

Some silences are heavy;  
sagging under the weight  
of words left unsaid.

~ j. m. green

# The Weight of One's Words

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<sup>12</sup> But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation. (Jam 5:12 ESV)

Two aspects:

1. Say what you mean – are your words **truthful**?
2. Mean what you say – are your words **trustworthy**? (Will you carry out what you say?)

# Outline of Message on James 5:12

- I. The Trustworthiness of God's Words
- II. Words in the Book of James
- III. The Failure of Words – Peter's Denial of Jesus
- IV. Jesus' Teaching on the Use of Words
- V. Words and Oaths in Jewish Tradition

# Kata Itu Kota

Do what you say

Walk the talk



# The Boy and the Wolves, or The Broken Promise

“My brother, my brother,  
I am becoming a wolf!”

- a Native American fairy tale published  
by Andrew Lang in 1894



‘ My brother, my brother, I am becoming a wolf ! ’

# The Weight of God's Words

<sup>6</sup> The words of the LORD are pure words;  
As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven  
times.

(Psalm 12:6 NAS)

<sup>6</sup> Janji TUHAN adalah janji yang murni,  
bagaikan perak yang teruji, tujuh kali dimurnikan dalam  
dapur peleburan di tanah.

(Mazmur 12:6 ITB)



<https://nutrifaith.wordpress.com/2015/04/15/14-fiery-furnace-of-cleansing/>

# The Weight of God's Words

<sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that comes from the mouth of God.'"

(Mat 4:4 ESV)

<sup>35</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

(Mat 24:35 ESV)



# Abraham Trusted God's Words

<sup>2</sup> And Abram said, "O Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

<sup>3</sup> And Abram said, "Since Thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."

<sup>4</sup> Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

<sup>5</sup> And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

<sup>6</sup> **Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.**

(Gen 15:2-6 NAS)

<sup>6</sup> **Lalu percayalah Abram kepada TUHAN, maka TUHAN memperhitungkan hal itu kepadanya sebagai kebenaran.** (Kejadian 15:6 ITB)



# Abraham Trusted God's Words

<sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

<sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

<sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;

<sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"--and he was called a friend of God.

<sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

(Jam 2:20-24 ESV)

# Abraham Trusted God's Words

Sequence of events:

1. God makes a promise to Abraham
2. Abraham hears God's words and trusts them – the start of faith
3. Many years later, God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac
4. Abraham hears God's words and still trusts them, and obeys them (works) – demonstrating true faith in God's words



<https://medium.com/bible-and-prayer-book/abraham-isaac-sacrifice-c435bd5f0453>

Q1: Is there some area of your life where you need to trust God's words and obey?

# The Theme of James

True Faith + Do It = A Faith that Acts



<https://metrobc.us/sermons/what-is-faith/>

II. Words in the Book of James

# The Theme of James

True Faith vs. Counterfeit Faith  
Iman yang benar vs. Iman yang palsu



<https://nutrifaiith.wordpress.com/2015/04/15/14-fiery-furnace-of-cleansing/>



<https://julikenn.wordpress.com/2021/11/09/false-or-counterfeit-faith/>

## II. Words in the Book of James

# The Structure of James

James 5:7-11 Patience in suffering

James 5:12 The weight of one's words

James 5:13-18 Prayers in the church body

# Words in the Book of James

(1) **Be slow to speak:** <sup>19</sup> Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; (Jam 1:19 ESV)

(2) **Control your tongue:** <sup>26</sup> If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. (Jam 1:26 ESV)

(3) **Our tongue stumbles:** <sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body... <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. (Jam 3:2,8 ESV)

(4) **Our passions cause quarrels:** <sup>1</sup> What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?... (Jam 4:1 ESV)

(5) **We judge the law when we speak evil about others:** <sup>11</sup> Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law... (Jam 4:11 ESV)

(6) **We boast in our arrogance:** <sup>15</sup> Instead you ought to say, "*If the Lord wills*, we will live and do this or that." <sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. (Jam 4:15-16 ESV)

(7) **Say what you mean, and mean what you say:** <sup>12</sup> But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation. (Jam 5:12 ESV)

# The Failure of Words – Peter's denial of Jesus

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."

<sup>35</sup> Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the disciples said the same.  
(Mat 26:34-35 ESV)

<sup>69</sup> Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean."

<sup>70</sup> But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean."

<sup>71</sup> And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."

<sup>72</sup> And again he denied it **with an oath**: "I do not know the man."

<sup>73</sup> After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you."

<sup>74</sup> Then he began to **invoke a curse on himself and to swear**, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed.

<sup>75</sup> And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

(Mat 26:69-75 ESV)

# Empty Oaths, Empty Promises

1. Say what you mean – are your words **truthful**?
  - Peter invoked empty oaths to give false weight to his lie.
2. Mean what you say – are your words **trustworthy**?
  - Peter's made an empty promise which he did not fulfil, perhaps out of fear.

Q2: Is there some area in which,

(a) You need to be truthful, or correct a lie?

(b) You need to fulfil something you had said you would do?



# Jesus' Teaching on the Use of Words

<sup>33</sup> "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall **perform** to the Lord what you have sworn.'

<sup>34</sup> But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

<sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

<sup>36</sup> And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

<sup>37</sup> Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

(Mat 5:33-37 ESV)

<sup>29</sup> Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

<sup>30</sup> But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

(Mat 10:29-30 ESV)

# The Third Commandment

<sup>7</sup> "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.  
(Exo 20:7 ESV)

<sup>12</sup> You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. (Lev 19:12 ESV)

<sup>3</sup> For now they will say: "We have no king, **for we do not fear the LORD**; and a king--what could he do for us?"

<sup>4</sup> They utter mere words; with empty oaths they make covenants; so judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field.  
(Hos 10:3-4 ESV)

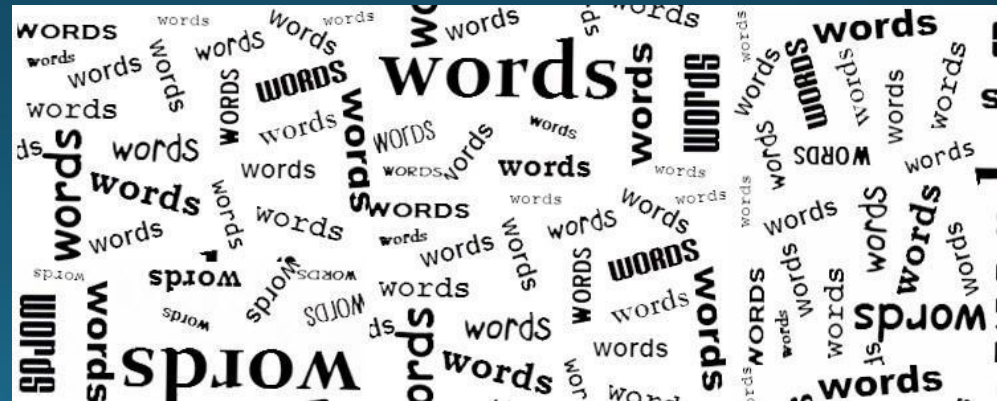
# The Third Commandment

<sup>5</sup> It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

<sup>6</sup> Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

<sup>7</sup> For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is **vanity**; but God is the one you must fear.

(Ecclesiastes 5:5-7 ESV)



<https://medium.com/100-naked-words/6-too-many-words-cd9d843b43af>

# Words and Oaths in Jewish Tradition

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/vows-and-oaths/>

- The violation of both vows and oaths is considered a very serious matter in Jewish thinking.
- While there are examples in the Bible of individuals making vows, by the rabbinic period the practice was very much discouraged.
- The rabbis developed a ritual to solve the problem of unfulfilled vows.
- The ritual is performed in the presence of three people who act as a kind of religious court to release people from unfulfilled vows.
- It is part of the process of self-reflection and repentance leading up to the Jewish New Year and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Q3: Are there any vows which you cannot fulfil, and need to ask for the Lord's forgiveness and release?

# The Weight of One's Words – Summary

- I. The trustworthiness of God's words
- II. Words in the book of James
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A person's words should carry weight in two aspects,

1. Say what you mean – are your words **truthful**?
2. Mean what you say – are your words **trustworthy**?

# Paul's Letter to the Corinthian Church

<sup>16</sup> I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea.

<sup>17</sup> When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?

<sup>18</sup> But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No."

<sup>19</sup> For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes."

<sup>20</sup> **For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.** And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

(2 Corinthians 1:16-20 NIV)

<sup>20</sup> **Sebab Kristus adalah "ya" bagi semua janji Allah.** Itulah sebabnya oleh Dia kita mengatakan "Amin" untuk memuliakan Allah. (2 Korintus 1:20 ITB)