

44. Lucifer' lie of good works is in fact a warning that the wrath of God can be withheld if people will get involved in religion and do the things that religious people do.
45. These final two verses of James 1 demonstrate that religion is the ultimate assault on the grace plan of God. Verse 26 reads this way so far, "If anyone subjectively has the opinion that he is religious."
46. Again, the word "religious" in the Greek is **θρησκος** (*thrēskos*). The etymology of this word is helpful in our understanding of its negative implications: religion is fear based.

θρησκος. A derivation from **θροέω** [*throēō*], "to tremble"; this helps us to understand the form **θρησκος**. If these words are set in the context of what precedes them, the meaning is that of "religious conduct or practice" in general, with particular emphasis on the zealotry of such practice: "to practice religion," or "to keep a religious statute." (155–56)

Josephus mostly uses **θρησκεία** for Jewish worship of God, so Paul says in Acts 26:5: "... I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion." In James 1:26–27, **θρησκος** means "god-fearing," "pious," and **θρησκεία** means "fear of God."⁴ (156)

47. This mental attitude of fear toward the gods of the Greek pantheon was the recommended system of appeasing them in the effort to acquire salvation or deliverance from danger.
48. Whatever might elicit fear in the human soul, there was a god in the Pantheon who could be appeased in some way.
49. Consequently, the very nature of the human psyche indicates that Lucifer has a built-in access into its dark recesses where fear lurks for appeasement.
50. Fear is an emotional monster that lurks in the souls of men and without access to divine problem-solving devices it will linkup with worry to produce anxiety, tension, stress, dread, and trepidation.
51. The end result is that some god must be assuaged and, for some, killing infidels for Allah is called for.

⁴ K. L. Schmidt, "θρησκεία, θρησκος," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 3:155–56.

52. For others, speakers of truth must be shouted down, profitable businesses must be burned, teaching the Word of God must be hushed by fiat from the Supreme Court.
53. A benign reaction to fear is provided by Rome in the form of certain rituals, such as over emphasis on taking the Eucharist, contributing money, paying indulgencies, saying the rosary a certain number of times as a substitute for confession alone to God alone.

James 1:26 If any fearful person holds the subjective opinion that he is devout ...

1. The word “devout” is chosen to translate “religious” because it is the mental attitude of fear that causes him to devoutly submit to the human-good solutions imposed by the Roman *Papa* or Protestant clergy in order to assuage God.
2. The next phrase is “does not bridle his tongue.” This is the present active participle of **χαλιναγωγέω** (*chalinagōgēō*): “to bridle.” An equestrian term used for a device that rests on the soft part of a horse’s mouth so he can be controlled.
3. What is to be controlled is the **γλῶσσα** (*glōssa*): “the tongue.” But this pious, religious busybody, smart aleck⁵ does not bridle his tongue because of the little negative **μή** (*mē*): “not.”
4. Sometimes being unbridled is both endearing and productive such as the daring way Pepper Martin played baseball for the St. Louis Cardinals.
5. His unbridled style of play in the 1931 World Series set a Series’ record for base hits in the Cardinals victory over the Philadelphia Athletics. He had twelve hits including four doubles, a home run, five stolen bases, five runs scored, a .500 batting average, and was the Series MVP.

⁵ “An impudent or obnoxiously self-assertive individual, a wise guy” (Christine Ammer, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* [New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997], 593).

6. A member of the Gashouse Gang, his aggressive, hustling, and daring approach during his 13-year career won him the nickname of Wild Horse of the Osage.
7. In the environment of the Christian way of life, a legalistic, excessive conformity to a religious or moral code, which the Bible does not impose for salvation, is typical of those who are “working” for salvation.
8. Our devout worker is not only living a lie, he imposes his erroneous lifestyle on others. This behavior is indicated by the phrase, “does not bridle his own tongue.”
9. James uses the tongue in another illustration in chapter 3, verse 3, where he refers to a man with the ability “to bridle the whole body” where he again uses horses to make his point in:

James 3:3 Now if we put bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.

10. Let's note a few principles on the problem of sins of the tongue:

(1) Sins of the tongue originate from the sin nature:

Psalms 34:13 Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.

(2) Sins of the tongue are the verbal expressions of certain mental attitude sins such as pride, envy, jealousy, bitterness, vindictiveness, implacability, hatred, etc.

Psalms 5:9 There is nothing reliable in what they say; their inward part is destruction itself. Their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue.

(3) Proverbs 6:16–19 lists the seven worst sins and three of those are sins of the tongue. See if you are smart enough to identify these three:

Proverbs 6:16 There are six things the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:

v. 17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

Psalm 6:18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil,

v. 19 a false witness which utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers. (NASB)

(4) Sins of the tongue produce triple compound discipline:

Matthew 7:1 “Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

v. 2 “For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

The sin of the tongue is the result of a mental attitude sin so there is divine discipline for the mental attitude sin.

The sin of the tongue always maligns, judges, or gossips about someone else so divine discipline for that.

Therefore, the sin of the tongue always mentions someone else’s sin. Whichever one is mentioned, if the individual actually committed that sin, he is not punished for it.

This sin is instead measured back to you. This results in triple compound sins. The cluster can result in painful discipline from the justice of God.

(5) The continued commission of sins of the tongue can result in scar tissue of the soul. Unabated, it can result in the sin unto death.

Psalm 12:3 May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that boasts! (NET)

(6) God protects and blesses the believer who is victimized by the sins of the tongue.

Job 5:19 He will deliver you from six calamities; yes in seven no evil will touch you.