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It's Time
to Give a
Good Report
(Part 2)

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Series: Living Lessons from Proverbs

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It's Time To Give A Good Report

Looking at life from God's perspective
Will change the way you live.
It'll change the way you view life's trials,
And the kind of report you give.

You'll see the spiritual side of life,
And your vision you'll transport
Into the realm of heaven, so
You'll give a good report.

Looking at life from God's perspective,
Learning His heart to proclaim,
Will transform your tongue and thus your life,
And you'll never be the same.

That's the essence of the message of this two-part lesson on "Giving a Good Report." It all boils down to viewing life from God's perspective.

God's perspective, you see, is spiritual.
God's perspective is eternal.
God's perspective is edifying.
God's perspective is encouraging.

Satan's perspective, meanwhile is physical.
Satan's perspective is circumstantial.
Satan's perspective is destructive.
Satan's perspective is depressing.

And the battle for control of the mind and thus for control of the tongue (and ultimately for control of the life) is not a battle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. It's a battle in the heavenlies between Satan and God, and the battlefield is the Christian's tongue. Under Satan's control it's a flame of fire, a fire no man can tame. James tells us it can set on fire forests of lives and is set on fire by hell itself. But under God's control, that flame that so destroys is channeled into a flame that warms. That fire that so consumes becomes, in the hands of the master builder, a torch used to weld the hearts of men into a bond of unity in a spirit of love.

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The battlefield is the tongue—yours and mine. The issue at stake is whether or not you and I re-train our tongues to “speak life” from God’s perspective and learn to give a good report. It’s Time To Give A Good Report.

That’s what we determined in the last lesson. Now we complete this second leg of our journey into the land of The Tongue by taking a more practical look at “How to Give a Good Report.”

Our outline:

I- There Is Progress

II- There Is Promise

III- There Are Principles

A- Principles on Giving A Bad Report of People

1- Why We Do It

2- What Happens When We Do

3- Three Things Not To Do

4- How to Respond.

B- Principles on Giving a Silent Bad Report

C- Principles on Giving a Good Report of Circumstances.

IV- There Is Power

A- Two Things to Consider

B- Three Ingredients For Change

It is time to give a good report! We’ll begin by giving a good report of how we fared with last week’s assignment. The assignment, you remember, had five parts:

1) I asked you for one week to give only a good report of people—to say only that which is positive and encouraging to others and about others.

2) to give only a good report to God, a report of praise and thanksgiving

3) to give a good report of God to those about you.

4) to give a good report of yourselves (to see yourself from God’s perspective)

5) to give a good report of your circumstances.

I have to ask you, “How did you do?” You say, “Oh, I did some better but I still sang most of life’s songs in the minor key. I really didn’t do that well!”

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Now wait a minute. That's not a good report! Wasn't there even one time you stopped and gave a good report? You say, "Well, sure, there were several." Well, then

...whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
(Philippians 4:8 paraphrase)

Paul says, I want you to give a good report of how you gave a good report. I will. God really used this lesson in my life last week. I did better Monday and Tuesday while it was still fresh in my mind. (And we'll get to that issue later.) But I learned to smile again even when I felt bad. (I had forgotten how important that was.) I learned to find some words of encouragement for people who asked how I was doing or how business was or how I was feeling. I remembered that God desired a good report in prayer. I stopped running myself down and thus giving a bad report of God's Wisdom in choosing me or His Power in changing me or His Grace in using me. I found that my problem was I kept listening to the voice of the stranger. I'd wake up in the morning and find myself saying to myself (and it was Satan speaking), "Boy, am I tired. I'm depressed. This is gonna be a rotten day." In the past, I had agreed with Satan, and his prophecies became self-fulfilling. Instead, this week I rebuked him. I said, "Lord, it's a new day. I have strength in you. I'm not depressed—I'm in Christ. And this is the day that the Lord hath made. I'm going to rejoice and be glad in it." My friend, those prophecies were self-fulfilling as well. So I began giving a good report to myself about myself. And at the same time, by God's grace, I began viewing and reporting the fires of my life from the vantage point of God's mountain rather than reporting the flames from the vantage point of the blaze. You know, I got a better response from other people. I gained a better perspective of other people, and I was happier than I've been in years. You see, I began to believe those good reports I was giving and the result was joy.

You say, "But didn't you fail at some point?" Boy, I really did. I fell back into my old thought patterns and gave lots of bad reports, too. But I believe God is pleased. I believe He's focusing on the progress I allowed Him to make and not on my failures. The battle's not over. It's just begun. But this is a "Progress Report," and I'm here to report "Progress."

Now what about you? Can't you think of one time God reminded you to give a good report last week when you heeded that reminder?

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Sure you can. Then let's stop and praise God for the progress He's making in teaching us to report life from His vantage point and stop listening to Satan's negative lies. Let's pray.

Dear Lord,

We love you so, and we recognize that you desire for us to give a good report of life.

That whatsoever things are true,
whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever
things are just, whatsoever things are pure,
whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever
things are of good report, if there be any
virtue, if there be any praise,

(Philippians 4:8)

You've commanded us, Lord to "*think on these things*". Lord, we're beginning to get the picture. Please forgive us for the times we've slipped. But Lord, we're excited at the progress you're making in our lives. Make it even better this week, we pray.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

It Is Time To Give A Good Report, and there is progress both in your life and in mine. To God be the Glory. Not only is there progress, there is promise. Because when you and I begin to view the land of Spiritual Conflict from God's vantage point, we will begin to possess the land.

In the last lesson, we watched as the children of Israel, poised on the threshold of an entirely new kind of experience, failed to enter into that experience because they believed a bad report. God had promised them a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of fruitfulness, a land of plenty. He had also promised to give it to them, to deliver it into their hands. All His children had to do was believe Him and obey Him, and all they had prayed for would be theirs. But God had not promised them no opposition. He had not promised them that the land would be inhabited by a fearful few who would be paralyzed at their presence.

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God had not promised them no *conflict*. God had simply promised them it would be no *contest* when He came on the scene. But ten of the twelve spies saw the enemy from man's perspective instead of God's, and in the flesh they saw no hope. My friend, in the flesh there's never any hope, for only against the backdrop of man's impotence can God's omnipotence stand alone beneath the spotlight on God's stage of deliverance. And the tougher your battle, the bigger your giants, the greater your God has got to be. There were giants in the land. Big Deal!! Without the giants, Israel could have taken the land without God. (And who would have received the glory for that?) It would have been no contest without the giants, and no contest = no grace!

So our God delights in promising His children (in the spiritual realm) a land of promises, a land of victories, a land of fruitfulness He has given it to us. But it is inhabited by giants, king-sized enemies whose only goal is to keep us from possessing that land. But, my friend, it is through the process of the conflict that our God reveals His character and changes ours. The promises are our assurance, but the process is God's sandpaper by which He not only delivers us but through which He transforms us.

The difference, my friend; the difference is perspective. When the battle is tough and the enemy seems invincible, Satan whispers in our ear a "Bad Report." He tries to divert our attention from the promises by magnifying in our minds the immensity of the problems. The children of Israel believed the lie. They bought the devil's report. They viewed the enemy from the wrong end of the binoculars and panicked. They had the promises, but instead of praising God and claiming them, they huddled in defeat and lost it all. The interesting thing is that they were closer to possessing the land at that moment than at any other time in their history. When Satan starts intensifying his propaganda campaign in your spirit and you begin to listen to his bad report; you can rest assured at that moment victory is but a breath away.

Now I don't know about your life or how near or far you may seem to be from living in the victory of spiritual power, nor do I know what particular lies Satan may be whispering to you today. Perhaps he's saying, "You'll never make it," or "What's the use?" or "You're a born loser, give up." Beloved, don't listen to him. Rebuke him. He's trying to sell you a bad report just to keep you from possessing the land of promise, and chances are you are closer to victory today than you have ever been before.

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Now we can glean some principles from that story in Numbers 13 that ought to help us in our decision-making processes when we are surrounded by bad reports.

Principle 1- People Prefer a Negative Report. You give the average person a choice, and he'll believe the story of gloom and doom every time. It's the sin nature of man that is tuned into Satan's network through which he broadcasts night-and-day signals that negate confidence in God's Word and God's sovereignty. You start a rumor that the recession's over, and nobody believes you; but start a rumor that a depression is a certainty, and half the world grabs its money and hides in a closet. Fallen man is programmed to believe a bad report.

Principle 2- The positive perspective is not a majority even among God's chosen, even among God's leaders, those who have heard His promises and seen the land. It ought not to be so, but often it is.

Principle 3- God expects us to search out the land. He says, "Get the facts at any price." He's not raising a church full of ostriches. He expects us to examine our problems and even realistically acknowledge the size of our enemy.

Principle 4- He wants us to examine those problems only through the lens of His promises. Remember, he allowed the big giants only to reveal a bigger God. Examine your problem, then claim His promises and possess the land. So when you look at the enemy, always look at the enemy in the light of God's power. Always look at the obstacles in the light of God's faithfulness. And always look at the challenge in the light of God's ways. He works best when there is no hope at all. Then look at:

Satan's tactics: depression & defeat.

Satan's tools: the leaven (like the devastation from a bad report.)

Satan's downfall: the man who is willing to believe God no matter what, and then Satan's finished. Refuse to believe the devil's lies. Tune him out. Victory is just around the corner.

So God has given us progress, and God has given us promises. Now as we move into the more practical realm of the study, may I remind you, He has given us principles as well. The scriptures clearly illustrate both the cause and effects, the whys and wherefores, of giving a bad report. Learn the principles, and they will help you

claim the promises.

Today we will ask and answer basic questions about giving a bad report—a bad report of people, and a bad report of life—first of all about giving a bad report where people are concerned.

Question 1- What makes us give a bad report of people? Why do we so delight in verbally destroying another person's character? There are several reasons. I'll give you just a few scriptural examples and illustrations that we can apply to our own situations.

First, we sometimes give a bad report of another in order to cover up our own sins. When the heat gets intense, we light a match under someone else to divert attention from our own disobedience. Children are masters at this: Little Johnny breaks Mom's new vase. How does he lessen the furor? Diversion! "Look Mom," Johnny cries, "that stupid Mary tracked mud on your white carpet." He hopes the mud on the carpet will take attention away from the broken vase. And we're just children when you get down to it. Chances are a lot of our conversation is aimed at disclosing others' weaknesses because we just don't want to face our own. It's the old log and beam principle Jesus talked about in Matthew 7.

Perhaps the most graphic scriptural illustration is Potiphar's wife giving a bad report of Joseph. It was El Smokescreenio Deluxio. She was the guilty one, but through the deceitfulness of diversion, she took the heat off of herself and destroyed another's reputation. We sometimes do the same thing.

Another reason we malign others has to do with rebellion to authority. Many, many times the object of our bad reports are those a little higher on the totem pole than we are, and the issue isn't their behavior. The issue is our inability to operate under authority. In Numbers chapter 16, beginning with verse 3, we read of Korah and his three friends plotting to undermine Moses' leadership by attacking his character. They began by circulating a bad report. Soon the whole camp believed it. But verses 11 and 12 indicate that their real conflict was with God, and their real source of irritation was with God over the concept of authority.

Beloved, be careful to give a good report of those whom God has placed over you. If you are always maligning your husband or your parents or your boss, chances are their weaknesses are not the real issue. Chances are your weakness is the issue, and your inability or unwillingness to accept authority has caused you to

give a bad report.

A third reason we give a bad report is because the life we are attacking has brought us under conviction. You let one member of a household become a Christian, and let that life begin to reflect holiness, and he or she will be the object of every conceivable negative comparison. Why? Because unless you can discredit that life, you have to face the logical conclusion that you have a need, and they have the answer. So you bad-mouth them over inconsequential faults to keep from facing the reality of a changed life. How many husbands are guilty of this when their wives become Christians?

The scriptural illustrations are many. In Matthew 9:34, the Pharisees accused Jesus of being demon-possessed because He had authority over demons. They couldn't explain His power, so they blasphemed His character in order to justify their own rebellion. They did the same thing in Matthew chapter 12 where they maligned Jesus and His disciples for healing on the Sabbath. The Sabbath wasn't the problem. The problem was that Jesus could heal and they couldn't. So they either had to discredit His character or accept the fact that He was who He claimed to be. Many of those we attack verbally are simply a threat to us because of the holiness of their lives, so rather than seek their kind of power, we seek to destroy them instead.

A fourth reason we give a bad report is to win peer acceptance. Often we enter a conversation we are not really negative or condemning, but we are surrounded by people who are thriving on destroying another's reputation. Either we take a stand and be different or join in the chorus with like-minded losers. So often we cherish the acceptance of men more than the acceptance of God, so we become bad news bores ourselves. We never would have started the conversation, but we're not man enough or woman enough to stop it.

Read Acts 6:9-14 and see how this worked with those who testified against Stephen.

Then lastly, we sometimes give or accept a bad report or think the worst of one we love just because we do not know all the facts. So we jump to conclusions and accept in our hearts what our minds cannot prove, and we destroy those we love in the process. Joseph was about to do that in Matthew 1:19, wasn't he? He had agreed to put away his wife privately, finding her to be with child. He didn't have all the facts. Then an angel came and set him straight.

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Oh, how often we draw conclusions about people without all the information we need. They are guilty until proven innocent. Praise God, He does not deal with us like that.

Sowemustaskourselves, “Whyarewegivingabadreportofsomeone else?” Is it a smokescreen to hide our own sins? (Genesis 39:7-20) Is it really a sign of our resistance to authority? (Numbers 16:3-13) Is it because that person’s life brings us under conviction? (Matthew 9:34, 12:2-14) Is it to gain the acceptance of our peers who are giving a bad report themselves? (Acts 6:9-14) Or is it because we have drawn conclusions without all the facts? (Matthew 1:19)

These are some of the things that motivate us to give a bad report. There are others: jealousy, suspicion, and anger are some. In any case, it’s wrong and God says, “Stop it!” Remember, when you speak evil of another, at least two things happen:

1- You violate the Word of God.

Don’t criticize and speak evil about each other, dear brothers. If you do, you will be fighting against God’s law of loving one another, declaring it to be wrong. (James 4:11a TLB)

They must not to speak evil of anyone, (Titus 3:2a TLB)

When you give a bad report of a Christian brother, you violate the Word of God.

2- When you do, you set in motion, a divine boomerang.

With the severity we judge we shall be judged. And the yardstick with which you measure others, others will use to measure you. (Matthew 7:1,2 paraphrase)

So often we find ourselves the subjects of constant verbal attacks and we feel persecuted, when in reality, we are only being measured by the verbal yardsticks with which we measure others.

You begin to give a good report of others and others will give a good report of you. The disease is contagious. (But so is the cure!) And I believe there are three things our conversation ought never to include. I’ll only list them:

- 1) Our conversation ought not to include an account of another’s sins. (Ephesians 5:12)
- 2) It ought never to include judgment of another’s ministry. (Romans 15:18)
- 3) Nor ought it ever to call attention to another’s unchangeable

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defects. (Romans 9:21)

Others' sins are God's business. Pray about them, but don't talk about them. Others' ministries only God can judge. He knows their abilities. He knows their hearts, and He knows His purposes. Others' defects are His concern. He made them. He has a reason. He turns weakness into strength. He will reveal His power through their problem. That's the potter's problem, not the vase that sits alongside and considers itself more beautiful or more useable. In II Corinthians 10:12, Paul said we dare not make comparisons or pass comparative judgments on others. Those who do, he added, are not wise. So that's why we give a bad report, and that's what happens when we do.

Now let's look at how to respond to a bad report! What do you do if someone else approaches you with the "inside scoop" about a brother gone astray? Here are some suggestions:

Suggestion 1 - Offer to take them directly to the person about whom they are speaking. (Matthew 18:15) (That shortens many conversations!) Remember God deals directly with His children. He expects His children to deal directly with one another.

In other words, if someone says, "Did you hear about how Fred treats his wife? And he's a deacon," you can answer, "No, I really haven't, but I know Fred's phone number. Come on, I'll call and set up an appointment so you can talk to him about it." (Then watch him squirm.) That's one answer.

Suggestion 2 - A second one is to answer with a positive report. (Proverbs 15:23 and 28; Proverbs 25:11; and Romans 12:21 may be used as references here.) Someone may say, "Boy, I hear John really has a problem with bad language." You might answer, "I don't know about that, but what a work of grace God is doing in his life. I knew John before he became a Christian, and I'm overwhelmed at the change." You can end the bad report by giving a good report. In other words, "Be not overcome with evil," Paul said, "but overcome evil with good."

Suggestion 3- A third response is a grieved countenance followed by silence. (Not a sermon, just silence. Not an angry defense, just silence.) Silence is a secret weapon to still a flame-throwing tongue.

A talebearer revealeth secrets but he that is of a faithful spirit
concealeth a matter. (Proverbs 11:13)

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Where no wood is there the fire goeth out; so where there is no talebearer the strife ceaseth. (Proverbs 26:20)

It all has to end somewhere. Let your tongue be the end of the line. A look of grief, silent disapproval, and a quiet refusal to pass it on stills the sound waves and sometimes even convicts the broadcaster as well.

Those are three ways to deal with a bad report of people. Another word of caution. You can give a bad report, a negative response without ever saying a word. Learn to be sensitive to how your facial expression and habits belittle those about you. Here are a few examples of what we do without saying a word, and what we are really saying when we do.

When you	What you are saying is:
1) Yawn while another is speaking	"I wish you'd stop; I'm bored." (You wouldn't say that, but you did!)
2) Fail to greet someone (at church or in the mall)	"You're not really important to me." (Why bother? I only greet those who count.)
3) Keep looking at your watch (at another's house or while he's talking.)	"Boy, I'll be glad to get out of here."
4) Frown at a meal (maybe you're just preoccupied) but you give the impression,	"Is this the best you can cook?"
5) Have a sly grin while someone's talking to you	"If you only knew what I'm thinking."
6) Dress sloppily or inappropriately to go to another's house or on a date.	"You're not worth dressing up for."
7) Smirk at someone else's answer.	You may be thinking that's better than I could do, but to them it says... "How stupid can you get?"

You may not mean to say those things, and perhaps you would never in a million years really say those words, but if others interpret your behavior or expression to be saying those things,

then aren't you giving a bad report?

Well, for the sake of time, we won't elaborate on giving a good report of God to God. I think most of us understand what we do. We simply must determine to have our prayer life, for instance, characterized by praise, thanksgiving, and intercession. Our testimony ought to be constantly glorifying God and giving to man a good report of what God has done.

But I believe our biggest problem is how to give a good report of the day-to-day circumstances in our lives that will, in essence, point others to God's perspective and give glory to Him. Herein lies the area where most bad reports originate. Such simple questions they are. People ask you: "How was your day?" "How are you feeling?" or "What are you going to do about that decision?" Simple questions, but how you answer them may make all the difference in whether you encourage them or discourage them, whether they are pointed to God's perspective or to man's. Let's just try those three questions, give some possible answers, and examine the effects those answers might have on those around us.

Question 1: "How was your day?" That's a harmless enough question, one we casually respond to every day. But how we respond to it could make a big difference in our testimony. For example, one correct response would be this, "My day was neat. It was fruitful and productive. God taught me some new things today. I'm excited. How was yours?" It's just one example, but do you see God's objectives?

- 1- You acknowledge God's productivity in all situations.
- 2- You focus on God's activities rather than on man's.
- 3- You focus on character, rather than on circumstances.
- 4- You reflect a positive emotional response, thus generating a positive response in them.
- 5- You transfer the focus to the one asking, expecting a similar response from them. You're saying, in essence, "How was your day? Was it good, too?"

Now let's look at an incorrect response and what Satan can do with that.

Incorrect response #1 - "My day was awful. My car broke down, my wife burned supper, the kids got the measles, I lost my wallet, and it rained again."

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Now all of that may be true, but do you see what you've said in effect? You have yielded to Satan's objectives. Satan's objectives were:

- 1- To reflect hostility towards God for allowing circumstances that made your life physically and emotionally difficult.
- 2- To create an atmosphere of competition for pity.
- 3- To focus attention on circumstances as the indicators of what is and what isn't a good day.

A second incorrect response might be this: (Sob) "I just couldn't cope with my life today. The pressures, the problems, the pain! Oh, I can't measure up." Satan loves a response like that. It says in effect:

- 1- You are weak, therefore, your God is weak and unable to encourage you.
- 2- I want to transmit a negative atmosphere as a Christian.
- 3- I am defeated and accept defeat as a way of life—would you join me?

It was a simple question, "How was your day?" But God and Satan were vying for control of your response.

Question 2: It seems just as harmless. "How are you feeling?"

Now before you answer, consider what is really important. "How is your body feeling? or "How is your spirit responding?"

One correct response would be this:

"I'm fine. Isn't God's strength fantastic? What comfort and power there is in Him!"

Do you see God's objectives? They are:

- 1- To give a positive report (You can always give a positive report of His work in your life.)
- 2- To call attention to God's attributes, rather than your suffering.
- 3- To attribute spiritual wholeness to Him alone.

One incorrect response might be this:

"I feel awful! My big toe is still swollen, my right ear is starting to swell, and oh, what a stopped-up nose is like. You know I only slept 15 hours last night, but I'm suffering for Jesus."

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Satan's objectives are these:

- 1- To call attention to self.
- 2- To slander God as inadequate to care for bodies.
- 3- To create a martyr image (thus stealing glory from God.)
- 4- To focus on the physical as an indicator of blessing or defeat.

Another incorrect response would focus more on the emotional than the physical. It would sound like this: "Oh, the pain of it all... I'm so depressed I can't eat. (Would you hand me that candy bar?) "Oh, the agony, the grief, the loneliness, the uncertainty, the pain of it all." Do you see Satan's objectives with this kind of response? They are:

- 1- To make Christ appear inadequate as the comforter.
- 2- To gain sympathy.
- 3- To excuse unfaithfulness.
- 4- To escape responsibilities.
- 5- To focus on feelings as a barometer of spiritual blessings or success.

And very quickly, here's a third question. Someone knows you're facing a serious decision, either in your job or in your ministry, and they ask, "What are you going to do about that decision?" One correct response would be: "I'm seeking the will of God concerning the choice that will best accomplish His long-range goals for my life." (You avoid concentrating on the choices which might glorify you, and you focus on God's long-range goals which are character and growth.)

God's objectives with this kind of answer are these:

- 1- To lift up the will of God as a specific, findable objective.
- 2- To focus on the future as it fits into God's timing rather than the immediate deadlines you have set.
- 3- To create a desire in others to see God's best for you, rather than encouraging unwanted counsel that will simply seek to amplify your position and focus on circumstances. One incorrect response might be this: "I might do this, on the other hand, I might do that. Both are equally good you know." (That may be true, but look at Satan's objectives.)

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1- He wants to reveal an independent spirit. (I can make my own choices.)

2- He wants to indicate that God's will is uncertain and elusive.

3- He wants to elevate self into a position of great importance as the decision-maker.

Another incorrect response would be: "Who knows what I'll do. It's all so confusing. No matter which decision I make, I'll probably regret it." Satan again has objectives. Do you see what they are?

1- To indicate that there is futility in following Christ.

2- To indicate that God is the author of confusion.

3- To indicate a lack of concern on God's part.

Simple questions aren't they? But how we answer simple questions like these may well determine whether God or Satan uses our tongue to accomplish his purposes. The key is learning to respond from God's perspective, then you'll always give a good report. Do you see the pattern? Sure I know your answers can't be memorized. And yes, I know, it's an honor to receive a frank reply. But there's a difference between sharing a need with a close prayer partner and sharing gloom with a casual inquirer. The more you speak negative words that are circumstantially oriented, the more important those things will become to you. You will become what you say. So learn to give a good report.

Now in closing, I want us to look at the power that's ours—the power of a good report. I want to remind you that scripturally and experientially we know that whether or not we learn to give a good report will determine how we affect others, how we glorify God, and what we ourselves will eventually become. We will miss the land of milk and honey if we are believing and receiving man's perspective of life. The giants will overwhelm us. We'll be like grasshoppers, lost in a sea of unmanageable circumstances, expecting life's worst and not being disappointed.

Or we can purpose in our hearts to make this concept of giving a good report an integral part of our lives from this day forward. As a regular part of our spiritual objectives, the giving of a good report can transform our testimony, change our frame of reference, and turn us into walking billboards of the joy of the Lord. We know it's right, and we know we need it. The question is, three months

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from now if someone asks you, "Are you giving a good report?" will you stare blankly back and then say, "Oh, yeah, we studied that three months ago. That was a neat idea." Or will it become such an integral part of your life that not another day will pass, till God calls you home, that you are not aware of whether or not your life and your lips are giving a good report.

I would like to suggest, and I'm dead serious here, that for this or any other scriptural concept to become a part of your life three things are involved. Those three things spell C-A-R (if that will help you remember.)

The "C" stands for COMMITMENT. It means you make a once-for-always determination that this principle is the will of God for your life (in this case, the principle is the principle of a good report.) You drive a stake in the ground. Write a letter to God this afternoon (date it, sign it, and put it where you have to read it every morning, perhaps in the front of your Bible.) It is a commitment that by God's grace, in ever increasing splendor, your life day by day is to increasingly reflect a good report. It will be God's power, but it's your choice, and it's an irreversible choice. Write out the verses of scripture that command you to give a good report. Memorize them and stand on them. Get someone to witness it. You have made a commitment not to me, but to God. From that moment forward, you are personally responsible to God to always give a good report. Then ask God to convict you when you don't and to encourage you when you do. He'll do it. He delights to do it. So the "C" stands for COMMITMENT.

The "A" stands for ACCOUNTABILITY. That's the essence of strength in the body of Christ.

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. (Ecclesiastes 4:9,10)

Unless you surround yourself with monitors and agree to encourage one another to be encouragers and lovingly and graciously call to one another's attention those bad reports, you will gradually sink back into your old habits of conversation. It can be your husband, your wife, your children, your boss, your friends or all of the above. They can all serve as monitors if you ask them to, not competitively, but cooperatively working together as a

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team to build each other up. Unless you become accountable, your commitment won't last. So the "C" stands for COMMITMENT and the "A" stands for ACCOUNTABILITY.

And lastly, the "R" stands for RENEWAL.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22,23

Every morning God opens a new bottle of mercy with your name on it. Every morning God opens a new box of grace with your name on it. Every morning we are to come boldly to His throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need. I mentioned earlier that last Monday and Tuesday were great days for me. Wednesday—not so good. And by Thursday, the principles seemed faint, almost indistinguishable. I had made a one-week commitment, so what went wrong? Renewal? I hadn't renewed that commitment day by day. That's why God divided time into days, remember? It is because 24 hours is about as long as most of us can remember to be faithful. So we're to take up our cross how often? Every day and follow Him how often? Every day (Luke 9:23).

If you're serious about your commitment, you'll become accountable to someone, and you'll renew that commitment every morning for the rest of your life.

Commitment

Accountability

Renewal

A three-fold triangle of faithfulness that says to God, "I mean business. I want to be a man or woman who gives a good report, who reports all of life from God's perspective. I want to build up the body of Christ, not tear it down. I want to bring joy into lives, not sadness. I want to view my trials from God's vantage point, not Satan's. I want to believe God and enter the land, no matter what lies the enemy tells."

It's Time to Give a Good Report.

A Good Report of Others, a Good Report to Others

A Good Report of God, a Good Report to God

And a Good Report of Life, whatever life may bring

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our way.

It's Time to Give a Good Report. We know we should, and we know how. Oh, what could happen in our churches, homes, lives, and world, no what will happen in the days to come because we've chosen to do so.

It's Time to Give a Good Report. We can begin today, and the good reports need never end as we enter naturally into that life for which God is preparing our tongues, when for all eternity we will gather round His majestic throne, singing His praises, and forever giving a good report.

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