

February 10/11, 2024

“Faith & Words”

Pastor Brad Holmes



Beyond the  
Weekend

**SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.**

**2024 Challenge:** Finding Jesus in the Old Testament

**FEBRUARY:** Read Genesis to see how people, situations and events point to Jesus

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## Day 1 Proverbs 18 | Faith & Words

**The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.** Proverbs 18:21

Real faith changes the way we speak. We see this theme in both James 1 and 3. It's also one of the most repeated topics in the Old Testament book of Proverbs. Proverbs is a collection of godly wisdom. It is characterized best as general truths, not necessarily promises. It's a book full of warnings, commands and metaphors about how life really works. Proverbs reveals that even thousands of years ago, the power of words was clearly recognized.

The power of words is something we've all experienced. Words matter. They build up and they can certainly tear down. Proverbs 18:21 tells us, “The tongue has the power of life and death.” This week we'll be challenged to consider this life-and-death power. We'll look at both how we use our words and how words have made an impact on us. If words have the power of life and death, it behooves us to spend some time reflecting on our relationship with the things we say and hear.

**TODAY:** Ask God to open your heart to what he has for you this week. Ask him to bring to mind those things from the weekend services you need to remember and for the Holy Spirit to reveal where you need to grow when it comes to the power of words.

**JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:** Read Genesis 13-15. Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Note the story of Melchizedek and the cross-reference listed (Hebrews 5:6, 10 and Hebrews 7).

## Day 2 James 3:2-5 | Word Direct

**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.** James 3:4

Horses and ships. Two large and powerful things controlled by only a small bit or a simple rudder. James says it's like this with the tongue. It's small, but *wow*, can it be powerful. Words can change the direction of a life.

Whether we realize it or not, words spoken to us have a profound impact on who we are. A hurtful word from a friend, parent, coach or teacher can cause us to create a vow we still live by today. An encouraging word can have the opposite effect. It can give us the confidence we need to take the next step. Words give life or take it. Often an important step in our growth is being honest with how we've allowed words to change the direction of our lives. We've likely been impacted by both encouraging and hurtful words.

**TODAY:** Create two columns in your journal. Label the columns encouraging and hurtful. Think through the things you've heard about yourself throughout your life and now believe. Put them in the appropriate column. For the things in the encouraging column, consider reaching out to those people and thanking them. For those things in the hurtful column, reflect on how you may have allowed those statements to distort the truth of who God says you are. If you would like to start a conversation about how to heal the wounds of hurtful words, please reach out to [care@adabible.org](mailto:care@adabible.org). We'd love to connect with you.

**JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read Genesis 16-17.** Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Note the promise to Abram and Sarai.

## Day 3 Ephesians 4:17-32 | Words that Build Up

**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.** Ephesians 4:29

James says words can wreak havoc like a fire (James 3:6). Think for a moment about the power of fire. All it takes is a careless spark to set a forest ablaze. Fire can have a devastating impact. Yet, fire can also be a good thing. Many of us heat and cook with a form of fire. We drive vehicles that rely on a type of fire for propulsion. Fire isn't bad. What matters is controlling fire and using it for the right things.

But our words also have the potential to build each other up in Christ. Paul tells us that we have an opportunity to use words to encourage each other. One of our roles as part of a church community is to use our words in a way that causes those around us to love Jesus more. Like a controlled fire that heats our home, cooks our food or powers our vehicles, our words should be used for good. We're called to use them for Jesus.

Commit to using words to build others up. Maybe that's speaking up more in small group, stepping up to lead a small group, serving children in Discovery Village or helping people feel welcomed through hospitality. God has uniquely created, gifted and called us for service. There are many opportunities to use our words to build each other up.

**TODAY:** Is there someone you need to apologize to today for how your words have negatively affected them? Find an appropriate way to apologize and ask God for forgiveness as well. When we ask God for forgiveness, he gives it to us (1 John 1:9).

Learn about the relationship of faith and words in this week's Beyond the Weekend podcast with Pastor Brad Holmes and other staff. Listen [HERE](#).

**JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read Genesis 18-20.** Highlight anything that points to Jesus.

## Day 4 Luke 24:13-35 | Words of Life

**They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"** Luke 24:32

Two disciples walk the road to Emmaus. They're downtrodden. Their world has been rocked by the death of Jesus. But, Jesus, with his identity hidden, meets them there with encouraging words. He unpacks the meaning of his death, resurrection and Scripture about his identity. It's an incredible moment. Jesus's words cause their hearts to burn and the truth to come alive.

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our faith begins with the words of life. The good news is forgiveness is available to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Accepting this good news has consequences for our lives. It results in a radical reorientation of our lives as we follow Jesus. That's real faith. It isn't about earning anything. That's already been done through the work of Jesus on the cross.

**TODAY:** Thank God for the good news of Jesus. Thank him for loving us enough to send his Son to die. Ask him to help you continue to reorient your life around following him. If you've never accepted the good news of Jesus, don't wait. You can ask him to forgive you of your sins today and begin following him. If you'd like to have a conversation about what it means to follow Jesus, please email us at [btw@adabible.org](mailto:btw@adabible.org).

**JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read Genesis 21-22.** Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Note the birth of Isaac from an impossible situation. Consider all the ways Abraham's test points to Jesus and what God will do through him.

## Day 5 Luke 6:43-49 | Words and Our Heart

**A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.** Luke 6:45

Pastor Aaron Buer has mentioned numerous times that James's letter can feel like a gut punch. Well, it seems like he may have gotten that from growing up with his brother, Jesus. In today's text, Jesus speaks something that is a bit of a gut punch. It's a call to honest assessment of who we are and it has everything to do with our words. Jesus says words reveal the heart.

It's easy to excuse hurtful words. We use phrases like, "That's not who I am" or "I was just joking" when we apologize. But Jesus says the heart spills. So if we find ourselves saying hurtful things, we should honestly assess our hearts. It's likely our heart and our character need to be transformed by Jesus. Here's the thing, our heart will never be perfect and our character will never be fully formed, but we cannot lie to ourselves about it. We must take Jesus seriously if we want to change. Jesus's teaching about words calls us to be honest with ourselves. The good news is that Jesus is in the business of fixing broken things, including our hearts. Our job is to make our faith real by obeying him. When we choose to obey, the Holy Spirit transforms our hearts.

**TODAY:** Memorize Psalm 19:14, "May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." Partner with the Holy Spirit in the changing of your heart and words by praying this verse every morning, in the middle of the day and at night. Try it for the rest of the month. Returning to this request over and over will create the time and space for it to reshape your heart.

**JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:** Read Genesis 23-25. Highlight anything that points to Jesus.