

From Time to Time, “My Mother/Father Comes Out of My Mouth”

It seems as if the older I get, the more often my mother or father (both now deceased) “come out of my mouth.” Several comments on social media indicate the same is true for many others. Thankfully, both my parents were faithful Christians for all of my life, so the things originating from them that “come out of my mouth” are *wholesome* and *good for edification*, and *give grace* (and wisdom) *to those that hear*, cf. Eph.4:29.

But in these regards I am doubly blessed in that other influential Christian men and women from my past also “come out of my mouth” from time to time. Preachers, Elders, Deacons, and Bible Class Teachers mostly, but also just good, faithful Christians with no particular role or title who spoke memorable words of truth and wisdom which sunk deep into my heart. Jesus said that “*the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart*,” Matt.15:18a. I am thankful that so many “*who spoke the word of God*” to me, when I *consider “the outcome of their way of life,”* provide examples that are *worthy of imitation* and words that are worth repetition, cf. Heb.13:7. So, when someone else “comes out of my mouth,” it invariably makes me smile and reflect with deep appreciation.

It is NOT true that we are the mere “products of our raising” as some would say. The apostle Paul serves as a prime, but by no means *singular*, example. His “raising” had produced a “*Hebrew of Hebrews*” and a “*Pharisee*” who was also a “*persecutor of the church*,” Phil.3:5-6. Whatever “influences” he had, surely were “coming out of his mouth” when he spoke against Christ and Christians, cf. Acts 26:9-11. If we are all truly the “product of our raising” as some suggest, he would have remained all of these things. But Paul was provided with, in addition to all the others things he had heard and been taught, **truth from God**. And from that moment on, something very different “came out of his mouth” for the rest of his life- “*the gospel*” of which he was never again “*ashamed*” to proclaim, cf. Rom.1:16; Phil.3:8-16.

Our “raising” only determines *who* we are and *what* we become IF we refuse to accept any additional and/or contradictory input. This is especially true regarding the input of divine “*truth*,” for by it we can be “*transformed by the renewing of (y)our mind, that we may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect*,” Rom.12:2. Your past and your “raising”- whether good or otherwise, does not determine your future. You do. And you do so by what you decide to let *into* and *reside* in your heart. Whatever is in your heart will “come out of your mouth,” but YOU get to decide what takes up permanent residence there.

So, what do you allow to *take up permanent residence* in your heart? The words and wisdom of *the world* and *worldly people*; or, the words and wisdom of *God*- either read in His Word directly or relayed to you by *one* or *several* of those who belong to Him? Whoever and whatever you keep in your heart will “come out of your mouth.” You get to choose.

Why not let you **heavenly Father** come out of your mouth? He will, if you let Him take up permanent residence in your heart. The same is true of your **spiritual brother Jesus Christ**, and of the **words of the Holy Spirit** and of **those who spoke/speak the word of God** to you... if just let them into, and keep them in, your heart. Then, when someone else “comes out of your mouth,” it’s a good thing and provides no reason for regret or shame! (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)