



Cursing

With we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.
James 3.9-10

Cursing can refer to the activity for which our mothers threatened to wash out our mouths with soap as children. It may refer to making some pronouncement of future evil upon a person, with the sense that such words carry the power to bring said evil to pass. "I am cursed," someone may exclaim, conveying the idea that they are doomed by fate to some negative outcome. The meaning intended by James in the verses above has much broader application to our daily lives. The cursing James writes about here refers to any negative speech to or about others.

Having warned about the destructive power of the tongue, James points to the inconsistency, if not hypocrisy, of a follower of Christ speaking well of God and ill of men. James makes much of the fact that all men are created in the image and likeness of God. Viewing others as image-bearers of God ought to inform your disposition towards them and the words you speak to them and about them. Beyond that, the Christian should not be double-tongued, but speak words that consistently fall into the blessing category.

As D.A. Carson points out in the New Bible Commentary, "in James's day the king or emperor would set up his statue in the cities of his realm. If anyone insulted or cursed the statue, they were treated as if they had cursed the emperor to his face, for the statue was the image of the emperor. Therefore the insulting of a person, made in God's image, is like insulting God himself."

As a state leader, you are held to a higher level of accountability for your words. Yet as a believer, the standard is higher still. Consider how high Jesus raised the bar when he taught that we should not even curse our enemies (political adversaries). Perhaps like me, you need the Holy Spirit to wash out your mouth with spiritual soap to address the cursing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Garner". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Don Garner
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