



FAITH, FREEDOM, & FITNESS

POWER CHURCH

MESSAGE: 01 FEB 2026

Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/q0dPIGD8oPE>

**Happy Lord's Day
and welcome to Power Church!**

Today is Sunday, February 01, in the year of our Lord 2026.

**Before we open with prayer,
I want to invite those watching us on YouTube to join the
Strong Life 610 Ministry.**

Joining is FREE, and we NEVER ask for donations.

**As a Strong Life 610 Team Member,
you will receive our DAILY BREAD devotions,
weekly POWER CHURCH messages,
and our monthly STRONG LIFE newsletter**

To join, simply visit our website at:

www.stronglife610.net

Click the ABOUT US link and scroll down to the JOIN US link

Thanks so much, and we hope and pray to hear from you

Let us pray:

Father,

*Help us, Lord,
to rid ourselves of sin and shame*

*Lead us, Lord,
as we deny ourselves of the ways of the world*

*Strengthen us, Lord,
to take up our cross and follow You*

In Jesus' Name, Amen



THE POWER OF THE CROSS

Matthew 16:24

***Then Jesus said to His disciples,
“Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves
and take up their cross and follow Me.”***



The Roman empire used the horror of crucifixion as one way to keep conquered populations in line, executing criminals and rebels from the lower and slave classes by the thousands. It was an act of violation, public humiliation, control, and torture. The crucifixion process was carefully arranged to maximize suffering and draw out death sometimes taking *days*. The dead were often left to rot in public view.

That is what makes it jarring to hear Jesus, in today's verse from Matthew 16:24, use crucifixion in comparison to following Him:

***Then Jesus said to His disciples,
"Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves
and take up their cross and follow Me."***



While self-denial was a common enough idea in both Jewish and Greek teaching of the day, Jesus pictured a self-denial that included willing participation in the death of self.

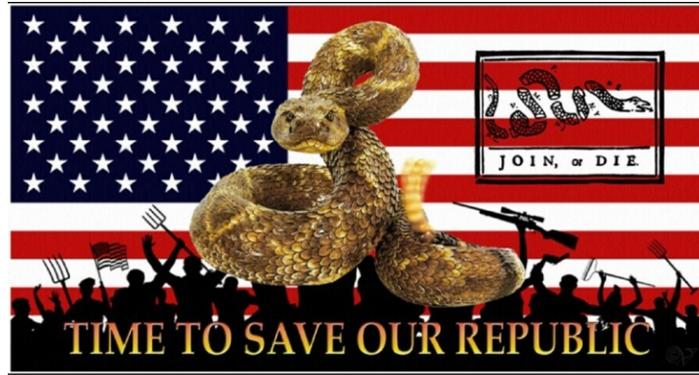
Yet, while the cross was literally an execution stake, a horrible vessel of torture and death, think about the power of the cross.

As Pastor Jonathan Cahn wrote:

That same cross became the symbol of life and hope. Amazing! Death turned into life. It was the worst thing that could happen that became the best thing that ever happened. The worst sin that has ever been - the crucifixion of God - became the greatest act of righteousness that has ever been. The ending of Messiah's life becomes the beginning of eternal life. The cross becomes a place of hope, and the tomb becomes a place of new beginnings.



The power of Messiah is to turn everything upside down. You have that power, too. If you're in Christ, you have the power to turn everything upside down; to turn your sorrows into joy, your setbacks into victory, your failures into triumph, and to turn every bad thing into the blessing of God. Use that power. For the cross is the most revolutionary power in the universe. It's the power of the Lord for you to turn the world - and your life - upside down.



Thank you so much for joining us for today's "Power Church" message.

Until next Sunday: *"Be strong in the Lord, and the power of His might."*



FAITH, FREEDOM, & FITNESS

DAILY BREAD

Monday, February 02

James 2:18

***But someone will say,
"You have faith; I have deeds."
Show me your faith without deeds,
and I will show you my faith by my deeds.***



How do you respond when you encounter a lifter that is new to powerlifting? How about a lifter new to your federation? Do you welcome them or ignore them?

In today's verse from James 2:18, James continues the point that genuine, living faith in Christ results in a believer beginning to participate in good works:

***But someone will say,
"You have faith; I have deeds."
Show me your faith without deeds,
and I will show you my faith by my deeds.***

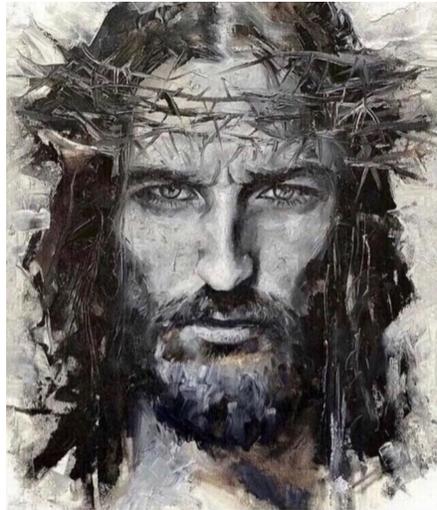


As followers of Christ, we begin to obey our Father and love others as they love themselves. Those who don't do so, as James said in the previous verse, have a dead faith.

James' argument here is entirely practical: show me. Show me any evidence for your faith without any works. It can't be done. When we *truly believe* something, we act on it. Faith that doesn't cause a person to act is a dead faith, not a saving faith. As James concludes, ***"I will show you my faith by my deeds."***

Again, it's important not to read the wrong message into James' words. At no point does James disconnect salvation from faith. On the contrary, this entire passage is about the fact that we are only saved by faith – but that faith is more than simply agreement. Saving faith produces works. Thus, while the works do not save, those who are saved will naturally, demonstrate good works.

In Christ, Spero



*For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him
should not perish,
but have everlasting life.*

Thanks to www.bibleref.com for providing biblical material on our Daily Bread Scripture.



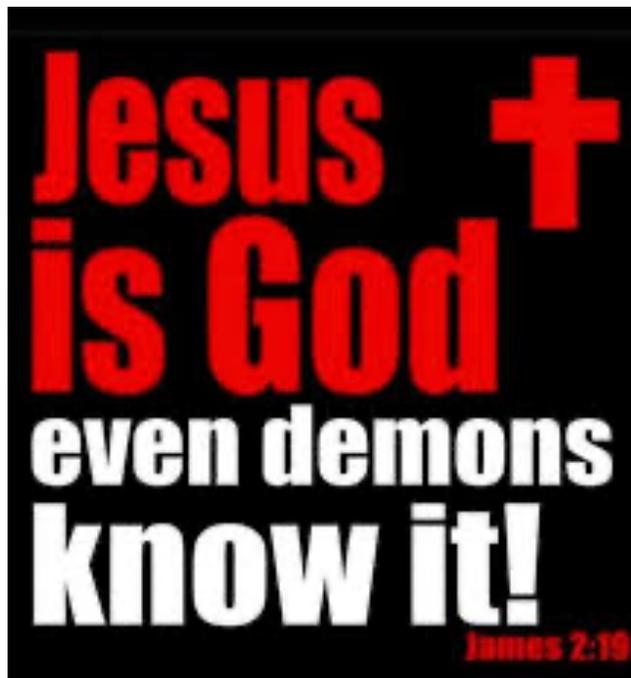
FAITH, FREEDOM, & FITNESS

DAILY BREAD

Tuesday, February 03

James 2:19-26

***You believe that there is one God. Good!
Even the demons believe that—and shudder.***



***You foolish person,
do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?***

Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar

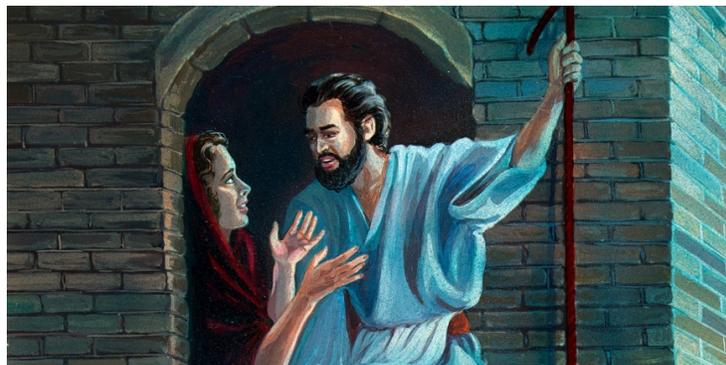
You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

***And the scripture was fulfilled that says,
“Abraham believed God,
and it was credited to him as righteousness,”
and he was called God’s friend.***



You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

***In the same way,
was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?***



As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

James continues making his point that genuine saving faith in Christ results in doing good works. This includes loving other believers and obeying our Father. It is not enough to simply agree to certain facts about God. It is not enough to claim to be a believer. Saving, living faith is a trust in God which naturally results in certain actions. It means living out the truth with our everyday choices.

Today's verses from James 2:19-26 begin with perhaps the strongest statement in Scripture on the difference between "knowing about" God and "trusting in" God:

***You believe that there is one God. Good!
Even the demons believe that—and shudder.***

Knowledge is not the same as trust, or obedience, or saving faith. After all, James argues, even demons believe that "***there is one God***" and they shudder in fear of Him.

Next, James asks if we want to understand, through evidence, that faith without works is dead:

***You foolish person,
do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?***

Next, James offers two examples to his readers to support his argument. His first example centers around Abraham:

***Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did
when he offered his son Isaac on the altar***

***You see that his faith and his actions were working together,
and his faith was made complete by what he did.***

***And the scripture was fulfilled that says,
"Abraham believed God,
and it was credited to him as righteousness,"
and he was called God's friend.***

And his second example is that of Rahab, a prostitute who sheltered Israel's spies and helped them escape from their enemies as they scouted out the Promised Land God had promised them:

***You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do
and not by faith alone.***

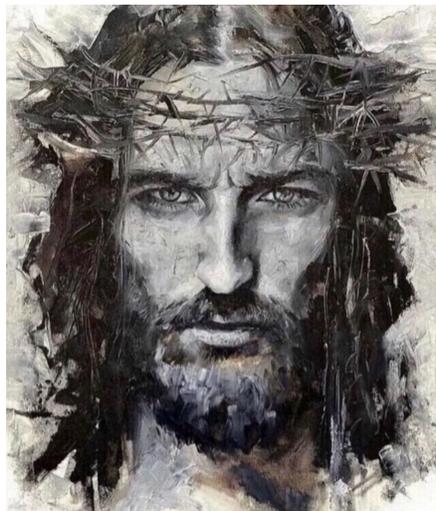
***In the same way,
was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous
for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off
in a different direction?***

James completes his case, reiterating that genuine faith in God naturally leads the believer to participate in good works:

***As the body without the spirit is dead,
so faith without deeds is dead.***

This isn't a particularly radical idea, even from a non-spiritual point of view. If we believe that God is truly God and that He has saved us through our faith in Christ, why would we not obey Him? Our deeds don't earn our salvation, but what we do proves whether or not we really have saving faith.

In Christ, Spero



*For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him
should not perish,
but have everlasting life.*

Thanks to www.bibleref.com for providing biblical material on our Daily Bread Scripture.



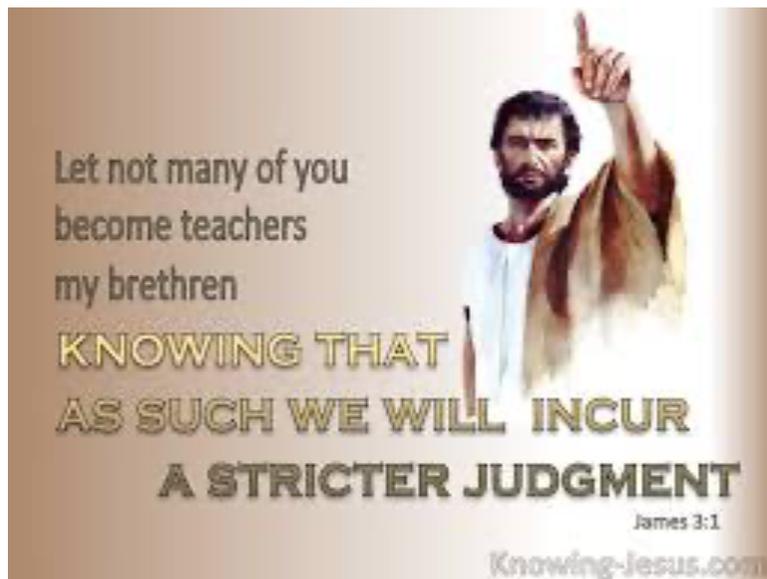
FAITH, FREEDOM, & FITNESS

DAILY BREAD

Wednesday, February 04

James 3:1-2

***Not many of you should become teachers,
my fellow believers,
because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.***



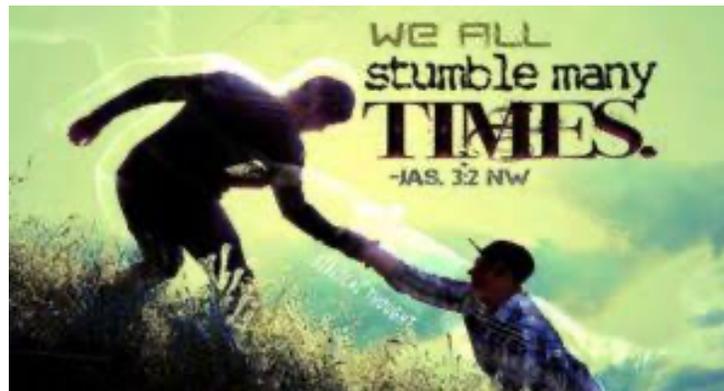
***We all stumble in many ways.
Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect,
able to keep their whole body in check.***

Today we begin studying the third chapter from the Book of James. In the first two verses from James 3, James launches into a new passage about controlling our words:

***Not many of you should become teachers,
my fellow believers,
because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.***

As we journey through chapter three, James will connect this to the main idea from chapter two, that saving faith in God always leads to a believer participating in good works. As James states in verse 2, this does not mean perfection, but it does mean our deeds and words should reflect our faith in God:

***We all stumble in many ways.
Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect,
able to keep their whole body in check.***



James begins with a warning about taking on the title of “teacher,” a warning we can also take into consideration when we take on the title of “coach,” “meet director,” or “judge.” When we claim the mantle of teacher we will face a stricter judgement. Simply stated, the more we claim to know, the more accountable we will be held for what we do with that knowledge.

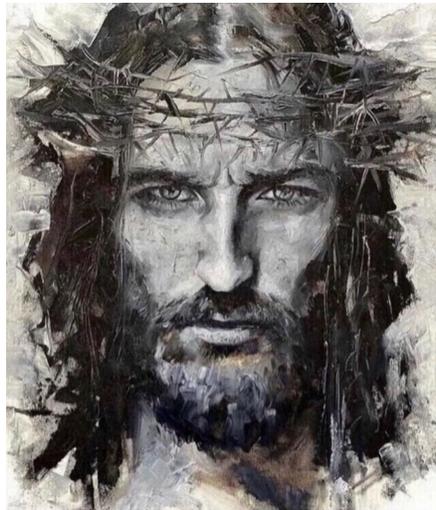
James is not suggesting that we should not aspire to become teachers of faith, but rather that we should not take the role lightly. As teachers, we will face a stricter judgement. Our job is not to prophesy or reveal “new” truths from God, but to take what has been revealed and make it easier for others to understand and follow.

As verse 2 clearly states, James is not requiring perfection from us. The point of chapter 2, once again, was that genuine Christ followers will participate in genuine good works in obedience to God. Our goal, therefore, is to stop stumbling, or sinning, so that we are in full control of ourselves at all times.

Once we learn to perfectly control our words, we will be in perfect control of every part of ourselves. This is a noble goal to aspire to, much like a powerlifter who aspires to never miss a lift on the competitive platform. And yet, as both James and the rest of the New Testament make plain, we will never attain that kind of perfection on this side of eternity.

And that's why we need Jesus!

In Christ, Spero



*For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him
should not perish,
but have everlasting life.*

Thanks to www.bibleref.com for providing biblical material on our Daily Bread Scripture.



FAITH, FREEDOM, & FITNESS

DAILY BREAD

Thursday, February 05

James 3:3-8

***When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us,
we can turn the whole animal.***

Or take ships as an example.

***Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds,
they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to
go.***



***Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body,
but it makes great boasts.***

Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.



The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.

***It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire,
and is itself set on fire by hell.***

***All kinds of animals, birds,
reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by
mankind,
but no human being can tame the tongue.***

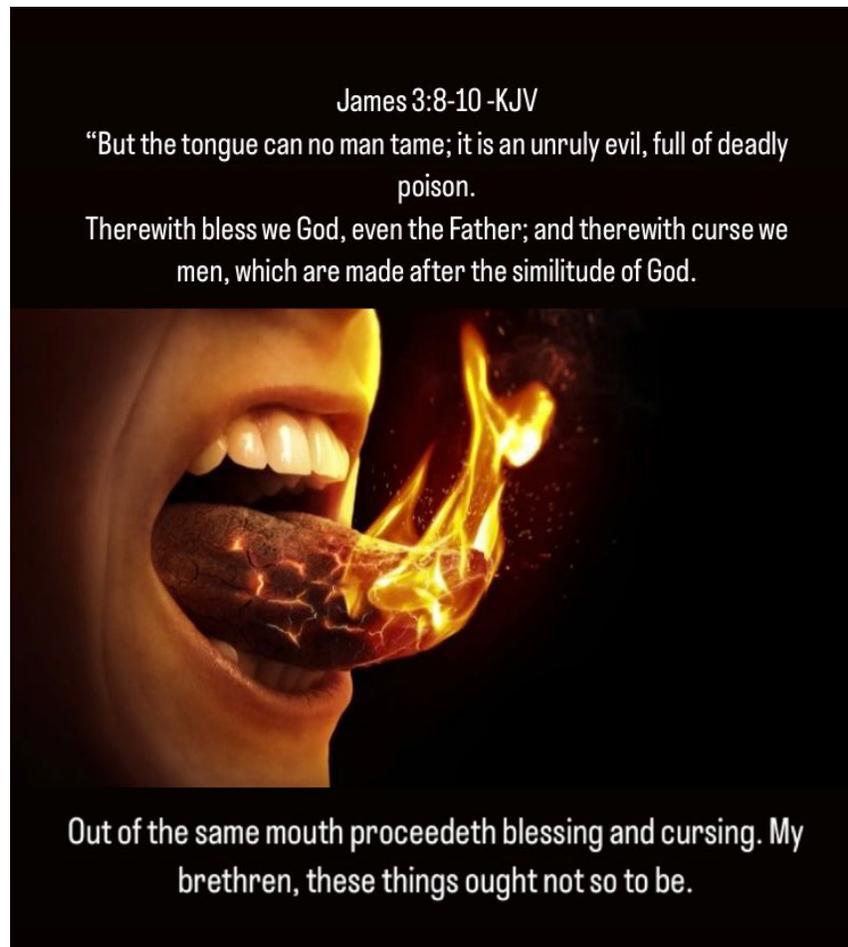
It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

In today's verses from James 3:3-8, James begins to illustrate the idea he introduced in verse 2: the tongue is the most difficult aspect of our lives to truly control. James goes as far as to say anyone who could perfectly control his words would be perfect and in full control of every part of himself. This ability to control the tongue is described in verse 2 as the means to "bridle" our bodies.

In verse 3, James points to horses as a natural example. Horses are large, powerful animals. And yet, they can be controlled with a small piece of metal and a few leather straps. James' point in referring to a horse's bit is that a large, powerful animal can be overcome and controlled by something very small.

In the next verse, James points to large ships at sea. The power behind those ships in Jame's era was the mighty wind, but nobody can control the wind. Wooden sailing ships full of cargo could weigh thousands of pounds. And yet, a pilot could alter the movement of the most massive boat using just a relatively small piece of wood: the rudder.

James then teaches that is we can learn to control our tongues – meaning the words we say – we could control what we do with our entire bodies. The one who controls a bit controls the entire horse. The one who controls the rudder steers the entire ship. And the man who learns to control his tongue is the one who has gained control over his entire self.



James concludes today's verses by pointing to an amazing human achievement: we can and have tamed virtually every kind of creature. But we can't tame our own tongue. Our tongues are uncontrollable, powerful, evil, and hurtful.

Just like it's not a gun that kills but rather the person in control of the gun, our tongues – the actual flaps of muscle in our mouths – are not themselves possessed of evil. Just as our deeds reveal our faith, our words reveal our hearts. We can't tame our tongues on our own, because we can't change our sinful nature on our own.

*One more time:
That's why we need Jesus in our hearts!*

In Christ, Spero



*For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him
should not perish,
but have everlasting life.*

Thanks to www.bibleref.com for providing biblical material on our Daily Bread Scripture.

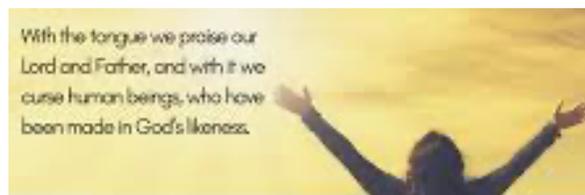


FAITH, FREEDOM, & FITNESS

DAILY BREAD

**Friday, February 06
James 3:9-12**

***With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father,
and with it we curse human beings,
who have been made in God's likeness.***



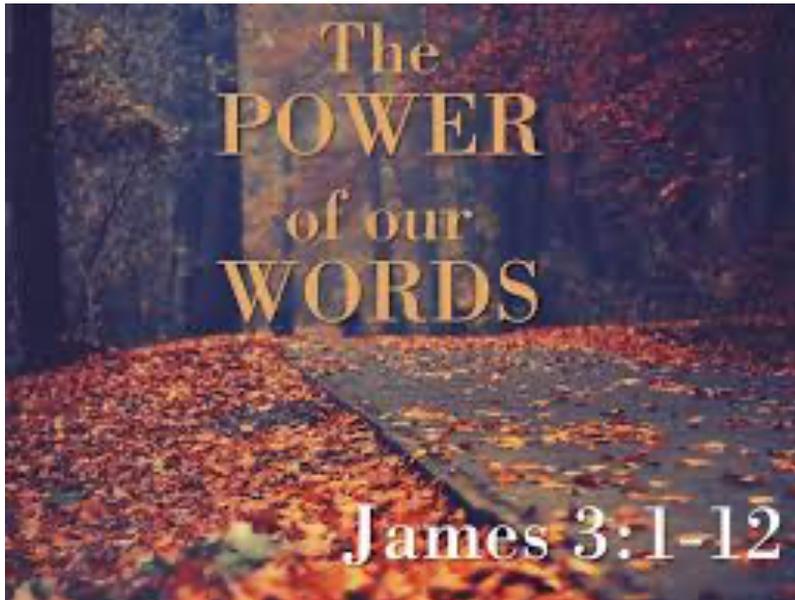
**THIS
SHOULD
NOT BE.**



***Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing.
My brothers and sisters, this should not be.***

Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

***My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives,
or a grapevine bear figs?
Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.***



In describing the uncontrolled, evil nature of our tongues – our words and how we use them – James now points to two contrary ways we use our tongues in verse 9:

***With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father,
and with it we curse human beings,
who have been made in God's likeness.***

First, we use our words to bless or praise our Lord and Father. And it is this way that makes his next example more convicting: we also use our words to “curse” people. In the classic sense, to “curse” another person is to condemn them, to wish them to be cut off from blessing. More generally, this type of “cursing” is a desire for evil to come into someone’s life. This speech is abusive because we are cursing a being made in the image of God. Thus, we use our words to bless our Creator and then to curse His creation.

***Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing.
My brothers and sisters, this should not be.***

In the next two verses, James continues to make the case that our tongues – the words we use which reveal our fallen hearts – are evil and uncontrollable:

Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

***My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives,
or a grapevine bear figs?
Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.***

Just like in the previous verse, James says what is becoming clear to us: this contrary use of words doesn't make sense. Blessing and cursing shouldn't originate from the same mouth.

James also continues to make his case that we are not naturally in control of our tongues. If we were, how could it be possible to use our words to both praise God and to curse His creation? James illustrates this point by showing that nowhere in nature will you find a mixture of salt and fresh water bubbling up from a spring, nor will you find figs on a grapevine.

In the same way, a single mouth *shouldn't* pour out both blessing and cursing. The fact that our mouths *do exactly that* is evidence that we're broken and need our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In Christ, Spero



*For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him
should not perish,
but have everlasting life.*

Thanks to www.bibleref.com for providing biblical material on our Daily Bread Scripture.



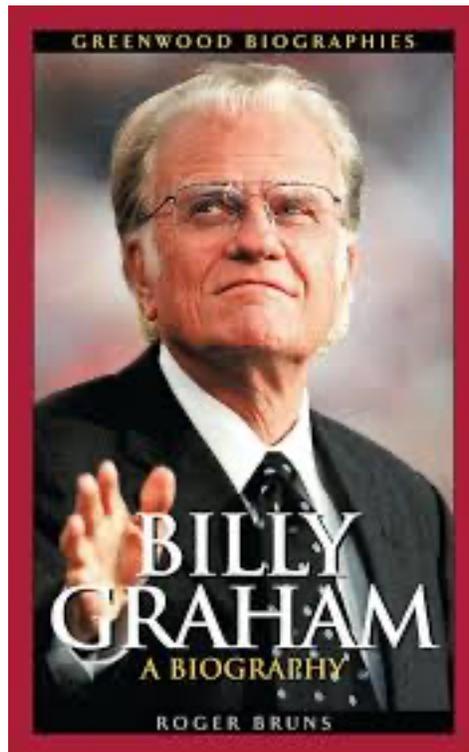
FAITH, FREEDOM, & FITNESS

DAILY BREAD

Saturday, February 07

James 3:13

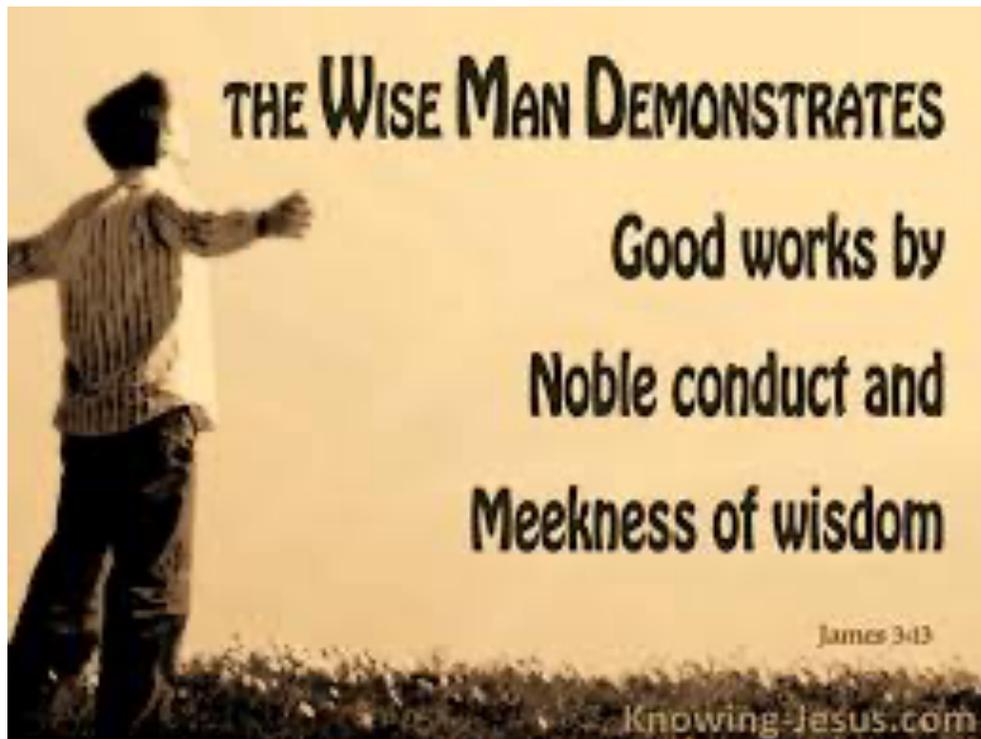
*Who is wise and understanding among you?
Let them show it by their good life,
by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.*



What is wisdom?

In a new section beginning in today's verse from James 3:13, James will show that how each person answers that question depends on whether their focus is limited to this life or includes eternity in heaven:

***Who is wise and understanding among you?
Let them show it by their good life,
by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.***

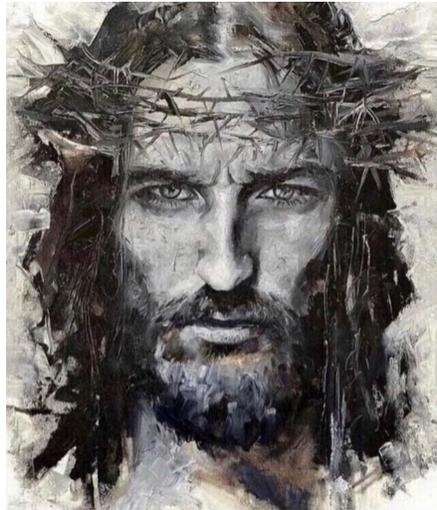


As you can see, James starts out with a provocative question. This test immediately challenges our personal pride: ***“who is wise and understanding among you?”***

Many with some scriptural training or higher status in the faith community will be tempted to count themselves qualified as “wise.” Those who feel inadequate in spiritual things might hope they won’t be noticed. James’ answer, however, may be surprising to many. As human beings, we tend to measure wisdom as having all the right answers to the hard questions. Instead, James echoes what he wrote about faith and good works in chapter 2: “I will show you my faith by my good works.”

A truly wise person will demonstrate the humility of wisdom by his good works. The true test of God's kind of wisdom is a life well lived, a life spent doing good works for others. As the wisdom book of Proverbs repeatedly makes clear, humility is an essential component of living wisely (Proverbs 1:5-8). Without setting ourselves aside, we cannot hope to become the wise servants God has called us to be.

In Christ, Spero



*For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him
should not perish,
but have everlasting life.*

Thanks to www.bibleref.com for providing biblical material on our Daily Bread Scripture.