

INTRODUCTION.

IN 1:26-27, ~ WE HAVE THE FINAL TWO VV OF THE FIRST MAJOR SECTION OF JAMES.

▶▶ Here James shifts the discussion ~ to a contrast between false and authentic religion.

IN OUR CULTURE ~ TO CALL SOMEONE "RELIGIOUS" ~ CAN IMPLY ~ 77

▶▶ that his or her beliefs are shallow and fake.

▶▶ However, ~ the Greek words for "religious" and "religion" ~ on their own ~ did not have those connotations.

▶▶ The words simply mean ~ religious service, ~ especially as expressed ~ in a system ~ of external observances.

▶▶ So, ~ the words can be used in both ~ a negative ~ and a positive ~ way.

▷▷ They can refer to one who has a genuine walk with God with resultant good works ~ 77

↳↳ or ~ to one who merely keeps outward rituals ~ but has no gen. walk with God.

→→ Context . . . .

▶▶ Simply put, ~ suggest that the words can refer to ~ false faith ~ and genuine faith.

▷▷ Interchangeably. 77 1/16

## JAMES = NEGATIVELY AND POSITIVELY.

▶▶FR/FF and GR/GF.

▶▶1<sup>st</sup>, ~ he comments on ~ one who merely keeps outward rituals, ~ vs. 26.

▷▷I.e., ~ inner self ~ does not match ~ outer actions of faith.

↪↪In reality: ~~ False faith.

▶▶2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ he comments on ~ genuine religion/faith, ~ vs. 27.

▷▷I.e., ~ inner self does match ~ outer actions of faith.

## NEED TO DIGRESS ~ BECAUSE NEED TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT.

▶▶Outward expressions of faith, ~ church attendance, ~ good works, ~ are not ~ what saves us.

▶▶For the genuine believer, ~ outer expressions of faith ~ are the ~ result ~ of an inner change.

▶▶Eph. 2:8-10 ⇔⇔ <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

▶▶The work of salvation ~ is for God's glory ~ and ~ is not accomplished ~ by human works.

▷▷The whole process of salvation ~ is not a human achievement, ~~ but ~ is an act of God's goodness. ↴↴ 2/16

▷▷ The emphasis is always on Christ, ~ the object of faith, ~ not ~ on the amount of faith.

▷▷ Salvation ~ is by God's completely unmerited favor.

▶▶ God has created believers anew in Christ Jesus, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ so we can do the good things he planned for us.

▷▷ Good works are ~ the result, ~ not the cause, ~ of salvation.

▷▷ God's Spirit, ~ working through a transformed heart, ~ produces a good life (Gal 5:22-23).

▶▶ So when we say ~ inner matches the outer, ~ it's in the sense that inner change comes first.

▷▷ And say ~ outer doesn't match inner, ~ means no inner change.

BREAK VV 26-27 DOWN.

IN VS 26a, ~ JAMES PRESENTS A PERSON ~ WHO CONSIDERS THEMSELVES RELIGIOUS ~ in the positive sense, ~ as the context indicates.

IOW, ~ THIS PERSON THINKS THEY'RE A CHRISTIAN ~ BECAUSE ~ they check all the right boxes.

▶▶ I.e., ~ goes to church . . . .

▶▶ Here James gets into the area of ~ self-deception.

▷▷ Not a case ~ in which a person is trying to fool others. ¶¶ 3/16

THE GRK VERB FOR ~ THINKS HERE IN VS 26a ~ IS USED IN THE NEGATIVE SENSE ~ 77

▶▶ of creating ~ a wrong perception.

▶▶ The implication ~ is that those to whom James refers ~ have a wrong opinion ~ 77

▷▷ of their religious nature.

↳↳ I.e., ~ have an erroneous opinion ~ of their relationship with God.

▶▶ They think they are religious. ⇔⇔ I.e., ~ they actually think they have gen. faith.

▷▷ But in fact ~ they are not religious.

↳↳ Their relationship with God ~ is far different ~ 77

→→ than what they ~ consider it to be. ⇔⇔ Do not have gen. faith.

IN VS. 26b, ~ JAMES CHARACTERIZES THIS PERSON ~ AS ONE ~ who does not bridle their tongue.

I.E., ~ THE PERSON DOES NOT KEEP A TIGHT REIN ON ~ or doesn't control ~ their tongue.

▶▶ Of course, ~ *tongue* ~ stands for speech.

▶▶ And since this is a contrast to the person's actions, ~ James is referring to improper speech.

▷▷ E.g., ~ speech that is ~ slanderous, ~ boastful, ~ impure, ~ hurtful, ~ or foul as in swearing. 77 4/16

## JAMES GIVES US A HINT HERE ~ OF WHAT HE'LL GO INTO DETAIL ABOUT IN CH. 3.

▶▶ Namely, ~ that we need to keep a tight rein on our tongues.

▷▷ They are dangerous when out of control.

## HERE THOUGH, ~ JAMES IS USING UNCONTROLLED SPEECH ~ as a telltale sign ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that the person ~ who thinks they're religious ~ and ~ checks all the right boxes ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but doesn't control their speech ~ is really ~ unconverted.

↪↪ This person's outward expressions of faith ~ have no inward reality.

## JESUS SHOWS US THIS.

▶▶ Matt. 12:34. ~~ [speaking to pharisees] ⇔⇔ You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

▷▷ Their nature ~ was completely evil ~ as seen by their words.

▷▷ The words ~ out of the abundance of the heart ~ indicate ~ ¶¶

↪↪ that a person's words ~ reveal his or her true character.

→→ "Heart" = the inner person.

▷▷ The Pharisees ~ could not hide their evil behind their ~ status, ~ robes, ~ and position.

↪↪ Their words ~ betrayed their true character. ¶¶ 5/16

▶▶ And Lk. 6:43-45. ~ ~ <sup>43</sup> "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, <sup>44</sup> for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷<sup>45</sup> The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

▷▷ Jesus pointed out ~ that a person's words ~ will eventually tell what kind of person they are.

▷▷ Just as people know the kind of tree ~ by the fruit it bears, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ so people know from what a person says ~ whether he is righteous or not.

▷▷ In this case ~ fruit stands ~ for what is said, ~ not what is done.

GETTING BACK TO JAMES, ~ ~ ¶¶

▶▶ again this person's outward expressions of faith ~ have no inward reality.

▶▶ Their way of talking ~ shows ~ there has been no inward transformation, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ no true spiritual rebirth.

▶▶ They are like the people Jesus describes in [Matt. 15:8](#).

▷▷ This people honors me with their lips, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ but their heart is far from me. ¶¶ 6/16

▷▷ In the case of the people James is describing, ~ we could say, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ they honor God with their religious activity, ~ but their hearts are far from him.

▶▶ Like the pharisees, ~ they are like whitewashed tombs, ~ which outwardly appear beautiful, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but within are full of ~ dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

↳↳ They cannot hide their true nature behind their church going, ~ etc.

INSERT TWO NOTES HERE.

▶▶ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ the present tense of the verb for bridle ~ may suggest ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that James is contemplating ~ chronically loose lips ~ rather ~ ¶¶

↳↳ than an occasional lapse in speech.

→→ Present tense in Greek . . . .

▷▷ Habitual, ~ lifestyle ~ thing.

↳↳ That is a very logical and reasonable conclusion.

→→ If occasional lapses in speech, ~ we'd all be in trouble.

▶▶ And here's the 2<sup>nd</sup> note ~ we need to insert here. ¶¶ 7/16

▷▷Please do not misunderstand.

↳↳James is not saying ~ sinful speech is the only telltale sign ~ 77

→→that the person who ~ thinks they're religious ~ 77

↳↳and checks all the right boxes ~ is really unconverted.

▷▷Sinful speech is simply ~ a good representative ~ of an unconverted heart.

↳↳Because ~ what we are ~ determines what we say.

IN VS 26c, ~ JAMES LOWERS THE BOOM ~ on the person who thinks they're religious ~ 77

YET SHOWS NO INNER CHANGE.

▶▶As we've been talking about, ~ they are deceiving themselves.

WE NEED TO DRIVE THIS HOME.

▶▶This is not someone ~ who is deceiving others.

▶▶Not like the false teachers ~ who Peter and Jude say sneak in ~ 77

▷▷and introduce their heresy secretly, ~ in order to deceive believers.

▶▶And they're not like the hypocrites ~ 77

▷▷who pray in public and fast ~ only to be seen by others. 77 8/16



▶▶ No, ~ the people James is talking about ~ are literally ~ deceiving themselves ~ 77

▷▷ into thinking ~ they're ok spiritually.

↪↪ Think going to heaven when die.

GRK WORD FOR ~ "DECEIVES" ~ MEANS ~ 77

▶▶ to cause someone (in this case themselves) ~ to have ~ 77

▷▷ misleading or erroneous views ~ concerning the truth.

▶▶ The person ~ who claims to be a Christian and checks all the right boxes, ~ 77

▷▷ yet shows ~ no outward evidence of inner transformation, ~ 77

↪↪ has an erroneous view ~ concerning their relationship with God.

▶▶ They believe it's existent.

▷▷ When, ~ in fact, ~ their relationship with God ~ is non-existent.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND.

▶▶ Scripture deals with the fact ~ that not only ~ 77

▷▷ are there saved people and lost people ~ 77

↪↪ but there are lost people ~ who think ~ they are saved people. 77 9/16

▶▶ That is of tremendous concern to God.

▶▶ That kind of deception ~ is eternally fatal, ~ as we'll see in a little bit.

▶▶ And so over and over again, ~ Old Testament and New Testament, ~ 77

▷▷ the cry of the Spirit of God ~ is that one should not be deceived ~ about the reality of faith.

### THIS IS SERIOUS STUFF.

▶▶ And ~ an extremely dangerous position to be in.

▶▶ Because Jesus said ~ there will be a group of self-deluded people ~ 77

▷▷ who stand before him at the judgment.

↳↳ Matt. 7:21-23. ~ 21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ~ 77

→→ 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ~ 77

↳↳ 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

### TRUE DISCIPLES ~ AFFIRM JESUS'S LORDSHIP, ~ SUBMIT TO HIS AUTHORITY, ~ 77

▶▶ and ~ obey his word. 77 10/16

▶▶ Jesus insisted ~ that a person is confirmed as a true disciple ~ not by ~ 77

▷▷ prophecy, ~ exorcism, ~ or working miracles ~ 77

↳↳ but by living ~ a transformed life ~ made possible by God.

→→ Which includes ~ proper speech.

▶▶ The disobedient lifestyles of lawbreakers ~ are inconsistent ~ with genuine discipleship.

▶▶ I never knew you ~ has the sense, ~ 77

↳↳ "I do not recognize you ~ as one of my people."

▶▶ And their alleged good deeds ~ he views as ~ lawlessness.

▷▷ All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

▷▷ Sin is the defilement ~ which a fallen nature imparts to all we do.

↳↳ So, ~ a person cannot be saved by good works.

→→ Because even good works ~ are tainted by our sin nature.

IN VS 26d, ~ JAMES GIVES HIS VERDICT ~ ON THE PERSON WHO THINKS THEY'RE religious ~ 77

YET SHOWS NO INNER CHANGE. 77 11/16

▶▶I.e., ~ their religious activity, ~ church going, ~ etc., ~ is not the result of an inner change.

▷▷Their religious activity ~ is based on ~ an erroneous and deadly thinking ~ 77

↪↪that mere religious activity means they have a genuine relationship with God.

→→They do not.

▶▶This person's religion, ~ James says, ~ is worthless.

▷▷I.e., ~ this person's faith ~ is dead.

↪↪It is not ~ saving faith, ~ as James will say later.

"WORTHLESS" ~ MAKES EMPHATIC ~ JAMES'S REJECTION OF THIS TYPE OF FAITH ~ as a false faith.

▶▶Genuine, ~ saving faith ~ will produce actions in the believer's life ~ 77

▷▷which are in accordance with ~ the word of God.

▶▶In the example given, ~ they will control their speech.

IN THE SEPTUAGINT, ~ THIS ADJECTIVE, ~ WORTHLESS, ~ 77

▶▶is used of pagan idols and idol worship. 77 12/16

▶▶ A professed Christianity ~ that centers on the external expressions of faith, ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ e.g., ~ attendance at worship, ~ rote prayers, ~ church membership, ~ participation in the ordinances, ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ but is devoid of the regenerating power of the gospel ~ is as futile and unprofitable ~ as idol worship.

▶▶ These outward aspects ~ are important as expressions of personal faith.

▷▷ I.e., ~ genuine saving faith ~ will manifest itself in outward godly aspects.

▷▷ But these outward aspects ~ are useless ~ apart from the Spirit's inner work.

### JAMES SEES THE UNBRIDLED TONGUE AND THE DECEIVED HEART ~ ¶¶

▶▶ as occurring in company ~ with an empty faith, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ no matter how many religious activities the person engages in.

### IN VS 27, ~ JAMES PROCEEDS TO EXPLAIN WHAT GENUINE RELIGION LOOKS LIKE.

NOW, ~ HE DOES NOT EXPLICITLY SAY THIS, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ but since this is a contrast to the person in vs 26, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ the implication is ~ that this person ~ has control of his tongue.

▷▷ I.e., ~ there has been ~ a genuine inner change ~ in this person. ¶¶ 13/16

▶▶ IOW, ~ the outward expression is the same both cases.

▷▷ But the inward expression ~ is far different ~ 77

↪↪ than the self-deceived individual.

▶▶ And this person's actions ~ are not worthless.

▷▷ They will bear much fruit.

▷▷ Furthermore, ~ they are the direct result ~ of a genuine ~ inner change.

▶▶ True inner change ~ will issue forth ~ in meaningful ~ outward expression.

▷▷ James will say more on that later.

CONTINUING IN VS 27, ~ JAMES GIVES US TWO TELLTALE SIGNS ~ OF GENUINE religion/faith.

▶▶ Two signs that genuine faith produces.

▶▶ I.e., ~ Substantive ministry ~ and moral purity. ⇔⇔ Break it down.

1<sup>st</sup>, ~ SUBSTANTIVE MINISTRY. ⇔⇔ To visit orphans and widows in their affliction.

▶▶ Visit: ~ to care for or look after, ~ with the implication of continuous responsibility.

▶▶ Affliction: ~ an oppressive state of ~ physical, ~ mental, ~ social, ~ 77

▷▷ or economic ~ adversity. 77 14/16

▶▶ Care for orphans and widows ~ is commanded in the Old Testament ~ ¶¶

▷▷ as a way of imitating God's own concern for them.

▶▶ Psalmist: ~ God is the 'Father of the fatherless and protector of widows' (Ps. 68:5).

▶▶ In a text that bears many similarities to this passage in James, ~ Isaiah announces ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that God will no longer recognize ~ the worship his people offer him.

↪↪ They must ~ 'wash themselves . . . learn to do good; ~ seek justice, ~ correct oppression; ~ ¶¶

→→ defend the fatherless, ~ plead for the widow' (Isa. 1:10-17).

▶▶ The orphan and widow become ~ types ~ of those who find themselves helpless in the world.

▷▷ IOW, ~ this goes way beyond widows and orphans.

↪↪ Refers to anyone ~ who is undergoing an ~ ¶¶

→→ oppressive state of ~ physical, ~ mental, ~ social, ~ or economic ~ adversity.

▶▶ A person who possess genuine religion/faith ~ will imitate their heavenly Father ~ ¶¶

▷▷ by intervening to help the helpless.

A 2<sup>nd</sup> TELLTALE SIGN ~ OF GENUINE RELIGION/FAITH. ⇔⇔ Moral purity. ¶¶ 15/16

▶▶ To keep oneself unstained from the world ~ means ~ to avoid thinking and acting ~ 77

▷▷ in accordance with the value-system ~ of the society around us.

▶▶ This society reflects, ~ by and large, ~ beliefs and practices that are ~ 77

▷▷ unchristian, ~ if not actively ~ anti-Christian.

▶▶ The believer who lives ~ 'in the world' ~ is in constant danger ~ 77

▷▷ of having the taint of that system ~ 'rub off' on them.

▶▶ As Paul writes, ~ Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

▷▷ I.e., ~ we are not to copy ~ the behavior and customs of this world.

↳↳ Rather, ~ we are to let God transform us into a new person ~ by changing the way we think.

▶▶ The genuine believer will falter at times, ~ hence the need for Paul's command.

▷▷ But the typical response of the genuine believer ~ will be ~ to constantly and automatically reject ~ 77

↳↳ the behavior and customs of this world.

JAMES HAS CERTAINLY LAID SOME HEAVY WORDS ON US TODAY.