



## The Book of James Lesson 7 4<sup>th</sup> Q 2014 Taming the Tongue

### SABBATH

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Memory text: “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”  
(Matt 12:37, NKJV)

What do you think this text means?

- Is it a matter of finding the right incantation to speak and if we say the right magic words then we are saved, but if not we are lost?
- Is it a matter of having our words recorded in a heavenly deposition and if we have a record of good words we get judged positively but bad words we get condemned?

Here is my paraphrase of this passage:

The words you speak reveal the true condition of your heart, either healed or terminal.

The lesson states that words hold tremendous power, either for good or evil, whether spoken or written. Remember the adage, the pen is mightier than the sword?

Why is this so? What do words do? They communicate ideas and ideas become part of our mind. They can become like code, changing our beliefs, our views, our way of seeing the world, ourselves, some of these ideas get uploaded even before we know it and alter our functioning.

Consider how we learn language – how do we learn to speak? And how deeply wired into us is our language? Do you ever get up and think, “I am going to think in English today?” But English language is not in our DNA, it is uploaded after birth. How many other ideas, thoughts, beliefs, ways of thinking were uploaded in a similar fashion?

A child whose parent tells them critical words will internalize those words in such a way that they form a view of themselves that is altered from reality, but then begin acting on that view of themselves.

It is not only the words spoken but how they are spoken – the tone, the voice inflection, the look, the body language all communicate ideas, which impact how we hear the words.

In the movie My Cousin Vinny...So it is not the specific words, but the ideas that are conveyed by the words that are powerful.

What about Bible inspiration – is it the words of the Bible, or the ideas the words communicate?



This is from the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

The **leaven** hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the **leaven of truth** works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. **New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed;** the faculties are roused to action in new lines. **Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified.** The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. p. 99

- What is the leaven? – truth
- truth about what?
- The first truth is the truth about God – “this is life eternal that they might know...”
- Why is the truth about God the most important truth?
  - because this truth is necessary to win us to trust so we will invite God into our heart
- What happens when truth comes into the heart? Lies are displaced, and new desires are set up.
  - Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
    - Truth believed destroys lies and restores trust
  - Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
    - Restored trust results in opening the heart and experiencing God’s love which casts our fear and selfishness
  - Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
    - Love and trust result in acts of righteousness
  - Acts of sin are damaging to mind, body and relationships a terminal condition
    - Acts of righteousness, stemming from a renewed heart of love, result in growing in Godliness and spreading the kingdom of God
- But also the truth about ourselves, our condition, and the solution through Christ

A few pages later in the same book we read:

The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. p. 102

What piece of information is added here and why is it important?

The blood of the Lamb, often spoken of in the Bible, is metaphor for the truth.

When we partake the truth and are restored to trust, we reconnect with God in a love relationship and thus love, the lifeblood of the universe, flows from God into our hearts again.



Why is it important to move past the symbols to reality? I have patients who have dreams and will often be disturbed by their dreams – but dreams are merely symbolic representations of emotional content. The problem is that people often misconstrue their dreams. A classic dream, you have a performance coming up – it could be pitching for your varsity team, or starting in your first basketball game, or presenting a scientific paper, or sermon, or playing special music, or any other performance. And you have a dream of standing on the church platform in your underwear.

The dream is not about being in church in your underwear, it is about the fear of embarrassment, of exposing yourself, about insecurity and what others will think of you. But, if one takes the dream concretely, one might become afraid of going to church.

Likewise, the Bible is full of symbols, many people fail to understand the symbols and take them concretely.

Consider again the metaphor of blood – how is the “blood” typically used when describing the plan of salvation?

- Jesus is in heaven pleading His blood to the Father?
  - But if we translate the symbol, the blood representing truth or life, the perfect character of Jesus, then does Jesus need to plead to the Father for the Father to recognize and accept the truth or to partake of the perfect character He developed? Isn't the Father the source of all truth? Isn't the Father the one with perfect character upon which all life is designed to operate? Then this idea of Jesus pleading His blood to the Father for the Father's need is wrong.
  - Why might someone, say, one of God's apologists, present the idea that Jesus is pleading to the Father, if it isn't for the Father's need? Who might need this idea? Someone who, in their current understanding, believes lies about the Father, and believes that Jesus needs to do something to protect them from the Father. To calm that person enough to feel safe enough with God, to get to know them for themselves.
  - But Jesus is pleading His blood before the Father – but to whom is He pleading? The plan of salvation is the Father's plan – Jesus came to fulfill the Father's will, “not my will be done but thy will be done,” Jesus said. He said His words and works were that of the Father. So, the plan of salvation is being carried out before the Father. Then to whom is Jesus pleading?
  - Jesus said, it was good for us that He leave, for then the Comforter would come. The Comforter would not speak on His own, but speak only what He hears. To whom will the Comforter be listening? To Jesus, thus the pleadings of Jesus, the pleadings of truth are from Jesus, being communicated to your heart and mine by the Holy Spirit!
  - From one of the founders of our church:
  - ST, January 20, 1898 par. 6 “...Constantly He points us to the emblems of fatherly love, seeking to encourage faith and confidence in God. **He pleads with us to have a correct idea of the Father..**”



- The blood of Jesus is taken into the sanctuary in heaven in order to remove a record of sins from the heavenly ledgers?
  - Does truth need to be taken into the building in heaven and engraved on stones, or written in ledgers, then filed away to gather dust?
  - No! The sanctuary is also symbolic of the dwelling place of God, via His Spirit, which is the sanctuary of the human soul. It is our minds which are cleansed by the application of truth and the partaking of Jesus – it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me...
    - “For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building [Temple]...Don't you know that you yourselves [the church] are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you [you all] are that temple.” 1 Cor 3:9,16,17.
    - “As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- YOU also, like LIVING STONES [building blocks of the Temple], are being built into a SPIRITUAL HOUSE [Temple] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet 2:4,5.
    - “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's HOUSE [sanctuary/temple], built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building [sanctuary/temple] is joined together and rises to become a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord. And in him YOU too [you all] are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22.
  - From one of the founders of the SDA church, how we are supposed to understand the sanctuary:
    - Your faculties are separate and distinct, yet each is dependent for its success upon the other. **So each day God works with His building, stroke upon stroke, to perfect the structure, which thus grows into a holy temple for the Lord.** One stone mislaid affects the whole building. **This figure represents human character, which is to be wrought upon, point by point. There is not to be a flaw in it, for it is the Lord's building.** Every stone must be perfectly laid, that it may endure the pressure placed upon it. God warns you and every worker to take heed how you build, **so that your building may bear the test of storm and tempest because it is riveted to the eternal Rock.** Take heed how you build. Every hour may be spent in placing the stone on the sure foundation, ready for the day of test and revelation, when we shall be seen just as we are. This warning God presents to me as essential in your case. He loves you with a love that is immeasurable. He loves your brethren in the faith, and He works with them to the same end that He works with you. **His church upon the earth is to assume divine proportions before the world, as a temple composed of living stones, every stone emitting light. This building is to be the light of**



**the world, a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. It is composed of stones laid close together, stone fitting to stone, making a solid building. All the stones are not of the same form or shape. Some are large, some are small, but each has its own crevice to fill. And the value of each stone is determined by the light it reflects to the world.** This is God's plan, and He would have all who profess to believe His word fill their respective places in the great, grand work for this time.

We are, dear and much-beloved brother, living amid the perils of the last days. Every mental and physical power is to be cultivated, **for all the powers are essential to make the church a building which will represent the wisdom and character of the great Designer.** We are to cultivate the talents given us by God. They are His gifts, and are to be used in their right relation to each other, so as to make a perfect whole. **God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; man makes the character.** The mind is the Lord's garden, and man must cultivate it earnestly in order to form a character after the divine similitude. The Lord has wrought with you, my much-respected brother, enabling you to act your part as His workman; but there are other workmen who must act their part as God's agents, His members, who help to compose the whole body. Bear in mind, all are to be united as parts of a great machine. **The Lord's church is composed of His living, working agencies who derive their power to act from the Author and Finisher of their faith. The great work resting upon God's individual workers is to be carried forward in symmetrical harmony.** *Manuscript Releases, Volume 2 [Nos. 97-161, 1958-1964]. 1993; 2002 (339). Ellen G. White Estate.*

- The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity



with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

- The blood of Jesus is used as a payment to legally pay my debt?
  - How does the truth make a legal payment? It doesn't, the truth destroys lies, and where are lies operational – in the mind and heart of God? No! In the minds and hearts of sinners. Thus the blood, the truth must be taken into the sinner. This is why Jesus said, "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with me."

## THURSDAY

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Read second paragraph, "James uses the image of a..." The paragraph states, "Pure religion is rooted in faith, which is self-authenticating, just as a pure spring needs no proof other than the water that flows naturally from it."

What does this mean?

That if one has faith then one has a pure life and the pure life is what authenticates the faith? This is true, yet not that helpful, why?

What then does a pure life look like?

The Pharisees in Christ's day believed a pure life meant washing your hands before eating, and criticized the disciples for not doing so.

What about people who believe a pure faith is praying five times per day, or going to church on Sabbath, or avoiding alcohol, or any other such behavior?

These people have faith and it leads to what they define as purity, does their faith and their subsequent lives confirm their faith?

Or, does it actually matter upon what our faith is based and in whom we have faith?

The Pharisees had faith in their belief system, and followed it, and thought they were pure. Faith in falsehood may lead one to observe certain rituals, and falsely believe one is pure, because one has claimed the blood as a legal payment etc.

So, faith is not enough, the critical question is, in what or whom is your faith placed?



Why do some attack evidence when God has gone to such lengths to reveal Himself to us and provide us the evidence of His trustworthiness?

The reason the attack on evidence, thinking, reasoning, is that some have faith in a god that is irrational, or a system that is corrupt and they are terrified that thinking people will expose the fallacy of their system. But God Himself invites us to come to Him and reason and in doing so we will be purified!

Read last paragraph, “God’s will, of course...” What does this mean? What does forgiveness mean in God’s system?

Consider the two law lenses – under the imposed law lens the idea of forgiveness is legal, it means pardon, yet even in this theology there are lies upon woven lies – for those who teach that God forgives claim He only does after He has received the legal payment of His Son’s blood. Think about it, if someone owes you \$10,000 and can’t pay it, and their brother comes and pays their debt for them, can you turn the former debtor and say, “Now that I have been paid, I forgive your debt”? No, this penal view of God is false and needs to be rejected as part of the infection that has corrupted Christianity and obstructs Christ’s return.

Under design law – forgiveness is constantly extended from God and it was because of His love and forgiveness that Christ came, “For God so loved the world...” However, forgiveness means more than God’s personal pardon, it means restoration of Godliness in the believer.

**God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.** David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1

As the Saviour is lifted up before the people, they will see his humiliation, his self-denial, his self-sacrifice, his goodness, his tender compassion, his sufferings to save fallen man, and will realize that **the atonement of Christ was not the cause of God's love, but the result of that love.** Jesus died because God loved the world. **The channel had to be made** whereby the love of God should **be recognized by man, and *flow into the sinner's heart in perfect harmony with truth and justice.*** {RH, September 2, 1890 par. 7}

What was the purpose of Christ’s life and death? To reveal God and create the avenue whereby God’s love, God’s character could flow again into the human species, into your heart and mine!

Why does sin bring sadness to God’s heart? For the same reason any destructive behavior brings sadness to a parents’ heart. Sin damages and destroys us!



## SUNDAY

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Read second paragraph, “At the entrance to...” Prov 9:10 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” This is a good text to examine the meaning not merely the words.

What does it mean “the fear of the Lord?”

Does the Bible teach that we are to love God? With how much of our being? With all our heart, mind, soul and strength. And does perfect love cast out all fear? Then how is it that we are to fear God?

Several meanings are possible with this passage, two which are true, one which is false:

- Fear is awe, admiration – the more love we have and the more of God we come to know the more we admire Him
- If we are in wild living worshipping a golden calf and God thunders and it frightens us, but we stop the orgy and start listening to God, wisdom has begun – the beginning of wisdom, and as we spend time to get to know God we love Him and the fear goes away.
- It means we become wise by being afraid of God and we should live in terror of our terrible and powerful God. – this is a false interpretation

What do they mean by, “Some teachers of theology, in striving for credibility, also may utilize methods that leave little or no room for faith”?

It was unclear to me, what were your thoughts on the meaning of this passage?

Are they suggesting that the more understanding we have, the more knowledge, the more comprehension of how things work, evidence for things that faith is undermined?

If that is the case then they don’t understand Biblical faith. Biblical faith is not believing in something strongly, hoping, wishing and convincing oneself that something is true despite the evidence. Biblical faith is based upon the evidence, and the more God reveals Himself, the more knowledge we comprehend about Him, His design, methods principles, including in science and nature, the more faith we have.

Read third paragraph, “Paul understood...” What does it mean, “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2Tim 3:7 NKJV)

Well the context is speaking of women who are vulnerable to the manipulation of exploiting religious teachers.

Here is my paraphrase starting in verse 6:





Such people scam their way into homes of weak willed women where they manipulate them with guilt from past mistakes. These women are vulnerable because they are emotionally unstable, swayed by all kinds of selfish desires. 7 They constantly seek help, but reject the Remedy and all truth that would actually heal them.

What this means is that they seek to know things, but don't seek to be changed, transformed, renewed, which means they don't have a knowledge, or experience with God.

What does it mean to seek God's wisdom?

- To come to know reality
- To know God personally, His character of love
- To know His design for life, the protocols upon which reality is built
- To know God's methods for healing and restoration
- To know how you fit in and how you can cooperate with God

## MONDAY

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Read second paragraph, "If anyone..." The lesson points out a very important reality, that our thoughts lead to words, but spoken words reinforce the thoughts. Thus it is important to guard our words, often people will say things they are only speculating about, but once said, it reinforces in their mind and they come to believe something they themselves created in their imagination.

## TUESDAY

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The middle of the first paragraph quotes Prov 15:1 "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

What does this mean? Is it wisdom that is generally true or a promise?

When Jesus gave no answer did it turn away wrath?

Does this mean we are to roll over and become a doormat to the demands of others?

Does talking softly work best if one carries a big stick?

What about the words of not casting pearls before swine lest they turn and rend you asunder? Are pearls grievous words? So is there something more to it than just what we speak, than just avoiding grievous words?

What about Christ, "I have much to say but you cannot bear it?"

Read last paragraph, "As drops of water..."



## **WEDNESDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “We’ve all experienced...” The lesson points out how sin spread in heaven and on earth, through words inciting doubt and creating desire, confusion, uncertainty leading to choosing selfishness.

## **FRIDAY**

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Read and discuss question 3

From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks – so many of my patients don't know this and thus when ugly things are said to them or about them, they react with hurt feelings rather than reacting with compassion and sadness for the one who is so selfish and hard hearted to say such mean things.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:



*The Journal of the Watcher* is an illustrated e-book available in the APP STORE for your smart device. Above is the front and back of the postcards we have printed to help share this with others. This book tells the story of the Great Controversy over God's character. Every page is illustrated, with a cinematic audio score and professional voice talent reading.

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We are very excited about this new e-book and hope you will be too!

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And in Australia or New Zealand email [australia@comeandreason.com](mailto:australia@comeandreason.com) and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

**Sunday Nov 16:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon. (Dr. Jennings will be teaching his class Saturday November 15)



**Nov 22, 2014:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

**Jan 10, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

**Jan 24, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Monterey Peninsula SDA Church

**February 21, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, Dalles, Oregon. For more info and to register for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

**March 13-14, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.

**March 27-28, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

**April 10-11, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

**April 13, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

**April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.):** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

**May 1-2 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

**May 3, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

**May 5-9, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

**May 11-12, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at [ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com](mailto:ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com)

**May 15, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

**May 16, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

**May17-20, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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