and speak spiritual things, 1 Corinthians 2:16 will come to pass, and you will “have the mind of Christ.” I want the mind of Christ so that I can speak the words of Christ and get the outcome of Christ in my life!

Your mind is your greatest battlefield by far. It is where the enemy will attack you relentlessly. You can shut down every avenue of input in your life, but you will still have your thoughts to deal with.

Take your thoughts captive, and do not let them take over your life. Be still, know that He is God, and let Him help you discern which thoughts to speak and keep, and which thoughts to cast far, far away from you. This one thing will bring more change than you can imagine.

Speak words of righteousness. Speak words of truth. Speak words of power. Speak words of healing and deliverance. Speak words of blessing and success.

These are found in the Word of God, and if you will release them with the sound of your own voice,

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you will find yourself changing the unchangeable
and writing the victory decree in your life.