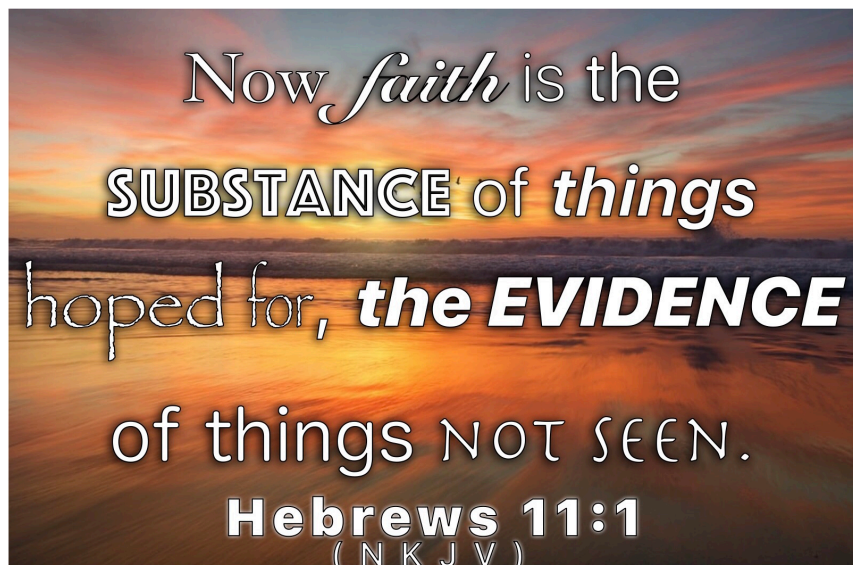


# Exhort One Another

Weekly Newsletter



## Food For Thought

### 1 Corinthians 3:2-3

"I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, because you were not yet ready for it. In fact, you are still not ready, because you are still fleshly. For since there is envy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and living like unbelievers?"

I'll be honest, I couldn't decide what to write about this week. I knew I wanted to build on last week's topic, but was unsure which direction to proceed in. I've decided to start with a little miniseries, breaking down the list of spiritual milk given in [Hebrews 5:12-6:3](#). I'm not sure how long this miniseries will go on, but probably no longer than 7 or 8 weeks. A brief review of this passage may be in order, and then we'll cut to the chase;

### Pop Quiz

In [Isaiah 38](#) the sun...

- (a) Stood still for an entire day
- (b) Went backwards 10 degrees
- (c) Caused global warming
- (d) Turned black like sackcloth

**Answer to last week's:**

14 giraffes were on the ark.

Why fourteen? In [Genesis 7:2](#), Noah was told to bring seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, and only one pair of every kind which was unclean.

According to [Leviticus 11:3](#), this would include giraffes (as well as water buffalo, and takin)!

### Interesting Observation

As evidence of the resurrection, the Sadducees would have done well to note Abraham's faith when he nearly sacrificed Isaac. (See [Genesis 22:1-19](#) and [Hebrews 11:17-19](#))

### Memory Verse

1 Peter 1:14-16

"As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. But as the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy."

jumping in with the concept of **Faith in God**. Although not the first on the list, it forms a good starting place, and something that is key to understanding the other things on this list.

Faith is, after all, a major tenet of the gospel, as there is no such thing as ‘believing the gospel’ if there is no faith with which to believe! Anyway, to recap the passage we are examining:

### 📖 Hebrews 5:12-6:3

“Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God’s revelation again. You need milk, not solid food. Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature—for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil. Therefore, leaving the elementary message about the Messiah, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God, teaching about ritual washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And we will do this if God permits.”

So, what is faith? To dig into that, why don’t we begin by examining and understanding the word translated as faith here. For those of you who enjoy studying the original languages of the bible, you may already be familiar with the greek word πίστις (*pístis*, *Strong’s #G4102*) which is used 244 times in the New Testament.\*

\*According to the ‘King James Bible Concordance’ and ‘Strong’s Hebrew & Greek Dictionaries’.

What does this word mean? *Strong’s Hebrew & Greek Dictionaries* provides us with this answer:

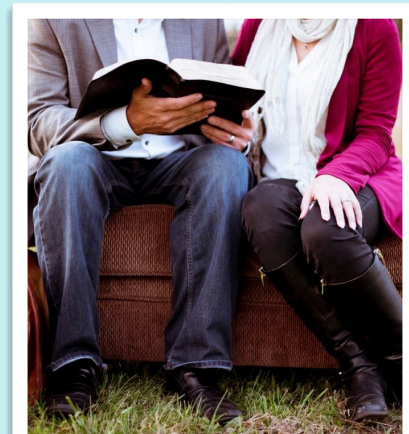
“From G3982; *persuasion*, that is, *credence*; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially *reliance* upon Christ for salvation; abstractly *constancy* in such profession; by extension the system of religious (Gospel) *truth*

## CONVERSATION STARTER

How do we *know* that we know God? Is it by doing some kind of good work, or experiencing an intense emotion? How can we discern how deep our fellowship with God runs? What can we do to avoid being lukewarm, or worse yet, being told that our Messiah never knew us? Is there a way to have confidence that we *know* Him?

### Matthew 7:22-23

“On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?’ Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you! **Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!**’” \*Emphasis not mine.



itself: - assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.” —*Strong’s Hebrew & Greek Dictionary*, #G4102.

The *Complete Word Study Dictionary* extends this still further:

“πίστις: *pístis*; gen. *písteōs*, fem. noun from *peíthō* (G3982), to win over, persuade. Faith. Subjectively meaning firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness (though rare). Objectively meaning that which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith.” —*The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, #G4102.\*

*\*I have not included the full article here, as it is lengthy. Those who are so inclined are welcome to examine it themselves.*

So faith (*pístis*) is an assurance, belief, fidelity, firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, reality, and faithfulness. (A common derivative of this word, also frequently translated ‘faith,’ is πιστεύω [*písteuō*, *Strong’s #G4100*]). With the sense of faithfulness or fidelity, we can also see a connection to action. Faith is more than intellectual, being something that is stronger than an emotion and that runs as deep as our hearts and actions. This is an important aspect to keep in mind. In fact, the Hebrew equivalent to this word, עֲמֻנָה (*ěmûnâh*, *Strong’s #H530*), is even more dependent on action. This is due to Hebrew being a language that is concrete in meaning, rather than abstract. The word *ěmûnâh* is the word used in *Habukkuk 2:4*, quoted by Paul in *Romans 1:17* (using the word *pístis* in the Greek).

With this connection to action, we might define this as such a strong intellectual and spiritual belief that it produces action in our lives. In a spiritual context, that action would be our obedience and response to the gospel and how we live our lives in faith *after* that initial response. Belief-to-obey, in a word (or three). Now let us examine the Scriptures together and see if this view is consistent; if this is indeed a kind of belief that produces action, beyond just the definition of the word.

#### **John 3:36, ESV**

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

Notice that this passage is in *John 3*, the chapter containing the famous passage, *John 3:16*. If you read through the entire context of the chapter, you will see that while this is John the Baptist speaking, Jesus Himself (also called Yahusha) was speaking on this same topic just earlier in this same chapter (*John 3:16-21*), stating that those who do *not believe* in the Son of God also have *evil works*, which the light of Messiah would expose; while those who *do what is true*, gladly come into the light. Combined with these words from John the Baptist, the connection between faith and deeds

is hard to miss. Whoever believes [#G4100] has eternal life, but whoever does not *obey* [#G544] (a part of true belief/faith) remains under God's wrath. Let's proceed to some other passages:

#### Romans 1:5-6

“We have received grace and apostleship through Him to bring about the obedience of faith among all the nations, on behalf of His name, including yourselves who also belong to Jesus Christ by calling:”

#### Romans 16:25-27

“Now to Him who has power to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation about Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept silent for long ages but now revealed and made known through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal God to advance the obedience of faith among all nations—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ—to Him be the glory forever! Amen.”

Amazingly, these mentions somehow slipped my attention despite having read the letter through multiple times, until I was reading it just a few months ago (and perhaps I'm not the only one!). Yet they represent an important point in Paul's writing: Paul's stated mission was to bring the **obedience of faith** to the nations (also translated *gentiles*). He opened and closed his epistle to those at Rome with the reminder that he was sent to bring this same obedience of faith to *all* the nations, including those at Rome. A careful study of Romans reveals that the entire content of the epistle follows that same vein. He thoroughly knocks down the arguments of the philosophical greco-romans (that abstract faith was all there was to salvation), as well as some of the false ideologies among the Jews of his time (such as that one could be saved by deeds alone); cinching the matter by such irrefutable statements as those in the following passages:

#### Romans 2:13

“For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be declared righteous.”

#### Romans 3:27-28, 31

“Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By one of works? No, on the contrary, by a law of faith. For we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. [...31] Do we then cancel the law through faith? Absolutely not! On the contrary, we uphold the law.”

#### Romans 10:16-17

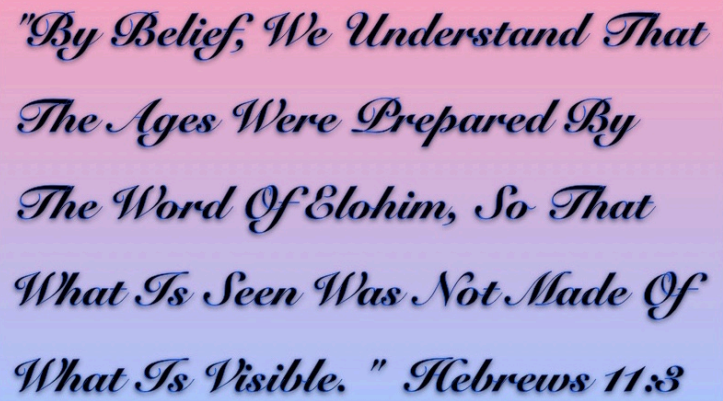
“But all did not obey the gospel. For Isaiah says, **Lord, who has believed our message?** So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.” \*Emphasis not mine.

You can see in just these few verses that this concept of acting on our faith saturates the book of Romans. Notice that last passage in particular: “All did not *obey*... Lord, who has *believed*...?” A fun

project for those who are interested in continuing to study the relationship between faith and deeds, would be going through the book of Romans and marking all references to faith and deeds. Keep in mind as you go that contrasts between righteousness and unrighteousness are references to deeds, and contrasts between belief and unbelief are references to faith. ;)

I'll add just a couple more passages for consideration and then close this topic for the day; leaving you to search out the matter for yourselves and find other relevant passages.

Now, I'm sure at least a couple of you have probably been eagerly waiting for me to bring this one up! **Hebrews 11**, the chapter that defines faith:



*"By Belief, We Understand That  
The Ages Were Prepared By  
The Word Of Elohim, So That  
What Is Seen Was Not Made Of  
What Is Visible. " Hebrews 11:3*

 **Hebrews 11:1-3**

“Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen. For our ancestors won God's approval by it. By faith we understand that the universe was created by God's command, so that what is seen has been made from things that are not visible.”

But here's an interesting thing to consider as well: **Hebrews 11** goes on to define this further—in keeping with the definition of cooperation between faith and deeds which we have already seen—offering examples of men and women with remarkable **faith**, *who did amazing deeds*. In my own paraphrase and summary of nearly the entire chapter: “By faith... he/she acted.”

And while discussing faith, we cannot forget the sound words of James on the matter, as well as those of our Messiah:

 **James 2:14-26**

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you don't give them what the body needs, what good is it? In the same way faith, if it doesn't have works, is dead by itself. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith from my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. The demons also believe—and they shudder. Foolish man! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is useless? Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was perfected. So the Scripture was fulfilled that says, **Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness**, and he was called God's friend. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way, wasn't Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by a different route? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.” \*Emphasis not mine.

Can there be any mistake about James' meaning here? I love how he takes faith and deeds, seen as separate things by those who did not understand their cooperation, and binds them together seamlessly. "Faith without deeds is **dead**." "Faith was active **together** with his deeds, and by deeds, faith was **perfected**." The heart of faith is also of deeds, just as the heart for deeds is also that of faith. What a lesson for all of us to take to heart (and put in action)!

 **Matthew 7:24-27**

"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of Mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. And its collapse was great!"

Those who hear... *and who obey*; these are the ones built on a solid foundation. Not as hearers only, but as **doers** who act upon His words (as Paul —and James— also said)!

But let's look at the context of this passage in *Matthew 7*, and see if we can gain a little more insight as to why Jesus is making a lack of obedience sound so serious.

 **Matthew 7:15-20**

"Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. You'll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So you'll recognize them by their fruit."

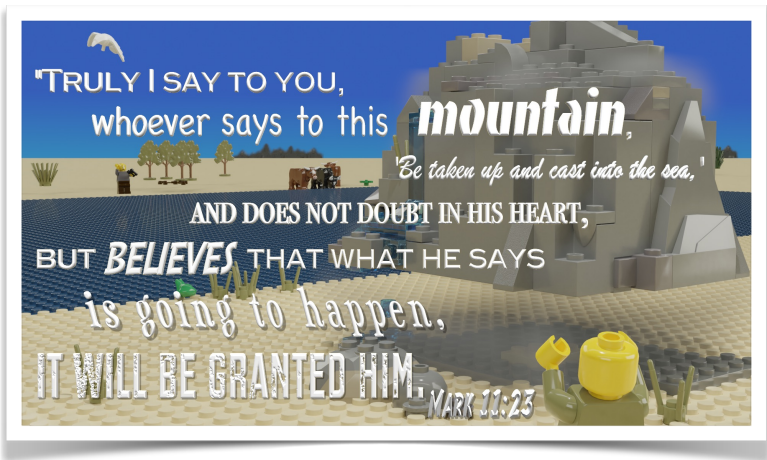
Our actions in faith are the fruit that we bear, which reveals whether we are a good tree or a bad tree. If our faith is real, then we will bear fruit. Faith without works is dead, just as a fruit tree that bears no fruit is of no value. Remember that we are to recognize others by their fruit: if we are fruitless, we are hypocrites; and if such is the case, then we are the ones who will, on the day of judgement be, "cut down and thrown into the fire."

 **Matthew 7:21-23**

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but *only* the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! **Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!**'"<sup>\*Emphasis not mine.</sup>

The fruit we bear is not merely on a physical level however. The fruit that Jesus is talking about is the fruit of faith, which causes us to obey. Notice that the individuals in this passage think they have a spiritual connection with God (they can prophesy, cast out demons, perform miracles...), yet ultimately they, (a) do not know him and, (b) are lawbreakers. Where is the disconnect happening? When faith is *combined* with deeds, rather than either one operating on its own, you are seeking to do the deeds that were prepared for you to do (*Ephesians 2:10*); you are obedient to the law, rather than being a lawbreaker; you are in accordance with Yahuah's will, because living in faith and obedience, you *know* Him.\*

\*Additional reading on the topic of knowing God/loving God includes (but is not limited to): *1 John 4:7-8, 1 John 4:20-21, 1 John 3:4-7, 1 John 5:1-3.*



This poses the question: if our faith in God is connected to and revealed by our actions, by what actions do we show our faith in God to be true? It certainly gives us all something to ponder, and is worth praying about indeed.

May Yahuah give us all the steadfastness, the

fidelity, the faithfulness, to *live out* our faith, and not merely believe *intellectually*. May he enable us to worship him in spirit and in truth (*John 4:24*), and give us love in action and in truth (*1 John 3:18*). Faith, working together with our deeds...

For therein lies the essence of true faith.

**QUESTIONS:**

- How can we endeavor to walk out our faith in a more fruitful way?
- What does it mean to obey God, and how does that relate to living out our faith?
- How can we be faithful to God, as He is faithful to us?

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## Be Separate

### Leviticus 19:2

“Speak to the entire Israelite community and tell them: Be holy because I, Yahweh your God, am holy.”

Today's Topic: **Taming The Tongue**

Continuing from last week's topic of being holy in all of our conduct, let's look into how we can be holy in our *speech*. I think it would be safe to say that I'm not the only one who has ever regretted something I said. It can be pretty easy to slip up sometimes, but causing damage can be much easier than repairing it! The tongue can be a weapon for tearing one another down, or a tool for building one another up. James goes into a great deal of detail on this, giving us some very good reasons to stop and think about it.

 **James 3:2b, 5-10**

“If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a mature man who is also able to control his whole body. [...5] So too, though the tongue is a small part of *the body*, it boasts great things. Consider how large a forest a small fire ignites. And the tongue is a fire. The tongue, a world of unrighteousness, is placed among the parts of our *bodies*. It pollutes the whole body, sets the course of life on fire, and is set on fire by hell. Every sea creature, reptile, bird, or animal is tamed and has been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. We praise our Lord and Father with it, and we curse men who are made in God's likeness with it. Praising and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers, these things should not be this way.”

I would recommend reading the rest of the chapter to gain some better contextual understanding; still, even just with this excerpt, you can see the importance of taming our tongues. But does scripture give us any clear directions on how we are to do that? As a matter of fact, a lot is said throughout scripture about our tongues (more, even, than I could have room for in this newsletter)!

So let's look at some of the various things our Messiah had to say on the matter:

 **Matthew 15:18**

“But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a man.”

 **Luke 6:45**

“A good man produces good out of the good storeroom of his heart. An evil man produces evil out of the evil storeroom, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.”

 **Matthew 12:34-37**

“Brood of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil? For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart. A good man produces good things from his storeroom of good, and an evil man produces evil things from his storeroom of evil. I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

The mouth speaks out of the overflow of the heart: if our tongue needs taming, our heart does too! This makes David's words vividly lucid, as we recognize the connection between our heart and our lips:

 **Psalm 17:3**

“You have tested my heart; You have examined *me* at night. You have tried me and found nothing *evil*; I have determined that my mouth will not sin.”

 **Psalm 19:12-14**

“Who perceives his unintentional sins? Cleanse me from my hidden faults. Moreover, keep Your servant from willful sins; do not let them rule over me. Then I will be innocent and cleansed from blatant rebellion. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to You, LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.”



We should also give heed to Solomon, as the wisest king of Israel by Yahuah's word (*1 Kings 4:29-34*, cf. *James 1:5-8*):

 **Proverbs 16:21, 23-24**

“Anyone with a wise heart is called discerning, and pleasant speech increases learning. [...23] A wise heart instructs its mouth and increases learning with its speech. Pleasant words are a honeycomb: sweet to the taste and health to the body.”

Having established these things, let's move on to how to put them into practice:

 **Ephesians 5:4**

“Coarse and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks.”

It's easy to see 'cursing' or 'blasphemy' as coarse talking, but what about euphemisms for foul language, or things of a similar nature? Many of these things become a part of daily life without even a thought to their usage. Unfortunately however, *many* of the exclamations that we might use sometimes actually originate in curses. I personally started weeding out euphemisms from my own vocabulary when I started looking up the definitions (and origins) of exclamations that are used all the time. But how is a surreptitious curse any better than one spoken openly? Or how is a more 'polite' form any better than the real thing? Euphemisms exist in order to avoid the original words which are deemed unacceptable; But changing exactly what is spoken doesn't fix the heart behind it. And if that *isn't* actually our intent, we should also have no desire to use language intended for that purpose without cause. It is no wonder that people with worldly thoughts have found alternative ways to express the

things in their hearts, but as our hearts become cleansed, and our minds renewed by the Word of the Lord, pure and undefiled, we should come to no longer bear such a resemblance to those in ignorance of the righteousness of God (cf. *1 Peter 1:14-15*). As we already saw from James, “Praising and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers, these things should not be this way.”

**“Praising and cursing  
come out of the same  
mouth. My brothers,  
these things should  
not be this way.”**

— James 3:10

Proverbs is equally clear on this topic:

 **Proverbs 26:18-26, 28**

“Like a madman who throws flaming darts and deadly arrows, so is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, “I was only joking!” Without wood, fire goes out; without a gossip, conflict dies down. As charcoal for embers and wood for fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife. A gossip's words are like choice food that goes down to one's innermost being. Smooth lips with an evil heart are like glaze on an earthen vessel. A hateful person disguises himself with his speech and harbors deceit within. When he speaks graciously, don't believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart. Though his hatred is concealed by deception, his evil will be revealed in the assembly. [...28] A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth causes ruin.”

Notice the detail Solomon goes into on the one who speaks smooth words. We can see from this passage several things we should avoid in our speech: deceitfully joking, gossiping, quarreling, speaking smooth words with an evil heart, lying, and flattery. We should not merely conceal our wickedness with fine sounding speech, but look to fix our heart first and foremost.

 **2 Peter 2:18**

“For by uttering boastful, empty words, they seduce, with fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have barely escaped from those who live in error.”

Let us each eagerly push toward the goal of taming our tongue and being holy in our speech as well as our actions.

 **Philippians 2:14-15**

“Do everything without grumbling and arguing, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world.”

 **1 Peter 3:10-11a**

“For the one who wants to love life and to see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit, and he must turn away from evil and do what is good.”

There are other passages that I could cover here, but I’ll move forward now. Thus far we have been looking at how *not* to use our tongues, but let’s take a look at the positive side of things — how *are* we to use them?

 **Colossians 4:2**

“Your speech should always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.”

 **Luke 21:13-15**

“It will lead to an opportunity for you to witness. Therefore make up your minds not to prepare your defense ahead of time, for I will give you such words and a wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.”

 **1 Timothy 4:12**

“Let no one despise your youth; instead, you should be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

Should we not all aspire to be an example to the believers in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity?

 **1 Peter 4:11**

“If anyone speaks, *it should be* as one who speaks God’s words; if anyone serves, *it should be* from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.”

 **1 Corinthians 14:26**

“What then is *the conclusion*, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, *another* language, or an interpretation. All things must be done for edification.”

We ought to speak words that edify each other; words honoring to Yahuah our God and Father. In place of hatred, speaking with the love of God; instead of cursing, blessing; giving thanks in every circumstance, without frustration, in

order that we may build one another up in the truth, as it says; “All things must be done for edification.”

 **1 Timothy 5:1-2**

“Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and with all propriety, the younger women as sisters.”

Although not directly related to taming our tongues, this one is important, being a guideline for us all when speaking with one another. Regardless of age or gender, we can encourage one another in whatever ways possible with due *respect* and *propriety*, as is fit for another’s benefit; not letting a brother or sister in the Lord fall down when we can help them up. Our conduct and speech should be as pure with our peers and those younger than us as it is with our elders, and as gracious and forgiving with our elders as it is with our peers, for “There is no favoritism with God.” (*Romans 2:11*; cf. *James 2:9*).

## Guess The Context!

“As my life was fading away, I remembered Yahweh. My prayer came to You, to Your holy temple. Those who cling to worthless idols forsake faithful love, but as for me, I will sacrifice to You with a voice of thanksgiving. I will fulfill what I have vowed. Salvation is from the LORD!”

**Guess the context!** What book is this from? What is the surrounding passage about?

 **1 Thessalonians 5:11**

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.”

Our speech should always reflect a desire to build one another up, never to tear down. Hurtful comments, futile arguments; these are not a taming of the tongue. How could we say we love the brethren if our conversation were to be full of malice, spite, jealousy, or the like?

 **2 Timothy 4:2**

“Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching.”

 **Titus 2:1, 8, 15**

“But you must say the things that are consistent with sound teaching.

[8] Your message is to be sound beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be ashamed, having nothing bad to say about us.

[15] Say these things, and encourage and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

Are our words always consistent with sound teaching? Are we beyond reproach? Notice the patience and authority mentioned in these several passages. Even rebuke —although firm and authoritative— is to be carried out with patience.

 **Hebrews 3:12-13**

“Watch out, brothers, so that there won't be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that departs from the living God. But encourage each other daily, while it is still called **today**, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.”

 **Hebrews 10:23-25, NKJV**

“Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

I love these passages. Why? Because of the *reason* they give us to exhort one another. They tell us *exactly* why we should build one another up, and why we should not neglect the gathering of ourselves together; also reminding us to exhort one another all the more as we see the day drawing near. Our purpose in fellowship is not to be self-seeking and look only to our own faith while neglecting others, but to mutually encourage one another in our common faith (**Romans 1:12**). And for what reason? That no one is hardened by the deceitfulness of sin; that no one will have an evil, unbelieving heart that departs from the living God; to promote love and good works, and to encourage each other. *This* is why we fellowship; *this* is why we exhort one another daily, lest *anyone* should fall short of the mark. In this journey to make it through life with our faith intact, we need all the encouragement we can get! And yes, at times even rebuke; and the better we receive correction — whether from a brother or sister, or otherwise, by the hand of God — the faster we will grow to be **strong** in our faith and **firmly** planted in the truth of His word.

 **Ephesians 4:25, 29, 31-32**

“Since you put away lying, Speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. [...29] No foul language is to come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. [...31] All bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.”

Here are some great guidelines for controlling our tongues and using them only for what is good, instead of for evil. We ought always to speak the truth, and be rid of foul language; always speaking words that will build up and give grace to our hearers. We should not be speaking bitterly or angrily, and should put away shouting and slander. The kindness and compassion of Christ should permeate our lives and speech, and we should forgive others readily, just as we have been forgiven. Shouting and anger, in particular, are two that we should keep an eye out for. Not infrequently, even *good* discussions that could be had in a *positive* manner are sabotaged by temper being inappropriately managed. Of course it's easy to react negatively when we first hear something we are unsure of or disagree with, but if our initial reaction sets the tone of a conversation (rather than being self-controlled), it can make it immediately difficult to continue talking about something —even if it's important.

Similar is the exhortation in Proverbs, which we would all do well to remember:

 **Proverbs 15:1**

“A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath.”

I have personally been trying to apply this principle in my daily life, and although I don't always remember to, when I do it makes a notable impact in how I interact with others. May we all be gentle and considerate in our speech, even when something may be an entirely new concept to us, or an otherwise difficult topic for us to engage in!

 **Ephesians 5:17-21**

“So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. And don't get drunk with wine, which *leads to* reckless actions, but be filled by the Spirit: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music from your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.”

 **Colossians 3:16-17**

“Let the message about the Messiah dwell richly among you, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

This provides some great ideas for us to draw from in how we can encourage one another with our speaking... or should I say our singing? ;) *Whatever* we do, whether in **word** or in **deed**, we ought to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. That doesn't sound like idle talk, nor profane language. *Words mean things*, and we will be held responsible for every idle word we speak (*Matthew 12:36*).

 **1 Peter 3:15b-16**

“Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. However, do this with gentleness and respect, keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are accused, those who denounce your Christian life will be put to shame.”

And finally, a wonderful reason to keep our speech pure; our tongue under control. Our words can make or break our testimony to others. We ought to be gentle, respectful, and keep our conscience clear. This goes for our interaction with each other, and our interaction with those who are not of our same faith.

Our words are like swords, but they can either be used for good or for evil.

 **Psalm 57:4**

“My soul *is* among lions; I lie *among* the sons of men Who are set on fire, Whose teeth *are* spears and arrows, And their tongue a sharp sword.”

 **Psalm 64:3**

“Who sharpen their tongue like a sword, And bend *their bows to shoot* their arrows—bitter words, That they may shoot in secret at the blameless; Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear.”

The wicked are the ones who use their tongues as swords for destruction. But there is another kind of sword, one that is good, that we should all take in hand.

**That is the Word of God.**

**📖 Psalms 149:5-7, 9**

“Let the saints be joyful in glory;  
Let them sing aloud on their beds.  
*Let* the high praises of God *be* in  
their mouth, And a two-edged  
sword in their hand, To execute  
vengeance on the nations, And  
punishments on the peoples; [...9]  
To execute on them the written  
judgment—This honor have all His  
saints. Praise the LORD!”

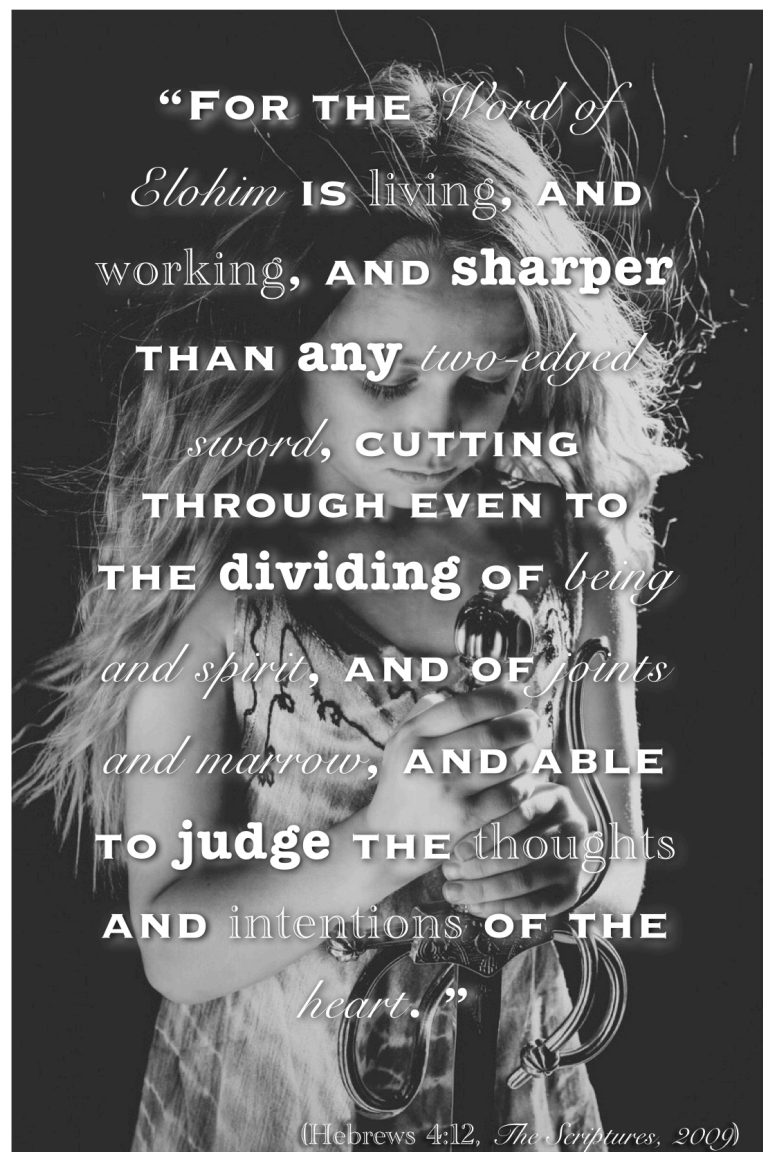
**📖 Ephesians 6:17**

“Take the helmet of salvation, and  
the sword of the Spirit, which is  
God’s word.”

**📖 Hebrews 4:12-13**

“For the word of God is living and  
effective and sharper than any  
double-edged sword, penetrating as  
far as the separation of soul and  
spirit, joints and marrow. It is able  
to judge the ideas and thoughts of  
the heart. No creature is hidden  
from Him, but all things are naked  
and exposed to the eyes of Him to  
whom we must give an account.”

And who is the Word of God? Yahusha (that is, Jesus) our Messiah. That adds a whole new element to, “Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do *everything* in the name of the Lord Jesus,” (**Colossians 3:17**). We want our speech and actions to be pure, because our Savior is pure, and we desire to follow Him. Be holy as your father in heaven is holy; and this in matters of the heart, of the body, and of the tongue.



**📖 John 1:1-5**

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it.”

**📖 John 12:48**

“The one who rejects Me and doesn't accept My sayings has this as his judge: The word I have spoken will judge him on the last day.”

 **Revelation 19:11, 13, 15-16**

“Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and He judges and makes war in righteousness. [...12] He wore a robe stained with blood, and His name is the Word of God. [...14] A sharp sword came from His mouth, so that He might strike the nations with it. He will shepherd them with an iron scepter. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty. And He has a name written on His robe and on His thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

I hope this section has given you all something to consider, something to act upon, and something to study. May we continue to be more holy in our speech and in our conduct, showing love to one another and to God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since I did so in the last section anyway, I'm going to go ahead and offer a study suggestion for those who are interested! Try going through the book of Proverbs and marking all the references to how we are to communicate (and how we are not!), and pick a few passages to memorize. Proverbs are super simple to memorize, and come more easily to mind when you need to apply them than longer passages. Having such easy-to-recall scripture in mind can help us to avoid temptation in a pinch. Think of how Jesus responded to the tempter: he replied with the truth of the Word.

Since James says taming the tongue is harder than taming anything else, it seems like a good aspect of our lives to start working on as we seek to be set apart to Yahuah, and set apart from the world. We ought to make some amount of progress if we start working diligently toward that goal every day!

 **1 Peter 1:13-19**

“Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be serious and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. But as the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, **Be holy, because I am holy.** And if you address as Father the One who judges impartially based on each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your temporary residence. For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from the fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.”

**QUESTIONS:**

What are some other ways we can be holy in our speech, and work to tame our tongues? How can we work to edify and build one another up with our words? Are there any other passages that teach us how to use our words for God's purposes rather than our own?

“Better a dry crust with peace than a house full of feasting with strife.”



(Proverbs 17:1, HCSB)

## To Wrap It All Up

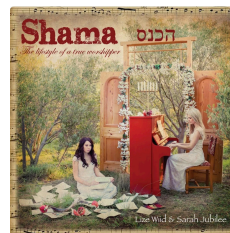
Not to be repetitive or cliché, but I hope you enjoyed yourself reading this; and that it gave everyone something to consider, something to pray about, and even (perhaps) something to study further and talk about!

I know I’m a day late, but I’ll aim to be more punctual next week!

I also noticed that the ‘Be Separate’ section seems to repeat the concept of ‘building one another up’ a bit much... in case I didn’t make it clear enough that we ought to edify and love each other. ;)

This issue was a bit lengthier than originally planned, yet I trust that it was not too boring to read! It’s funny; when you start adding scriptures to things like this, they seem to grow more quickly! I’ve tried to keep this founded in scripture, challenging each of us to dig into scripture and be firm and fruitful in our faith.

This song was chosen because it is a call to action, to be steadfast in our faith, fitting perfectly with our ‘Food For Thought’ section. Lize Wiid & Sarah Jubilee’s song, ‘Stay Awake’:



[YouTube](#)

[Apple Music](#)

## A Thought For This Thanksgiving, (2021)

Today is Thanksgiving Day, a time of feasting, merriment, and gathering together with loved ones to make new memories. Although not established as a feast in scripture, it is a time when we can bring to mind the thankfulness we have for Yahuah, our Lord; something we should bear in mind all year long. Thankfulness is mentioned all throughout scripture, from sacrifices of thanksgiving in the wilderness (*Leviticus 7:12*), to the angels in heaven singing in the end times (*Revelation 7:12*). Even our prayers are supposed to be offered up with thanksgiving!

 **Philippians 4:6**  
“Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”

What are we thankful for this year? Paul said we ought to be content with just food and clothes (*1 Timothy 6:8*), yet we have so much more. I mean really, everyone this year should *at least* have a sticker that says, “I survived the hand sanitizer shortage of 2020!” However you spend your day today, remember to give thanks to Yahuah for everything He has blessed you with, and continue to give thanks every day, living a life of

**THANKSGIVING.**



## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

I have a **special request** for those that are willing to help me out! Next week I intend to include a couple columns for folk's thoughts, comments, and advice; and would be grateful if anyone could send something in! The columns themselves are for shorter thoughts, but if you have something longer I'll try to stick it in there somewhere! Thoughts can be about this week's topics or last week's topics, or about anything you like! (Although if it is something that is connected to a particular topic we may want to save it for a future issue that discusses that topic). Please let me know if you want your name published or not, as you can choose a pen name or remain entirely anonymous if you like. Thanks ahead of time!

—The Editor.

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### LIVE IT!

This week, let's challenge ourselves to live out *Ephesians 5:4*. How can we be more careful to heed this instruction in our daily lives?

**Ephesians 5:4**  
“Coarse and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks.”

### *Always remember:*

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:14-25 (NKJV):

“Now we **exhort** you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.

See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is **good** both for yourselves and for all.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in **everything** give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Do not quench the Spirit.

Do not despise prophecies.

Test all things; **hold fast** what is good.

Abstain from every form of evil.

Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify** you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is **faithful**, who also will do it.

Brethren, pray for us.”

May our Lord Yahuah bless you all. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.