

And it Rears up its Ugly Head
James 1:26-27 (NKJV)

26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

James has led us through how that every good and perfect gift is from above.

And that with God there is only faithfulness to His promises.

He has given us the method of our salvation through the Holy Spirit using the word of God to quicken us and bring us to new life, spiritual life.

Then He give us the guide for this new life in that it is in listening and obeying the word of God.

And how if we do that we will lay aside all the works of the flesh and only give ourselves to the spiritual part that God has given us.

And now comes the test. Not a test of what we know or how we feel.

Not even a test of what we believe but rather a test of what we do.

And that is what counts. Lehman Strauss says:

The Pharisees were scrupulous in observing religious rites and ceremonies such as praying, fasting, tithing, and attending church; but the Pharisee's religion was a vain delusion. Such counterfeits creep into many local churches today. They sit with the brethren, sing with the brethren, give with the brethren, and listen to God's Word, but they have never received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Let my hearers beware! Such a possibility is very real. *Lehman Strauss, Lehman Strauss Commentaries – James, Your Brother: Studies in the Epistle of James, (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1967), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 63.*

I. Jesus and James

A. From the very first, scholars of the word have noticed how that James uses the same teaching as Jesus.

1. Controlling the tongue and how we treat the disadvantaged.

2. Matthew 7:15-20 (NKJV)

a. 15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by

their fruits you will know them.

3. Matthew 25:34-40 (NKJV)

- a. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

B. As we will see in other places in James, he never got far from the teaching of Jesus.

- 1. He may not have been a great doctrinal teacher like Paul but his straightforward practical teaching could not be misunderstood.

II. The Christian life is a life under control by the Holy Spirit.

A. James pick out two things the first the tongue and then our charity.

- 1. The tongue will be discussed in chapter 3 in great detail so we look at it briefly here.

- a. We must control the tongue and not the tongue controlling us.
- b. Control what we talk about.
- c. People or topics.
- d. Gossip or principles.
- e. Kind words or harsh words.
- f. Gentle speech or rough speech.

(1) Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

- g. Slander or edification.
- h. Talking down to others or building up others.
- 2. We do not have to always speak.

- a. Remember be swift to hear and slow to speak.
 - b. Proverbs 29:11 A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise [man] holds them back.
 - 3. Sometimes more is less and less is more.
 - a. Edward Everett vs Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg
 - B. How do we take care of the disadvantaged.
 - 1. One way is to take advantage of them.
 - 2. The powerful pick on the powerless for the same reason that the lion attacks the young or the injured.
- III. Doing these things does not make us a Christian, it manifests that we are Christians.
 - A. Some people in Washington DC have spent most of their lives getting the government, that is the rest of us, to support the disadvantaged.
 - 1. But let me look at their check book and see how much money they have given themselves.
 - 2. It is quite a different thing to get others to give and giving yourself.
 - B. Pure and undefiled religion makes a mark.
 - 1. Widows and orphans in James day were the most oppressed and disadvantaged.
 - 2. And surely it is not their fault they are widowed or orphaned.
 - 3. We often hear that don't we. They did it to themselves.
 - 4. I quit referring the poor to those who "Want to help."
 - 5. We need to take those WWJD bracelets and throw them away if we are not really going to ask the question.

So here we are living our Christian life and doing very well.

Then all of a sudden our tongue get out of line.

And we forget the poor. But we remember ourselves.

We all have a part of us that wants the old way, the way of self.

But God's people will win out over that.

Eventually we will have the total victory in Jesus Christ.