

HHBC



James 1: 25-27

*Looking to God's Word &
Religion*



James 1: 25-27

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. **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. **27** Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.



James 1:25

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But one who looks intently:

- This phrase is: **parakyp̄tō** is different from Verse 23, 24's **katanoēō**. (looking with careful attention; with careful consideration) or Roger's explanation from last week's lesson (putting; fixing your mind on the Word of God)

parakyp̄tō: is stooping down to look at; bending your body sideways at the waist to observe a thing; a 'more forceful word could not have been chosen to express the nature and ultimate object of reflection and to enforce the necessity of it' [M.R. Vincent] (Same word as John 20 used as Peter stooped over to look into the empty tomb...)

- The interlinear: has the one who looks intently into [into] the law of liberty (not 'at')... There is a double 'into' to stress the depth of the gazing.

The perfect law, the law of liberty: better: the *perfected*, (brought to its goal, finished law, nothing missing) **teleios nomos**..

The 'law of liberty' is **eleutheria**: freedom from the yoke of bondage of the old law; freedom to cast off the sin nature to serve God in positivity of spirit in our New Nature.



James 1:25

²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

The perfect law, the law of liberty: (contin...)

WHAT IS THIS 'LAW OF LIBERTY'? (used of only James).... some thoughts:

- *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.* [Gal. 5:1]
- *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* [II Cor. 3:17]
- Freedom from: the Law given to Moses... which was in no way a law of liberty but of bondage. It forbade and condemned the transgressions to which the flesh were prone. The curb it applied to man's will provoked the old man, and the offence consequently abounded instead of diminishing. The law could therefore not but work out wrath, as it is the strength of sin, not holiness. [adapted from: Wm. Kelly]
- Being a child of the Free Woman (Sarah) born of promise and not the Bondwoman (Hagar) born out of the power of the flesh [Gal. 4 explanation from Paul]
- It is Spirit given: *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death* (Rom 8:2)



James 1:26

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... and ABIDES by it (the perfect law, the law of liberty):

paramenō – aorist tense, active voice: to remain beside, continue always near the perfected law of liberty. Which is faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ (as James will say in 2:1)

... not having become a forgetful hearer

ginomai epilēsmonē akroatēs – again from last weeks lesson, emphasis on the fact of that one could come into the state of being a forgetful hearer, middle voice. From last week an out sight, out of mind hearer; he hears and there is no impact; the hearing fades away.

- (not as) one who hears with his ear, but the content of what is heard passes into oblivion
- interlinear: “Hearer of Forgetfulness” emphasis on the quality of the hearing
- hearing in Verses 23 & 25 is not **listening**— **akouō**

an Effectual Doer: **ergon poiētēs**— one who works, gets it done, produces, performs a thing. **poiētēs** is the word for poetry; Merryman: there is another greek word for ‘practicing’ the word. **poiētēs** is not rote practicing it’s living production (More of a movie director; artist, writer type of creative production). An involved type work.... Merryman: keep on becoming a Word-worker, word-producer.



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... **this** (doer of the work, continuing always near the perfect law, the law of liberty) **man will be**

blessed: blessed- **makarios** – happy; spiritually prosperous (Wuest)

- Vincent: there is an inner connection between the effectual doing of the word and the blessedness because of the preposition **“in what”** he does
- ‘Living faith produces living works’ (William Kelly)
- The implanted word (v. 21) is living, in *active* operation day by day to those that believe, Hence conscience is continually exercised for we have another nature, not only human but fallen and prone to evil. (Kelly)
- James is still addressing Temptations here: the **temptation to be a hearer only** (auditing) the Word of God rather than letting the Word’s power produce Christ’s will and work in us, by beholding Him and being transformed (II Cor. 3:18). (Hal Molloy)
- *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them* Eph. 2:10



James 1:26

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.

If any man thinks himself to be religious:

If any man: is an interrogative part of speech; indefinite pronoun. Just a way to pose a question

It is the man's thought of himself; not as he appears to others (Wm. Kelly)

religious – Kelly insists this is simply **service that is outwardly paid**; not pious, godly religious service in ceremonial form (vestments, rites, performance, formal gatherings etc.) and he criticizes other commentators who lean towards the formal definition. (McCalley, Vincent use the ceremonial definition)

- Thoughts on the 'religious' definition difference- is it doing of ceremonial things here or is it simply service (doing things outwardly)? It would seem Kelly has a point here given the context.. The religious works vis a vis discussion in Chap. 2 (showing partiality to the rich are 'doer' actions)



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YET: does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart:

bridle – *chalinagōgeō* (verb; pres. active) used only by James here in reference to the tongue, and in Jas. 3:2 in reference to bridling the body. To: hold in check, restrain, curb. Equestrian usage: to be a bit-leader.

tongue – we will put off the in-depth study of the tongue here as in Chap. 3: verses 5, 6 & 8 James addresses the subject in detail. We will see it is a very small part of the body, but it's power in analogies used by James: steers ships, sets forests on fire, and is untamable.

one doing 'religious' works while having an unbridled, wicked tongue: **is deceiving his own heart**

Back to the context: this man has the implanted word, engrafted in him, which he should gaze intently into to see that he is a New Man, enlivened by the Spirit to produce word produced works.

But: if his tongue is unbridled, he has only casually gave a cursory glance at the Word, and it hasn't been the supply-spring of his actions. His tongue is controlled by his Old Source and not his New Divine Source....



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Related Passage to this doctrine:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Eph. 2:10

workmanship – *poiēma* (creative production). Same root word as our 'effectual doer' (*poiētēs*) word here in James. We are God's creation. It involves creative expression and beauty; not just rote-production. We can almost, or perhaps say, we are God's poetry, created in Christ Jesus for Word-inspired good works

this man's religion is worthless:

worthless – *mataios* (*adj.*) devoid of truth, devoid of success, devoid of purpose....



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Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God:

pure – ***katharos***: simply: clean, same word as ... ‘*you are already clean by the word I have spoken to you*’ spoken by Christ, the Vine to us the branches in John 15:3

From John 15:2: *and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes [kathairō] it so that it may bear more fruit.*

‘to visit orphans and widows in their distress’: William Kelly says there was a Lawyer of the Law who once asked Jesus, ‘Who is my neighbor?’ (a lawyer who actually had no care to ever meet one of his neighbors)

to visit: *episkeptomai* (present tense; MIDDLE voice) who is personally invested in the results of: **actually going out** to look after, provide care for the widows and orphans in their dire straits, pressures (thlipsis)



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'to visit orphans and widows in their (pressure/affliction/straits):

widows & fatherless: were at the complete mercy of the hospitality of society; there was no safety net in those days

James 1:25-27: *related thoughts and reflections...*



- The One great secret of blessing is to keep your eye on Christ in glory- not on your duties, or your service, but on Himself. The sailor when asked how he got on in bad weather, replied, “I do not mind what weather I get if I can see the sun!” [JB STONEY]
- Out of the power of His word implanted in us by His Spirit, we are personally blessed to be purified by Him, and we are personally blessed to live in the harmony of His joy. (ROY SMITH. JAMES 1:19-22. JAMES #09 3/12/23)
- *(It is a law of our (new) nature)*; thus a law of liberty; for there is no liberty like that of doing that which it is in our very nature to do. [F.W. GRANT & FOLLOWING....]
- Thus there is abiding in it. The Word is that in which the soul finds its chosen portion and delight. It is a law without legality; it is a sweet attraction which wins and not drives.
- Such a one cannot be a forgetful hearer of that which so completely holds and captivates him. He is thus a “doer of the work” for a man will do according to that which is in his heart, as “out of his heart” so out of the heart will come the work, and such an one shall be blessed indeed in his doing- happy in the activity itself (e.g. visiting orphans & widows)- happy in the fruit of that activity
- On the other hand: anything that counts for religious activity which does not reach to this is in vain.