

James 2:18–26 (NASB 2020)

18 But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But are you willing to acknowledge, you foolish person, that faith without works is useless? 21 Was our father Abraham not justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called a friend of God. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 In the same way, was Rahab the prostitute not justified by works also when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? 26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

- 1) He concludes with another concrete analogy – body without spirit and faith without works – both are dead!
 - a) They may both be walking around so to speak but in truth, they are dead!
- 2) There are two scriptures from Matthew which look at exactly what James has been talking about in these last two passages.
 - a) First, from the sermon on the mount...

Matthew 7:21–23 (NASB 2020)

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. ²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; leave Me, you who practice lawlessness.’

What is missing from these folks – faith or works? (BE CAREFUL)!

- b) Obviously, they had some works so works could not be completely missing.
- c) You would think that they also had some faith – without faith, how could they have prophesied, cast out demons and performed miracles – in Christ’s name?
- d) The clue is perhaps in the last phrase of verse 23 – “you who practice lawlessness.”
 - i) They probably fall in the area of false prophets.
 - ii) One thing I think we have to realize about false prophets is they don’t usually think they are false prophets – they think they are in the right in what they are teaching.

Mark 13:22 (NASB 2020)

²² for false christs and false prophets will arise, and will provide signs and wonders, in order to mislead, if possible, the elect.

- e) It appears that these folks were missing the mark in their relationship with Christ as well because he says “I never knew you; leave Me.”

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- f) Perhaps the works they were doing were the wrong works because they were not in a relationship with Christ to understand what He wanted from them for works.
- g) Perhaps they were seeking to be famous – doing the works but for the absolute wrong reason.
- h) One way or the other, they missed the mark – insufficient works and insufficient faith!

3) The next passage is Matthew 25:31-46 the judgement...

Matthew 25:31–46 (NASB 2020)

The Judgment

³¹ “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. ³² And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; ³³ and He will put the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left.

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; ³⁶ naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink? ³⁸ And when did we see You *as* a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? ³⁹ And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did *it* for one of the least of these brothers *or sisters* of Mine, you did *it* for Me.’

⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you accursed people, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or *as* a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do *it* for one of the least of these, you did not do *it* for Me, either.’ ⁴⁶ These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- 4) I think it is important to note that both groups had the same question – when did they see Him?
- 5) The difference is that the group on the right had served their fellow man without thought of reward or praise – surely without thinking that it might have been seen as serving Jesus himself.
 - a) In this case, there was no thought about reward – only caring for those in need.
- 6) The group on the left had not served anyone and their question was really a way of looking for an excuse for not having done so.

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- a) One has the impression here that these folks really thought they were ok when in truth they were in a hollow relationship with Christ if any at all.
- b) This could be like a good surprise and bad surprise.

Same question, what is missing from these folks – faith or works? (BE CAREFUL)!

- 7) In this passage, the first group – the sheep on the right – had both the correct faith and the correct works.
 - a) And, I would also say they had the correct relationship with their Savior.
- 8) The goats on the left may have had neither.
 - a) We can say conclusively that they did not have the works which Jesus the King expected of them.
 - b) I think we must also note here that these folks offered no repentance – only excuses in the way of questions.
- 9) I know that this section has been somewhat drawn out but my hope is that we see how important it is to have both faith and works.
 - a) Contrary to what some might think, James never says otherwise.
- 10) Additionally and, perhaps most importantly I hope that we see that the works we are to have are all encompassing.
 - a) They are not just things we do because they seem right.
 - b) They are instead things we do because we are living by the law of freedom – obeying God and Christ because we love them.
 - c) And it is all based on a relationship that allows us to see what works we are to be doing.
- 11) Again FAITH DEMONSTRATED !!!!!

- 1) The subtitle in most translations for this section of James is “**The Tongue Is a Fire**”
- 2) Here in chapter 3, James continues to emphasize the importance of controlling what we say and how influential and/or destructive our words can be.
- 3) He begins by singling out the teachers first.

James 3:1–2 (NASB 2020)

The Tongue Is a Fire

¹Do not become teachers in large numbers, my brothers, since you know that we *who are teachers* will incur a stricter judgment. ²For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to rein in the whole body as well.

- 4) As always, it is important to grasp the context of the times in which James is living before we try to figure out what he is saying.
- 5) In the Jewish culture there was no higher calling for a child than to become a rabbi – a teacher.
- 6) Teachers were very important in the early church as well.

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7) We can see this clearly in Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 4:11–13 (NASB 2020)

¹¹ And He gave some *as* apostles, some *as* prophets, some *as* evangelists, some *as* pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

8) The big difference in the Jewish mindset and that of the early church was the status part of the role.

9) As teachers in the early church and carrying onward to today the primary concern is not status but as Paul says, “**building up the body of Christ.**”

10) Jesus addresses the proper attitude part of this in talking to the disciples about the scribes and pharisees...

Matthew 23:6–8 (NASB 2020)

⁶ And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the seats of honor in the synagogues, ⁷ and personal greetings in the marketplaces, and being called Rabbi by the people. ⁸ But as for you, do not be called Rabbi; for *only* One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers *and sisters*.

11) All the apostles by definition had to be teachers and as teachers they were promised that they would be guided by the Holy Spirit and given remembrance of all they would need.

12) The idea here is not that they should fear being a teacher but rather they should be careful of the status issues.

a) There was a possibility they would fall into that same trap as the scribes and pharisees.

b) In fact, some probably did – false teachers who want the praise for themselves not for Christ.

c) They were to be “passers on” of the teachings of the master teacher – Christ Himself.

13) We as teachers today are also under the guidance of the Holy Spirit if we will let ourselves be.

14) However, as always, we have the final say as to whether we pay attention or not.

15) There are many other ways teachers can go astray besides wanting status ...

a) In 1 Timothy Paul talks about teachers who wanted to teach but did not understand and were making confident and incorrect assertions. 1 Timothy 1:6–7

b) In 2 Timothy he talks about teachers who are basically coerced into teaching what their students wanted to hear. 2 Timothy 4:3–4

i) Here, there is the possibility that they were seeking approval from those they were teaching as well.

c) In Titus Paul talks about teachers teaching things for dishonest gain Titus 1:10–11.

d) And of course, in many places we are taught to beware of false teachers.

i) Those teaching another gospel, the Judaizers, etc.

16) James then says in verse 2...

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² For we all stumble in many *ways*. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to rein in the whole body as well.

- a) James knows that we all make mistakes and I personally think he is saying here – you are not perfect but take seriously the job that is before you.

1) Verse 2 becomes a springboard for James' next topic – ***small things controlling large things...***

James 3:3–5a (NASB 2020)

³ Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their whole body as well. ⁴ Look at the ships too: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are *nevertheless* directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot determines. ⁵ So also the tongue is a small part *of the body*, and *yet* it boasts of great things.

2) What James is doing here, in fact, all the way from verse 1 through verse 12 harks back to chapter 1 verse 19

¹⁹ *You know this*, my beloved brothers *and sisters*. Now everyone *must be* quick to hear, slow to speak, *and* slow to anger

3) Verse 5 clearly says that the tongue is small yet it has the power to do great things (or NOT).

- a) If not controlled it can cause great hurt and personal injury to others – broken hearts, spirits, damaged reputations, loss of jobs, broken friendships, and even broken families.

- i) That's a lot for such a small part of our bodies.

- b) It can direct individuals and large groups in the wrong direction, even putting their souls in jeopardy.

4) All of this of course is really not the tongue (the tiny part of the body) that is actually doing the “BAD STUFF”.

- a) Instead it is the mind and heart which are behind that small organ that is the real problem.

- b) No different than the hand on the rudder or the hand controlling the bridle.

5) Our solution is not to wear a gag so that we cannot talk – our solution is to control the heart and mind and make what the tongue does right.

- a) If the mind and heart are not thinking right – i.e. not under control of Christ and the Holy Spirit – then BAD THINGS WILL COME FROM IT!!!

6) Continuing with the rest of verse 5 through 12...