

- James warns that we can end up deceiving ourselves about our relationship with God.
- He gives us a three-point checklist which summarises his letter.
- As we prepare for communion we should hold this checklist up to our lives and see if these things are true of us.

### 1. **Check your tongue (v. 26)**

- Inward change should be outwardly visible.
- James focuses not on religious activities but on our speech.
- Danger areas:
  - i. Speaking too much & not listening to others.
  - ii. Not speaking when we should.
  - iii. Lying/gossiping. We can do this by attributing false motives or passing on information we shouldn't – perhaps even as a 'prayer request'.
  - iv. Constant negativity/complaining – just like the world.
- Attach the filter of Eph 4.29: "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."
- Jesus:
  - Perfectly bridled his tongue.
  - Didn't use it to defend himself at his trial – instead took our guilt.

### 2. **Examine your actions (v. 27a)**

- It's easy to think of Christianity just in terms of what we don't do.
- James asks: You may be living a respectable life – but are you actually *doing* anything?
- Widows and orphans = examples of the most helpless in society.
- Religion without loving deeds is self-deception.
- Sometimes we think: "You've made your own bed – you can lie in it" – but God didn't take that attitude to us.
- The call for us to care for the helpless is based on the character of God – and his saving us – when we weren't just hopeless but hated him.

### 3. **Purge Pollution (v. 27b)**

- 'The world' = human life lived in separation from/opposition to God.
- Pollution can take different forms:
  - i. Sudden oil-spill: Completely embracing the world.
  - ii. Gradual asbestos poisoning: The slow, nearly unnoticeable, deadening influence of the world.
- Where have we taken on the world's outlook/priorities/self-centredness/individualism?
- Pollution also comes from our own hearts - What pollutants do you wrestle with?
- James is calling us to life a life of integrity, completeness, wholeness.

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