

34. What is prohibited is for this person to repeat the mistake of the nobleman in verse 23–24. He forgot everything he heard. He was not a serious student of the Word of God.
35. So the man in verse 25 is encouraged to continuously study the Word by being nearby its teachings, “not having become a hearer that forgets.”
36. What he is to do is to access the doctrine he has learned and stored in the memory center of the *kardía* for the purpose of producing divine good.
37. This is introduced by the conjunction **ἀλλά (allá)**: “but,” followed by the noun **ποιητής (poiētēs)**: “doer.” What he does is indicated by the noun **ἔργον (érgon)**: “work.”
38. So far there is not an imperative mood in the verse nor will there be. Nevertheless, there has been a summary of what a positive believer must do in order “be blessed in what he does.” Let’s develop an expanded translation before we take up the last phrase of the verse.

James 1:25 But the one who looks with an earnest desire to absorb in detail the perfect law of freedom, and continues to live in close proximity to it, not having become a forgetful hearer only, but a doer of divine good ...

39. The verse continues with “this man,” which refers to the “doer-believer,” will be “blessed,” **μακάριος (makários)**. The word blessed (*makários*) is used 50 times in the New Testament and the King James Version translates it “blessed” 44 times and “happy” or “happier” six times.
40. We are going to use “happy” to translate *makários* in verse 25. Here’s why:

THE GREEK USAGE. First found in Pindar [Greek lyric poet, c.522–c.438 B.C.], **μακάριος** is a poetic word. It is a subsidiary form of **μάκαρ**. It denotes the transcendent happiness of a life beyond care, labor and death. It is then used of men to denote the state of godlike blessedness hereafter in the isles of the blessed. It becomes a leading philosophical term for inner happiness. (362)

THE WORD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. The special feature of μακάριος in the New Testament is that it refers overwhelmingly to the distinctive religious joy which accrues to man from his share in the salvation of the kingdom of God.⁵ (367)

μακάριος. It must be understood that the nine beatitudes of Matthew 5:3–12 and Luke 6:20–22 they constitute not only the exordium of the Sermon on the Mount but the specific teaching of the Messiah to the members of the kingdom that he is founding, and hence the essence of the gospel ethic, which is summed up in the axiom “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21). More than a fundamental attitude of a person, this appeal is that of an option that is as radical as it is paradoxical. First of all, Jesus is making an appeal to happiness. It is impossible to insist too strongly on the meaning of this μακάριος, repeated ten times (in Matthew) and intensified by the present imperatives “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.” This is much more than contentment; it is an interior joy that becomes external. (436–37)

The happiness of Christians will always lie in perfect unity of loyalty and conscience and in exact conformity to God’s will in every action: “The one who looks intently into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and remains, and becomes not a forgetful hearer but a doer—this person will be happy in what he does” (James 1:25), even if he is abused and suffers for righteousness. One is then identified with Christ and, after enduring the trial, assured of receiving the “crown of life” (James 1:12). In the New Testament, μακάριος always describes persons, never actions.⁶ (441)

41. So the man described in verse 25 “shall be happy in what he does,” the future active indicative of the verb εἰμί (*eimí*): shall be. The future tense anticipates the man will continue with his interest in studying the Word and as a result will be happy in producing divine good.
42. “Doing” is the application of doctrine inculcated through consistent Bible study. True happiness is a durable asset of the soul acquired by the consistent production of divine good under the filling of the Holy Spirit.

⁵ F. Hauck, “μακάριος,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), 4:362, 367.

⁶ Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. James D. Ernest (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 2:436–37; 441.

James 1:25 But the one who looks with an earnest desire to absorb in detail the perfect law of freedom, and continues to live in close proximity to it, not having become a forgetful hearer only, but a doer, this man shall become happy by the production of divine good. (EXT)

(End JAS1-47. See JAS1-48 for continuation of study at p. 471.)

James 1:26 [Paragraph 6] 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. (NASB)

1. The verse begins with the protasis of a first class condition by the particle **εἰ (ei)**: “If and it is true.” This is followed by the indefinite pronoun **τις (tis)**: “anyone.”
2. This first class condition is directed at a group of believers who have a personal opinion of themselves indicated by the present active indicative of the verb **δοκέω (dokéō)**: “think, consider, imagine.”
3. The present tense is aoristic or instantaneous. “It is normally a verb of *saying, thinking, or having an opinion*. The act itself is completed at the moment of speaking. The time frame of the introductory verb is concluded once the utterance is over.”¹
4. In addition, this verb takes on the concept of subjective thinking resulting in a pious, God-fearing mental attitude.
4. What this group of believers think they are is stated next with the predicate adjective, **θρησκός (thrēskos)**: “religious.” This is the mind-set that is in opposition to the grace plan of God which is the divine policy in every dispensation.
5. The use here of the word **thrēskos** requires us to take up the subject of religion and note the negative impact upon the souls of men.

Summarization of Religion

1. Lucifer is ruler of this world. Among his policies religion is a system by which he parlays human good into sin and evil.
2. Self-righteousness is the mental attitude behind human good and produces a saturation of evil in a client nation.
3. The greatest of all forms of evil used by Lucifer is religion. It was created by him to counterfeit the plan of God.

¹ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 517.

4. At its foundation, religion is man seeking approbation from God on the basis of human works. In James 1:26, the word “religious” is the hapax legomenon, **θρησκός** (*thrēskos*) and means, “religious, pious, devout,” and is practiced overtly.
5. The works performed by the religious person are motivated by fear and are overt, whereas the works performed by the mature believer are motivated by grace. The word for the latter is the noun **χάρις** (*cháris*).
6. *Thrēskos* is oriented to works while *cháris* is oriented to gratitude.
7. Therefore, in verse 26, the motivation for the cosmic believer is external and therefore prone to commit sins of the tongue.
8. The noun form of *thrēskos*, “religious,” is **θρησκεία** (*thrēskeía*): “religion.”
Expression of devotion to transcendent beings, especially as it expresses itself in cultic rites. James contrasts empty, vain religion in v. 26 with the pure religion of v. 27.²
9. Lucifer could not successfully deny the existence of God since he obviously is in a protracted struggle against Him.
10. The counterattack he devised was to structure a system that mimics the end result of a believer growing in grace and producing good works from a resident inventory of divine thought and motivation.
11. Therefore, his concocted lie to heathen and uninformed Christians is that good works will result in receiving approbation from God.
12. In the Church Age, the divine system of communicating the Word of God is the local church. Nowhere in the New Testament can there be found a requirement for denominations nor is there ever an example of a human hierarchy that rules over a collective of churches.
13. The apostles had authority to establish churches and to train pastors to teach doctrine to their congregations.

² Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 459.

The Expanded Translation of James: Chapter One

James 1:1 [Introduction] James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes of Israel among the Diaspora outside Judea. Greetings.

James 1:2 [Paragraph 1] My Jewish brethren, after weighing all the facts, you must consider [IM #1] it nothing but unalloyed happiness whenever you encounter various categories of pressure,

v. 3 knowing through the process of spiritual growth that the testing of your faith for the purpose of approval habitually produces stamina and endurance.

v. 4 The stamina and endurance from the inner resource of doctrine must have [IM #2] its perfect production, so that you may choose to be spiritually mature and complete, deficient in the sphere of nothing while inside the bubble.

James 1:5 [Paragraph 2] If anyone of you is deficient of wisdom, and you are, then he must keep on asking [IM #3] from the immediate source from God, Who keeps on giving to all generously and without disparagement and it shall be given to him for his advantage.

v. 6 But he must keep on praying [IM #4] for wisdom by means of faith, doubting nothing, for the one who prays while doubting the integrity of God is like the atmospheric and oceanic forces of the sea, whose waves are constantly being agitated by various wind forces hurling them about to and fro.

v. 7 For such a man must stop the ongoing process of presuming [IM #5] that he will receive anything in the future from the Lord,

v. 8 being a double-souled man of the royal family of God although unstable, restless, vacillating, fickle, unsettled, and unsteady in all his ways.

James 1:9 [Paragraph 3] But the poor believer must keep on celebrating [IM #6: present active imperative of the verb *καυχάομαι* (*kaucháomai*)] in the sphere of exaltation in his high status of royal family of God;

v. 10 and the rich man must keep on celebrating [IM #7: present active imperative of the verb *καυχάομαι* (*kaucháomai*): ellipsis borrowed from v. 9] in his grace orientation, because like the flower of grass he and his earthly blessings will perish.

v. 11 The sun continuously rises past the eastern terminator with a scorching heat that withers the grass. The flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance decays. So, too, the rich man in his manner of life will fade away.

v. 12 [Paragraph 4] Happy is the advanced believer who continues to endure testing for the purpose of approval, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised in eternity past for those who have personal love for Him.

v. 13 No one may ever assert [IM #8] when he is tempted, “I am continuously being tempted from the ultimate source of God”; for God—not tempted by evil, and He never tempts anyone.

v. 14 But each one is reluctantly dragged away through temptation when he is enticed by his own sin nature’s lust pattern.

v. 15 When the lust pattern’s agent provocateur copulates with free will, it creates a ménage à trois resulting in a pregnancy and, when sin gives birth, it delivers a child born dead.

v. 16 Stop being deceived [IM #9], my beloved brethren.

v. 17 Every good-of-intrinsic-value act of giving and every completed gift keeps on being from above, coming down from the ultimate source of the Father of lights, with Whom there is no change or alteration or the occurrence of an eclipse.

James 1:18 Having been decreed in eternity past, He regenerated us by a spiritual birth by the word of truth, namely the gospel, for the purpose of being the first fruits of His creatures.

v. 19 [Paragraph 5] Know this [IM #10], my beloved brothers, everyone must keep on being swift for the purpose of hearing, slow for the purpose of talking, slow [IM#11] with reference to reacting with mental-attitude anger;

v. 20 for the mental-attitude anger of the nobleman does not produce righteous standards of divine good from the source of God.

v. 21 Therefore, put away from yourself mental attitude sins that pollute the soul and all the excesses of an evil habit of mind, you must receive with humility [IM #12] the implanted word, which is empowered to deliver your souls from danger.

v. 22 But keep on becoming [IM #13] doers of the implanted Word, and not only hearers who deceive themselves due to self-induced stupidity.

v. 23 For if, and it is true, anyone is a hearer of the Word in the *noús* and not a doer from the *kardía*, such a person, is like a nobleman who looks contemplatively at his facial features in a mirror;

v. 24 for once he had continued to contemplate himself intently in the mirror and departed, he has the existing result of immediately disregarding what kind of man he habitually and regularly was.

v. 25 But the one who looks with an earnest desire to absorb in detail the perfect law of freedom, and continues to live in close proximity to it, not having become a forgetful hearer only, but a doer, this man shall become happy by the production of divine good.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things. (Philippians 4:8, NET)