

James

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Reconciling James and Paul

- **The things James asserts:**
 - **There is ‘dead’ faith (no accompanying activities)**
 - **Works are required of the Christian and one cannot be a Christian without good works.**

Reconciling James and Paul

- **The things Paul asserts:**
 - **Works play no role whatsoever in acquiring salvation.**
 - **We are saved by grace through faith alone; to add anything to the equation is heresy.**

Reconciling James and Paul

- According to James, if we do not have good works in addition to our faith in Christ, we are not saved – in fact, our faith is useless.
- According to Paul, we are saved by grace through faith apart for any works – in fact, our works are useless.
- So is there a contradiction here, or is it merely two sides of the same coin?

Reconciling James and Paul

- The strongest statement James makes in his writings is 2:24 “So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.”
- The book of James was written about 10 years before Romans, but not before the Apostle Paul began his radical teachings.
- So was James writing to refute Paul’s teachings on ‘grace alone’, or could he have been addressing a misuse of Paul’s teachings?

Reconciling James and Paul

- **"Trust only in movement, life happens at the level of action. We are not what we say, but we are what we do." Dr. Alfred Adler**
- **When asked if his 5 win, 5 loss team was better than their record showed, Bill Parcels said, "we are what our record says we are".**
- **"We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone." Martin Luther**

James 3: 1-12

- **1 Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. 3 We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. 4 And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. 5 In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 6 And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.**

James 3: 1-12

- **7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, 8 but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12 Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.**

James 3: 1-12

- **Our subject today is the power of words and taming the tongue.**
- **Sticks, stones, and words all hurt and sometimes the longest lasting hurt and deepest wounds come from the tongue.**
- **What we say matters and words truly are mightier than the sword. (Edward Bulwer-Lytton)**

James 3: 1-12

- **What is the state of pure speech in America today?**
- **What is the state of pure speech in the church?**
- **James addresses only the ‘dark’ side of speech – is there a ‘good’ side?**
- **If he is addressing the tongue, why start by saying only a few in the church should teach?**

James 3: 1-12

- **We've the lost the principle of pure speech in our society – in the home, in the public square, and in the corporate board rooms.**
- **The 'F' bomb is used freely as are numerous what we might call less offensive words.**
- **Foul language has an invasive effect on us – it sticks in memory and is all too easily recalled.**
- **There is an upside of sorts for us - with this kind of darkness, we ought to be more recognizable than ever.**

James 3: 1-12

- **What we say can move, encourage, harm, defame, incite, and the list goes on**
- **Psalm 45:1 Beautiful words stir my heart. I will recite a lovely poem about the king, for my tongue is like the pen of a skillful poet.**
- **Psalm 52:2 Your tongue cuts like a sharp razor.**
- **Psalm 64:3 They sharpen their tongues like swords and aim their bitter words like arrows. (can kill from a distance)**

James 3: 1-12

- **Prov 15:4 Gentle words are a tree of life; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.**
- **Prov 18:21 The tongue can bring death or life.**
- **Jer 9:8 For their tongues shoot lies like poisoned arrows.**
- **James 1:26 If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself**

James 3: 1-12

A montage of examples of
the power of words.

James 3: 1-12

- **When Isaiah, wanting to confess to God his utter sinfulness in the midst of a vision of God's holiness, expressed himself, he said, "I am a man with a dirty mouth."**
- **Regarding the bit in the horse's mouth - You get control of your tongue and you can direct your whole life.**
- **The same is true for the rudder of a ship – a small device steers the entire vessel.**

James 3: 1-12

- **Matthew 12:33** “A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. **34** You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. **35** A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. **36** And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. **37** The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.”

James 3: 1-12

- **Morgan Blake, a sportswriter for the Atlanta Journal, wrote I think an interesting statement. He said, "I am more deadly than the screaming shell from the Howitzer. I win without killing. I tear down homes, break hearts and wreck lives. I travel on the wings of the wind. No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me. No purity pure enough to daunt me. I have no regard for truth, no respect for justice, no mercy for the defenseless. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea and often as innocent. I never forget and seldom forgive and my name is gossip."**

James 3: 1-12

- **James 3: 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12 Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.**
- **We are not saved or lost by what we speak, but we give testimony to either being saved or lost by the words we speak. (similar to faith without works is dead)**
- **This is a real issue in our day – if you have a foul mouth it's not because your Irish or Italian, it's because your tongue needs to be tamed.**

James 3: 1-12

- I believe in a concept called ‘self talk’ – I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.**
- I reject name it and claim it, but I embrace speak it and seek it.**
- As a rule, people don’t need us to tell them what they can’t do – they need us to tell them to ‘go’ for it!**

Questions