

# The Book Of James: Keeping It Real

## James 1:26-27

### **James 1:26**

*(KJV) If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*

*(NIV) Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.*

When we fail to submit our hearts and tongues to the control of the Holy Spirit, we risk dishonouring the name of Christ in our walk and witness. Once wayward words are released, they can wound the ones we love and leave scars on our marriages and ministries.

**Psalm 141:3** *Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.*

The disconnect between *good works* and *good words* confuses our watching world and confirms all suspicions of hypocrisy at a time in history when we can ill afford to be unloving and lukewarm (Revelation 3:14-22). And while this kind of incongruity runs horizontal within our relationship with the secular world, another kind of falsehood runs vertical—with God—and threatens the authenticity of our relationship with Jesus.

### **Matthew 15:7-9**

*Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

And the reason this matters? We were saved that we might cultivate an authentic relationship with God through Jesus. When we enter our prayer closet and shut the door (Matthew 6:6) and present ourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1) before God our Father, we dare not dwell there in His presence with insincerity, indignity, or indifference. God lives and moves through vessels fit for His use (2 Timothy 2:20-21), who have taken up their cross and died to self, with all of its false humility—and have truly shared in the fellowship of suffering (Philippians 3:10-11) and the Lord's discipline (Hebrew 12:6) to bear real spiritual fruit that glorifies God (John 15:8).

Beloved, the best way we can express our love to God and communicate our gratefulness for His unique ministry through each of us is to *get real* and *stay real*. Get rooted in Jesus and His Word. And stay in His presence moment by moment, day by day—growing in the grace and knowledge of Him who lives in us!

**Galatians 2:20**

*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

**John 15:7**

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

\*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Have you ever had a season in your relationship with God when you sensed a disconnect with Him? How did you resolve it, or did you?

\*STUDY POINT: Identify three key passages in the New Testament where God brought into rapid focus the truth that would set His captive free—from self-deception and speaking lies.

**James 1:27**

**(KJV)** *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

**(NIV)** *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.*

This is God pressing the mute button on the one depicted in the previous verse—the one whose tongue deceives and destroys all the glorious groundwork of the Gospel God laid down through that person.

What a shame. What a tragedy. What a blasphemy to the Holy Ghost!

Remember this:

**Galatians 6:7-8**

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

**Romans 3:4**

*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

*Let God be true, but every man a liar.*

Listen, O boastful sinner practicing a vain religion:

God accepts as pure and faultless religious practice compassion and care for orphans and widows, in addition to personal holiness. Period.

And to the leaders of nations that ignore God, exalt themselves, and execute God's own, His Word stands steadfast and His verdict perfect:

**Psalm 2:1-12**

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.* He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland