

## James 1:26

An Original Translation from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins  
Revised October 2016

### 1. FINISHED TRANSLATION:

- **James 1:26:** If a certain man thinks he is religious, but does not make a habit of controlling his tongue, he is deceiving his heart. This man's worship is worthless.

### 2. THOUGHT-FLOW DIAGRAM:

- Εἷ τις δοκεῖ θρησκὸς εἶναι
  - ο μὴ χαλιναγωγῶν γλῶσσαν αὐτοῦ ἀλλ'
    - ἀπατῶν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ,
      - τούτου μάταιος ἡ θρησκεία.

### 3. DETAILED TRANSLATION NOTES:

Jas 1:26	Εἷ	τις	δοκεῖ	θρησκὸς	εἶναι	μὴ	χαλιναγωγῶν	γλῶσσαν	αὐτοῦ	ἀλλ'
	conj	nsm	3 <sup>rd</sup> ,s,p,a,i	nsm	p,a,inf	neg	papnsm	asf	gsm	conj
	if	certain man	he seems	pious, religious	to be	not	bridle, control, hold in check	tongue	his	but
	If a certain man thinks he is religious, but does not control his tongue, If a certain man thinks he is religious, but does not make a habit of controlling his tongue,									

Εἷ:

- (1) **Classification:** a conjunction introducing the protasis of this first-class conditional sentence ("if")

Τις:

- (1) **Case:** the subject nominative of the sentence.
- (2) **Translation:** the subject is masculine, and so is the rest of the sentence. It ought to be translated that way. Context makes it clear this is applicable to *any* Christian.

δοκεῖ:

- (1) **Voice:** simple active, indicating the subject ("a certain man") is performing the action of the verb.
- (2) **Tense-form:** context suggests a descriptive present.
- (3) **Mood:** a declarative indicative.

θρησκὸς:

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- (1) **Case:** a predicate nominative, identifying a quality of the subject, the “certain man.”

εἶναι:

- (1) **Classification:** an anarthrous, simple infinitive which complements the verb δοκεῖ.
- (2) **Tense-form:** context suggests a descriptive present.
- (3) **Voice:** simple active.

μὴ χαλιναγωγῶν:

- (1) **Classification:** an adverbial participle of attendant circumstance,<sup>1</sup> indicating an action that accompanies or “piggy-backs”<sup>2</sup> on the action of the main verb.
- (2) **Voice:** a simple active, performed again by the subject
- (3) **Tense-form:** context suggests an iterative present, a habitual action. The point is not that a person neglects to control his tongue once. It is that he makes a habit of it. He is outwardly pious and religious, yet the character of his life is wicked and sinful.
- (4) **Case:** the nominative case is a structural marker to let the reader know the subject is performing the action.

γλῶσσαν:

- (1) **Case:** an accusative of direct object, receiving the action of the participle

αὐτοῦ:

- (1) **Case:** a genitive of possession.

ἀλλ’

- (1) **Classification:** a contrasting conjunction (“but”).

ἁπατῶν	καρδίαν	αὐτοῦ.	τούτου	μάταιος	ἡ	θρησκεία.
papnsm	asf	gsm	gsm	nsm	nsf	nsf
he is deceiving	heart	his	his	worthless	the	worship
he is deceiving his heart. His worship is worthless.						
he is deceiving his heart. This man’s worship is worthless.						

ἁπατῶν:

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<sup>1</sup> Chris A. Vlachos, *James*, in *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2013; Kindle ed.), KL 2365-2367.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 640.

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- (1) **Classification:** an adverbial participle of attendant circumstance, indicating an action that accompanies or “piggy-backs” on the action of the main verb. This is the implied apodosis, the “then” part of the conditional sentence.
- (2) **Voice:** a simple active, performed again by the subject
- (3) **Tense-form:** context suggests a descriptive present.
- (4) **Case:** the nominative case is a structural marker to let the reader know the subject is performing the action.

καρδίαν:

- (1) **Case:** an accusative of direct object, receiving the action of the participle.

αὐτοῦ:

- (1) **Case:** a genitive of possession.

τούτου:

- (1) **Classification:** this one is difficult. It appears to be functioning as a true demonstrative pronoun. The antecedent is the hypothetical “certain man.” It should be translated as “this one’s . . .” *What* man is being referred to? The “certain man” from this example.
- (2) **Case:** a genitive of possession. The subject nominative is the “worship.” The idea is that this person’s worship is worthless.
- (3) **Translation:** Again, although context makes it clear that every Christian is being addressed; the “hypothetical man” is just that – a man. It ought to be translated “this man’s,” not “this person’s.” The preacher should bring out the general applicability in the sermon, and the average English reader can figure that out on his own (see how I used the generic masculine pronoun again! ☺).

μάταιος:

- (1) **Case:** the predicate nominative. The noun has the article, so this is *not* the subject. Besides that, this adjective receives the implied “being” verb and is therefore the predicate which identifies a quality about the head noun. What *about* this person’s worship? It is worthless.

ἡ θρησκεία:

- (1) **Case:** the subject nominative of the clause
- (2) **Article:** the article particularizes an otherwise abstract quality. In order to translate it, you would have to produce an awkward English sentence, like, “the worship of this one is worthless.” There is no need, in this context, to make such an unwieldy sentence. I left the article untranslated.