



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## TRUE FAITH IS BEING “DOERS OF THE WORD”, Part 4 – JAMES 1:26

COLORADO

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*James clearly lays out a contrast in chapter one that we dare not miss. The “hearer” looks at the Word of God and contemplates what is revealed. But, hearing the Word of God can never be the end in itself. Hearing is not enough and we must not miscalculate the importance of “doing” for true godliness will result from obedience to the Word. James does not make light of those who have forgotten what they have seen in the mirror of God’s Word and walked away. James contrasts the one who observes his face in a mirror then goes away and forgets what he looks like with the one who looks at the perfect law, who perseveres, remembers and acts upon it. An “effectual doer” looks at the perfect, liberating Word of God on a continual basis and is willing to abide under its purifying work, responding to the truths therein and thus please God. This man looks humbly, intently and diligently at the perfect law of God which is His Word and gives way to the Word in his/her life. The first one is deceived and the second one is blessed.*

### I. A VAIN FAITH, A WORTHLESS RELIGION-JAMES 1:26

*“If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man’s religion is worthless.” James 1:26*

In this very practical book that speaks to the fact that it matters how we live. In chapter one, emphasis is placed on a true, genuine faith contrasted with a vain and worthless faith. True faith will respond to trials with maturity, not give in to the temptation to sin and responds to the Word of God with obedience. True faith receives and responds to God’s Word. This genuine faith is contrasted with a vain and worthless faith. And it is essential we understand this contrast, for we are deceived if we think that just mere knowledge or outward actions are enough. God cares about our heart and in James 1:26, there is a window that gives a clear look into our heart which reveals a true faith or a vain and worthless faith.

### A. A VAIN FAITH: RELIGIOUS?– JAMES 1:26A

*“If anyone thinks himself to be religious ...” James 1:26a*

Wanting to take us one step further in examining our lives, James says that if you think you are “religious”, then look at another area of your life. What does James mean by “religious”?

**“religious”** Greek word **“threskos,”** refers to ceremonial public worship, the diligent performer of the divinely described duties of the outward service of God.

James wants us to evaluate where we are because he doesn’t want us to be deceived about the condition of our soul. Therefore, if you think you are a Christian, then take an honest look. Just because you do religious things;

you go to church, serve on committees, go on mission trips or may even be an elder in your church, know that these things do not necessarily mean you have a true and genuine faith. God is concerned not with outward actions, but with the condition of our inward heart. And James makes clear that there is a window that clearly reveals the condition of our heart, revealing the genuineness of our faith. What is that window?

### B. A VAIN FAITH: UNBRIDLED TONGUE?– JAMES 1:26B

*“If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue ...” James 1:26b*

James clearly states that the tongue is an indicator of our heart. The window into our heart is our tongue. We are deceived if we think we can go through the mechanics of merely professing to be a Christian and yet have a tongue that is out of control. James makes it clear that if you think you are a Christian, if you think you are religious, but you don’t demonstrate inner control of your tongue, you are deceived if you think you have a true religion, a true faith.

Why does James single out the tongue as an indicator of our heart and the genuineness of our faith? Why does James indicate that an out of control tongue reveals phony, religious devotion? Why does James make the point that if you say you love God, but don’t bridle your tongue, your religion is useless? James gives us a word picture to clarify this critical point.

**“bridle”** Greek word **“chalinagoge,”** which is a bridle. More specifically, the Greek word **“ago”** means to direct or restrain, govern, control or lead with a bridle.

James compares the tongue to a bridle used on a wild horse. You can take a wild horse and with time and patience, gain control over that horse with a mere bit and bridle in its mouth. You would be foolish to try and control it without a bridle and you would quickly find your horse out of control and yourself on the ground. And James would make the point that if you can’t control that horse with a bridle, you are deceiving yourself into thinking he is broke. And so it is with true faith. A person who is outwardly religious and yet has a tongue that is unbridled and out of control, demonstrates a heart that is not controlled by the Spirit of God. Our tongue gives an outward picture of our heart. What picture is revealed by your tongue not just to a watching world, but to God as well?

## BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

STAFF, LOBBYISTS, JOURNALISTS & SERGEANTS: TUESDAYS AT NOON, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0107

# Colorado

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This is not an easy thing to talk about. Jesus is speaking in Matthew 12:33-37 and says, “...*For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil. And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.*” It matters how we live, it matters how we talk as believers. The way we talk shows the condition of our heart. Do you say you are a Christian and yet your tongue is unbridled? James would say that your actions demonstrate a deceived and unholy heart.

Just as a wild horse can be tamed with a bit in his mouth, so the tongue can be tamed as it is submitted to the Word of God. And an out-of-control tongue indicates an out-of-control heart. I cannot think of a more powerful way for Satan to destroy your ministry than to do it with your tongue. Once those words are spoken, can you gather them all back? Our tongue reveals the condition of our heart before a holy God.

### C. A VAIN FAITH: A DECEIVED HEART?— JAMES 1:26C

*“If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart...” James 1:26c*

James goes on to make the point that if a man is unable to bridle his tongue, control his tongue, he is deceiving his own heart about the reality, the truth about his religion. Corrupt speech shows a corrupt heart. James would say that a person who thinks he is a Christian but does not bridle his tongue has a wrong opinion of himself and is deceived about his faith. Just because his life may be full of “good actions”, those outward actions are a religion of mere profession and not true faith. An out-of-control tongue suggests bogus religious devotion, no matter how well one’s devotion is carried out.<sup>1</sup>

### D. A VAIN FAITH: A USELESS RELIGION?— JAMES 1:26D

*“If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man’s religion is worthless.” James 1:26d*

James wants us to understand that if a person’s tongue isn’t controlled, his heart is not transformed and that man’s religion is in vain, useless.

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**“worthless”** Greek word “*mataios*,” means that it accomplishes nothing.

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The point is this; a religion that does not transform the heart accomplishes nothing. Our speech is used by James as an indicator that reveals the condition of our heart. If the tongue isn’t controlled, is the heart really transformed? True faith responds to the Word and that means in every area of our life. A religion that does not transform the heart accomplishes nothing and is absolutely useless. If one thinks he is religious but doesn’t demonstrate inner control over the tongue, he is deceived if he thinks he has a true religion, a true faith. If the tongue is not controlled by God, it is a sure indicator that the heart isn’t either. James makes it clear that the tongue represents the issues of a pure heart.

If your tongue is a window that reveals your heart, then I ask you, do these verses represent your heart?

>Psalm 119:10 says, *“With all my heart I have sought Thee; do not let me wander from Thy commandments.”*

>Psalms 119:2, *“How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart.”*

>Psalm 119:38, *“Establish Thy word to Thy servant, as that which produces reverence for Thee.”*

>Psalm 35:28, *“And my tongue shall declare Thy righteousness and Thy praise all day long.”*

>Psalm 17:3, *“Thou hast tried my heart; Thou hast visited me by night; Thou hast tested me and dost find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.”*

>Psalm 19:14, *“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.”*

James would say you are deceived if you say you are a Christian, you are hearing God’s Word and yet not exercising self control. Not responding to Scripture with humility and giving way to its work in your life is deception and we have made a gross miscalculation as to the true condition of our soul. True faith results in obedience to the Word of God. Don’t be deceived, it matters how we live. And a good indication as to the condition of our heart is our tongue. Do you have an unbridled tongue? Does your tongue declare righteousness and praise to God all day long? Have you purposed in your heart that your mouth will not transgress? Are the words of your mouth acceptable in the sight of God? Receive the Word of God with submission and humility. Then respond to the Word of God without deception allowing His work in your heart, transforming you from the inside out.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin, Ralph P. *Word Biblical Commentary, James*. Word Publisher, 1988. Pg. 52.