

# “Sticks, stones and broken bones”: why words matter in domestic violence

Geoff Broughton

## A personal note

During the mid-1990s, I lived and studied theology in the USA where I encountered the historic peace and justice tradition of Christian faith, most notably the Mennonite Church. In a country of gun-related violence, the Anabaptist witness to the peace and non-violence of Jesus Christ made a powerful impression on me. Returning to Australia, I became the assistant minister at St John’s Anglican Church in East Sydney which comprises the inner-city district of Kings Cross. Our church’s ministry to street-involved people centred around *Rough Edges*, a street-level café and community centre. I was pleased to discover that an Alternatives to Violence programme formed part of the volunteer training which I enthusiastically joined. The programme was more confronting than I—and most participants—imagined. I have rarely been exposed to physical violence in my life. I am very fortunate. I have only once used my fists in anger and somehow avoided fights throughout my working-class schooling in western Sydney. I did not consider myself a violent person and secretly believed I did not need alternatives to violence. In the programme, I was confronted by *my* violence with words. Blessed with a quick wit and a sarcastic sense of humour, I was shocked to discover how harmful my words could be. Clever phrases—not closed

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fists—was the way I inflicted harm and hurt on others. Twenty years after this humbling discovery, I am still conscious—as a lecturer, pastor, husband, father of teenagers, and friend—how my words can demean, dismiss and even devastate the people I love. This article is written particularly for those, like me, whose violence is verbal. Generations were taught resilience through the nursery rhyme lyrics “sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me”. The biblical alternative to violent words—speaking the truth in love (Eph 4:15)—has often been employed as Christian tough-love. Not surprisingly, some Christians love this Bible verse. It is often quoted, particularly when conflict emerges, or in the midst of difficult conversations. At best, it expresses profound ideas about who God is (light and love) and how people should speak (truthfully, lovingly). The Psalmist declared that “mercy and righteousness” kiss and the apostle teaches that when it comes to truth and love, one does not exclude the other. As reported in the essay by Julia Baird, something quite unexpected, unedifying, and downright ugly occurred in the days and weeks after the initial ABC reporting on domestic violence within the church. Truth trumped love; facts trumped truth and data trumped facts. A distraction at best, the debate lost sight of God’s light and God’s love in responding to domestic violence and degenerated into conflict over dated data and forgotten footnotes. Sadly, sometimes those aiming to speak the truth in love end up merely loving the truth they speak. Baird recalls her shock and horror at the initial responses of some church leaders—mostly men—to her reporting on domestic violence and the churches. As reported elsewhere, such behaviour echoes other forms of violence: where those experiencing domestic violence are ignored, silenced, or diminished by the more credible, more powerful or more dominant voices. The conflict witnessed in the initial conversation exhibited speaking without listening, reacting without insight. Erica Hamence, as a female pastor, offers a radically different perspective to the same reporting. For some, the credibility of the church is at stake. For others, the credibility of the testimony of those women who have experienced violence is at risk. This article will demonstrate why words matter in the context of domestic violence by examining the deep and profound connections between speaking, listening, wisdom, and integrity in Scripture.

## **Credible language in Scripture: speaking, listening, wisdom, and integrity**

Most Christian discussion of speech gravitates around essentially moral issues (e.g., condemning coarse language and gossip whilst encouraging good manners), at the expense of developing a more distinctive theological understanding that includes, but goes beyond, a concern for morality.<sup>1</sup> A theological understanding consistently sets human speech within the framework of God’s speech and our relationship with God, that benefits others; promoting speech that is wise, measured, and honest. A key biblical text that sums up many of these features is James 3:17: “the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.” This article will develop the biblical wisdom material so the Church—its pastors and leaders—might better exhibit this wisdom from above in responding to domestic violence.

The wisdom literature and the letter of James serve as primary texts for observing the deep and profound connections in Scripture between speaking, listening, wisdom, and integrity. Throughout the whole letter of James, speaking has a theological dimension too that understands it as a response to God’s prior speech, as being intimately bound to our relationship to God. Reflecting true wisdom (involving both speaking and listening), such speech is crucial in forming godly character, benefiting the Christian community, and as the criteria for future judgement. The perspective of James is informed by the Jesus tradition, wisdom literature, and other Graeco-Roman sources. By comparing several key texts in the letter of James with these other sources demonstrating why words matter, the distinctively theological framework for credible speech comes into prominence.

### **Speaking credibly: benefiting communities, not boosting egos (the wisdom of Proverbs)**

Proverbs refers quite frequently to speech, highlighting the close connection between wisdom and speech in this genre of literature. As David Hubbard comments, “accurate, honest, sensitive, prudent speaking is a theme threaded through Proverbs as consistently and strongly as any other.”<sup>2</sup> He organises a range of proverbs from chapters 18–22 under the rubric “integrity in conversation”.<sup>3</sup> Of these, Kidner considers chapter 18:21 to be especially important, “death and life are in the power of the tongue”.<sup>4</sup> This idea, the

power of words, is a controversial one in Old Testament scholarship, resulting in some scholars' tendency to overstate the power of words. It is remarkable and revealing that Baird received actual death threats after the initial ABC reports. Nevertheless, Kidner still finds in Proverbs "insistence that what man says wells up from what he is."<sup>5</sup> With a list that corresponds almost exactly to that of Hubbard, Kidner suggests that Proverbs argues for speech that is marked by honest, few, calm, and apt words.<sup>6</sup> Such speech should take place in a variety of everyday settings: households, neighbourhoods, marketplace, and the general community. Today, such honest, calm and apt speech is rarely witnessed in social media debates. Yet this is exactly the kind of speech that will make churches safe (see Hamence's article). Implicit, also, is the connection between accurate, honest, sensitive, and prudent speech and wisdom which acknowledges that wisdom comes from God (cf. Jas 3:17) because wise speech is a response to God's speech (see Proverbs 2:6 "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding"). Words matter because human words are framed by God's Word.

### **Speaking credibly: revealing character, not charm (the Wisdom of Sirach)**

Following in this wisdom tradition is Ben Sira who devotes several lengthy passages to describing both good and evil speech. For Ben Sira (as in Proverbs), wisdom and speech are intimately bound: "wisdom shows itself by speech, and a man's education must find expression in words" (Ecclesiasticus 4:24). Speech of the right quantity (20:5, 8) and at the right time (20:6–7) thus became for Ben Sira an important way of distinguishing a wise man from a fool.<sup>7</sup> The concern here is for more than just speech that is morally acceptable. The wise person is not only morally good, but is also the person whose character has been shaped by God. Failure in speech means failure in wisdom, which necessarily means a failure to live a life shaped by God. Therefore, Ben Sira is able to assert "there is a kind of speech that is the counterpart of death."<sup>8</sup> Passages such as 20:18–26; 27:11–29 and 28:8–26 focus on a variety of evil utterances: untimely speech, scurrilous gossip, sacred oaths, betrayal of secrets, insincerity, contentiousness, arrogance, and quarrels. Reading these ancient texts is akin to reading a compendium of mistakes the church and some leaders make regularly in responding to testimony of domestic violence. Particularly damning is the commentator

who observes that, “the poor conversation of a fool” who “speaks before he thinks . . . and is not worth listening to” (21:26).<sup>9</sup> Sadly, many women have come to a similar conclusion about the church based on the poverty of wise conversation surrounding domestic violence. Sirach—like Proverbs and much of the Old Testament—also witnesses to the power of words for good as well as evil.<sup>10</sup> It is the benefits of good speech for others in the community that is particularly recognised and affirmed (21:16–17, 25 and 6:5). Words matter because others are helped (or harmed) by what we say.

### **Speaking credibly: integrity, not intelligence (the wisdom of Plutarch’s *De garrulitate*)**

Among the many Greek philosophers who wrote on speech and conversation (including Plato, Aristotle, Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus), Plutarch’s *De garrulitate* stands out as the classical discourse on the subject.<sup>11</sup> Plutarch’s overarching concern is for controlled speech. Since “disaster is the end of unbridled tongues” (Mor 503C) this requires a controlled tongue. This concern finds expression in two virtues of speech: silence and brevity.<sup>12</sup> In diagnosing the problem of talkativeness, Plutarch implies that the consequences of bad speech are primarily personal. Gaining and protecting one’s reputation through appropriate speech and conversation is a central focus in *De garrulitate* (e.g., Mor 1:39C). Plutarch, however, is equally concerned with one’s character, and the intimate relationship between character and speech.<sup>13</sup> This may be contrasted with the biblical account which assumes that right living flows from “the fear of the Lord”. In the wisdom literature, foolishness is not merely lack of instruction or lack of self-control, but “fools say in their hearts, ‘there is no God’” (Ps 14:1). In other words, credible speech must be grounded theologically, not just in morality. The most sustained theological discussion of why words matter—of speaking and listening, wisdom, and integrity—is found in the letter of James where listening, not lecturing; faith, not favour; right relating, not bad behaving; and, truth-telling, not fake facts, make human speech credible.

### **Speaking credibly: listening, not lecturing (James 1:19)**

The connection between God’s speech and human speech becomes explicit until James 1:26 where controlled speech is made the mark of true faith. However, the implicit understanding throughout James is that human

speech is framed by, and a response to, divine speech (see Jas 1:18).<sup>14</sup> The first and most relevant admonition, to be “quick to hear” is more than just attentiveness or the technique of “active listening”, even though many Church preachers and teachers do well to be reminded of this basic lesson in civics. In the oral-aural culture of the first century, the association of wisdom with listening is easily overlooked. This short saying reflects the long experience that disciplined listening develops wisdom. The daily cry of the Israelite that began, “hear O Israel” emphasises the centrality of good listening to the faith of Israel. In the words of the law and the prophets, listening is first directed towards God. In the wisdom literature, noted above, “the reader of Proverbs is pommelled with commands to listen and pay attention to the forthcoming words of advice”<sup>15</sup> Beyond the connection between listening and developing wisdom, is that in Proverbs 2:1–6 between listening and spiritual formation. Finally, in Proverbs 5:1–2, a link is established between listening and speaking rightly. The long experience of these accumulated benefits of listening is captured in James’ pithy saying, “be quick to listen”. Contemporary church responses to domestic violence have included a “Time to Listen” that resonated deeply with a large gathering hosted by Northside Baptist Church on Sydney’s North Shore. Tragically, the church has been far too slow to listen to the testimonies of many living with domestic violence. To summarise, those who have disciplined their speech have a commensurate discipline in character; those who are disciplined listeners are also wise. What wisdom might be gleaned from listening to the testimony of women who have experienced violence? Why do their words matter? In the last section I will suggest, with help from C.S. Lewis, that it is *holy* wisdom.

### **Speaking credibly: faith, not favour (James 1:26)**

In 1:26, James makes explicit the connection between speech and faith, and claims that failure to “bridle the tongue” (the metaphor for controlling speech) renders one’s faith worthless. The use of the term *ματαίας* which was often applied to pagan religions (see Acts 14:15; 1 Pt 1:18), probably carries the more pejorative thrust of empty, worthless or even idolatrous, rather than merely vain.<sup>16</sup> That one’s relationship with God is contingent or dependent upon the way one speaks and listens appears to be unparalleled in extra-biblical sources. The idolatry of the uncontrolled tongue is the attitude that prefers talking to listening. It springs from the person

who has forgotten that true wisdom comes from the God who has already spoken. Here, James attaches the utmost theological significance to what we do and don’t say. Strikingly, James 1:26 begins, “If he does not control the tongue, then he deceives himself [lit. ‘his own heart’] and his religion is vain”. Johnson offers another possibility which involves reading *ἀπατῶν* not as deceiving but as “giving pleasure to”.<sup>17</sup> This alternative sets both uncontrolled speech (Jas 3:1–12) and giving into the pleasures of the heart (see Jas 4:1–3) as opposed to true faith (Jas 1:27), further deepening the theological grounding of credible speech. Either interpretation reinforces the stunning claim James makes. Uncontrolled speech—because it is self-deceptive or self-indulgent—is antithetical to a right relationship with God.

### **Speaking credibly: right relating, not bad behaving: James 3:1–12**

This claim is reinforced in another, extended passage concerning speech (Jas 3:1–12) where James’ outlook develops a covenantal perspective. Evidence for this claim has three supports: first, the double-mindedness of the tongue (Jas 3:9) reflects both Jas 1:8 and Jas 4:8 where one’s basic life-orientation is friendship with God or world; second, the tongue can be inflamed by *τῆς γεέννης* (“of hell” Jas 3:6); and third, teachers who fail in speech are liable to greater judgment (Jas 3:1).<sup>18</sup> Credible speech must be grounded in such a theological perspective and not reduced to simplistic, how-to formulae focused on morality or technique. The specific mention of teachers in the Christian community is equally striking in light of recent conflict in responding to domestic violence. James establishes a link between the teacher’s role, their patterns of speech and their accountability within the Christian community. Plutarch’s commentary on the maxim “Tis character persuades, and not the speech” unpacks the meaning of this link: “No, rather it is both character and speech, or character by means of speech, just as a horseman uses a bridle, or a helmsman uses a rudder, since virtue has no instrument so humane or so akin to itself as speech.”<sup>19</sup> The central role of credible speech—particularly by those in positions of influence—in the edification of others in the community is highlighted by the following conclusion, “the accent on a stricter standard of judgement for teachers may reveal an understanding of their role in the Christian community not only as imparters of Christian knowledge, but also as models of Christian behaviour, at least in their speech.”<sup>20</sup>

James 3:3–6 employs several powerful images regarding the tongue, suggesting that the tongue affects all facets of human existence. If James' claim, that the tongue guides the body—both positively and negatively—is correct, then this has enormous consequences for everyday, religious, educational, and political life. It seems that James is making another astonishing claim: human speech determines human behaviour and ultimately human destiny. This certainly appears to be the direction of James' argument in 3:9–10. The potential of human speech for both good and evil is here drawn out in the sharpest possible contrast: blessing God and cursing those made in his likeness. Why do words matter? The implications of James' speech ethics for domestic violence are profound. Violent, abusive and belittling words—here described as cursing—are antithetical to Christian prayer and praise. It is impossible for adoration of God and abuse of an image-bearer to come from the same tongue.

The theological and communal orientations of James' concern for speech are developed further in chapters 4–5 where other instances of evil (Jas 4:1–2, 11; 5:9) and positive talk (Jas 5:13–20) are discussed.

Duplicity in speech, as a failure shared by all humanity, (Jas 3:9—even James admits his culpability!) is ultimately inconsistent with true religion (Jas 1:26) and will bring judgment and condemnation (Jas 5:9, 12). As far as James is concerned, if faith without works is dead, so also are works without controlled speech. In James' theological framing, “all human activity, including speech, is defined in terms of these two allegiances”: friendship with God and friendship with the world (Jas 4:4).<sup>21</sup> Credible speech reveals allegiance to God through its role in perfecting character and its eternal significance: it is the wisdom from above (Jas 3:17). Credible speaking employs words which are “peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits” (Jas 3:17). This is the constructive role of words and why they matter. These are the words that disappear in a violent or abusive relationship and they are words that disappeared from many church responses to the initial reporting.

### **Speaking credibly: truth-telling, not fake facts (James 5:12)**

Towards the end of the letter, James develops the positive aspects of speech (Jas 5:13—the prayer in distress, Jas 5:13—the song of praise, Jas 5:14—the call for help, Jas 5:16—the confession of sins and Jas 5:19–20—the correction of the neighbour). This suggests that what he says about oaths in Jas 5:12 is,

above all, important for speech. The relevance of banning oaths to speaking is not immediately apparent. Yet the ban does not appear to be directed towards official oath-taking (where they serve an important function) but to everyday discourse, the “encouragement of plain speech in the community of faith . . . it is a call to simplicity and truthfulness.”<sup>22</sup> Developing discipline in both speech and listening benefits the whole community, and theologically is the appropriate response to the prior speech of God. In this way God uses credible human speech to witness to his light and love. Words matter because they witness to—or betray—God’s mercy and God’s truth.

### **Speaking credibly: core convictions, not corrupted chatter (Matthew 12:33–37)**

Although less developed than in the letter of James, Matthew ascribes to Jesus a similar framework for the credibility of speech to that held by James. Three passages illustrate these theological dimensions of why words matter: Matthew 5:33–37; 7:15–27 and 12:33–37. Only Matthew 12:33–37 will be explored here. It is not poorly chosen words that Jesus is targeting in these verses, rather, Jesus draws together heart and mouth—conviction and conversation—with a powerful metaphor: “the mouth speaks what comes from the centre of a person’s being, the heart” (Matt 15:11, 19).<sup>23</sup> That Jesus sees the credibility of human speech in a theological context is made clear in Matthew 12:36–37 where because words come from the heart, the judgement of an individual will be according to his or her utterances.<sup>24</sup> As observed in the letter of James, there are eternal consequences to the way we speak, and Luz observes this in Matthew’s gospel, and draws a contrast with Hellenistic warnings against chatter. The day of judgement will see our spoken words evaluated on the basis of the work they have produced, and for Matthew the central criterion of that evaluation will be love (*Liebe*).<sup>25</sup> The final test for the credibility of human speech is love: the wise and measured use of words that benefit other people and the wider community. The greatest commandment—to love God and neighbour (Matt 22:37–40)—is to find expression in our words. Jesus the Judge will evaluate the credibility of our convictions by how we speak. Speak the truth in love. The final criterion will be, is, according to Jesus, love.

Words matter in Scripture. Words matter in domestic violence. Words matter is how the church and its leaders respond to domestic violence—in

both pastoral and political contexts. Words matter because they either demonstrate credibility, or a lack of credibility. In the final section I demonstrate the credibility of Christian language through the writings of C. S. Lewis.

### **C. S. Lewis and the credibility of language**

What kind of language enable us to explore the puzzle, pain and paradox of domestic violence and abuse in the church (and the world) in credible ways? Clear and honest words are needed where too often Christian leaders and theologians speak in riddles or spin about difficult matters like domestic violence. Statistical clarity and data generated by research, however, make awkward bedfellows for responding to those experiencing abuse by others. We also need a more intuitive language which listens and responds to those deep, hidden parts of human existence and suffering. Especially those of us, or those parts of us, which remain in denial about the extent of the problem of domestic violence in the church. By observing the writing of C. S. Lewis—specifically how it evolved over his lifetime—I will suggest our language can be credible by honouring both the quest for truth and the command to love.

Lewis was, of course, a prolific Christian author in the middle of the last century, writing a number of books including, but not limited to *Mere Christianity*, *The Problem of Pain*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Narnia Chronicles*, and *A Grief Observed*. There is a substantial difference in the style of prose displayed across these books. For example, the earlier books such as *Mere Christianity* and *The Problem of Pain* are written in straight prose, using what Lewis called “theological” language. For Lewis, “theological” language did not mean lack of clarity or truth. These works made him famous for the opposite reason. Lewis tackles the “problem” of pain with clarity and conviction making famous the phrase that, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”<sup>26</sup> Lewis considered the credibility of this kind of language was an ‘apologetic mode of discourse’—arguing for the intellectual credibility of the Christian faith. Many considered Lewis the most credible Christian writer of his generation.

Over the course of his life, Lewis also came to appreciate that Christian truth could also be credible—often better communicated—through what he deemed “poetical” language compared to a more traditional “theological” language. Examples from his own writing include the children’s books *The*

*Narnia Chronicles* which reflect poetic—rather than theological—language. Another well-known example is *The Screwtape Letters*. None of these, of course, are lacking Christian truth or devoid of theological content.<sup>27</sup>

The contrast is most striking between Lewis' early classic *The Problem of Pain* and one of his last books: *Till We Have Faces*.<sup>28</sup> *Till We Have Faces* is written for and about rationalists, who, in desiring the clear, hard limited, and simple must still account for the unseen mystery of the gods. In *Till We Have Faces*, the contrast between clear, precise, honest theological language and the more puzzling, painful, paradoxical poetical language, is portrayed through two main characters. The clear precision of Greek wisdom is seen in the character named the Fox; the paradoxical, pain-filled and holy mystery is personified in the old priest from the House of Ungit. As the story of *Till We Have Faces* unfolds, the shortcomings of rationalism—the Greek wisdom of the Fox—becomes obvious. The most explicit condemnation of the Fox's philosophy is made early by the old Priest of the House of Ungit:

We are hearing much Greek wisdom this morning . . . and I have heard most of it before . . . Much less does it give them understanding of holy things. They demand to see things clearly, as if the gods were no more than letters written in a book. I, King, have dealt with the gods for three generations of men . . . and nothing that is said clearly can be said truly about them. Holy places are dark places. It is life and strength, not knowledge and words, that we get in them. Holy wisdom is not clear and thin like water, but thick and dark like blood.<sup>29</sup>

The testimony of those who have suffered domestic violence emerges from dark places, making their testimony “holy” places. The credibility of these testimonies resides in the life and strength, not knowledge and words, of their courageous testimony.

In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis asks the question many women who have experienced violence ask: is God good and powerful: “If God were good, he would wish to make his creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty he would be able to do as he wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore God lacks either goodness, or power, or both.”<sup>30</sup> Decades later, writing in *A Grief Observed*, after the death of his wife Joy Davidman, Lewis admits that “sooner or later I must face the question in plain language” by honestly wondering: “what reason have we, except our own desperate wishes, to believe that God is, by any standard we can conceive, ‘good’? Doesn’t all the *prima facie* evidence suggest exactly the opposite? . . . The terrible thing is that a

perfectly good God is in this matter hardly less formidable than a Cosmic Sadist.”<sup>31</sup> To reiterate, I am highlighting a contrast in his language and not the inner logic of Lewis’ apologetic arguments. Preachers and apologists are drawn to the clarity and reason of *The Problem of Pain*. Those who suffer and mourn resonate with the credibility and raw struggle of *A Grief Observed*. The initial debate within the Church regarding domestic violence lacked the versatility of language displayed by Lewis.

Clarity and reason—research and data—are not the only source of credibility. In certain conditions they are less helpful because they are “clear and thin like water”. Suffering and struggle—the tone and tenor of the testimony of many women who have experienced domestic violence—is equally credible speech. Often this testimony is “thick and dark like blood”, literally. Tragically, as happened in the debates following the ABC reports, too many women’s testimony was ignored or dismissed. Inexcusably, women reporting domestic violence to church leaders were often deemed as lacking credibility. The church is in grave peril when it ignores or invalidates the “holy wisdom” of such testimony.

Words will continue to matter. Words matter in Scripture. Words matter in domestic violence. Words matter is how the church and its leaders respond to domestic violence. Speaking and listening credibly about domestic violence demonstrates our wisdom and integrity. Credible words matter to God.

## Endnotes

- 1 For example, Calvin A Blom, “New Testament Principles of Oral Conversation as they relate to Everyday Life” (ThM, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1978), is guilty of this.
- 2 David A. Hubbard, *The Communicator’s Commentary, Vol. 15A: Proverbs* (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 395.
- 3 Hubbard, 271 including 18:2, 4, 6–7, 8, 13, 17, 20–21; 19:1; 20:15, 19; 21:23 and 22:11.
- 4 Derek Kidner, *The Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale Press, 1964), 46, who comments “above all, beliefs and convictions are formed by words, and these either destroy a man or are the making of him”.
- 5 Kidner, 48–9.
- 6 Hubbard, 400: “honest speech is marked by competence, confidence and finally consideration”.
- 7 John G. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach, A Commentary* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 101.
- 8 Sir. 20:12. cf. also 22:27 “O that a guard were set over my mouth, and a seal of prudence upon my lips, that it may keep me from falling, so that my tongue may not destroy me” and 28:18 “Many have been killed by the sword, but not so many as by the tongue”.
- 9 Snaith, 136.
- 10 Sir. 37:16 “Every undertaking begins in discussion, and consultation precedes every action” and 37:18 “Four kinds of destiny are offered to men, good and evil, life and death; and always it is the tongue that decides the issue”.
- 11 William A. Beardslee, “De garrulitate (Moralia 502B-515A)” in *Plutarch’s Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1978), 268.
- 12 Plutarch, *Mor. 502E*, quoting Sophocles, Plutarch states “in silence many virtues lie”. *Mor. 510E*, “remembering also that terse and pithy speakers and those who can pack much sense into a short speech are more admired and loved, and are considered wiser, than these unbridled and headstrong talkers.”
- 13 Plutarch’s commentary on the maxim, *Mor. 33F*: “’Tis character persuades, and not the speech”, illustrates this intimate association between the two:

"No, rather it is both character and speech, or character by means of speech, just as a horseman uses a bridle, or a helmsman uses a rudder, since virtue has no instrument so humane or so akin to itself as speech."

- 14 Robert W. Wall, 'James, Letter of' in *Dictionary of the Latter New Testament & Its Development*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1997), 545–561, regards the threefold saying of 1:19 as the key to the structure of the entire letter.
- 15 William R. Baker, *Personal Speech Ethics in the Epistle of James* (Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1995), 33, examples include: Prov. 1:8; 2:1–2; 4:1, 10; 5:1, 7; 6:20; 7:1–3, 24; 8:6, 33; 16:20; 19:20, 27; 22:17–18; 23:12, 22.
- 16 Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 211.
- 17 Johnson, *Letter of James*, 210–11.
- 18 Luke Timothy Johnson, 'Taciturnity and True religion: Jms.1:26–27', in *Greeks, Romans and Christians Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. D. Balch, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 329–339.
- 19 Plutarch, *Mor* 33F.
- 20 Baker, *Speech-ethics*, 21.
- 21 Johnson, *Letter of James*, 265.
- 22 Johnson, *Letter of James*, 341.
- 23 Most leading commentators affirm this use. For example, Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13 Vol 33A WBC* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 350. Also Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 321, comments on the use of kardia: "the heart is used here as an inclusive term to denote the sort of physical, spiritual and mental life . . . as centre and source of the whole inner life, with its thinking, feeling and volition".
- 24 W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 351.
- 25 Ulrich Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus: 2. Teilband, Mt 8–17* (Benziger: Neukirchener, 1990), 269.
- 26 C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1958).
- 27 C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (London: Faber & Faber, 1961).
- 28 C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces* (Glasgow: Collins, 1978).
- 29 Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, 58.
- 30 Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 23.
- 31 Lewis, *A Grief Observed*, 26.