



The Cure for Hypocrisy

Recap

In the first section of James letter he is interested in what lies in the human heart

Recap

“He never changes”

In the midst of a trial, or experiencing temptation, we question God, our faith, our lives etc.

And if we are truly honest we begin to question God’s love, God’s plan for us

James reminds the readers that God is steadfastly committed to us in the midst of these storms and that His commitment to us isn’t wavering

Recap

One cycle starts with **suffering**
and leads to maturity

The other starts with **pleasure**
and leads to spiritual death

Living a Lie, Matthew Hutson

People mislead themselves all day long. We tell ourselves we're smarter and better looking than our friends, that our political party can do no wrong, that we're too busy to help a colleague.

the biologist Robert Trivers floated a novel explanation for such self-serving biases: We dupe ourselves in order to deceive others, creating social advantage.

Living a Lie, Matthew Hutson

Psychologists have identified several ways of fooling ourselves: biased information-gathering, biased reasoning and biased recollections.

One of the most common types of self-deception is **self-enhancement**. Psychologists have traditionally argued we evolved to overestimate our good qualities because it makes us feel good.

A Receptive Heart, Steven J. Cole

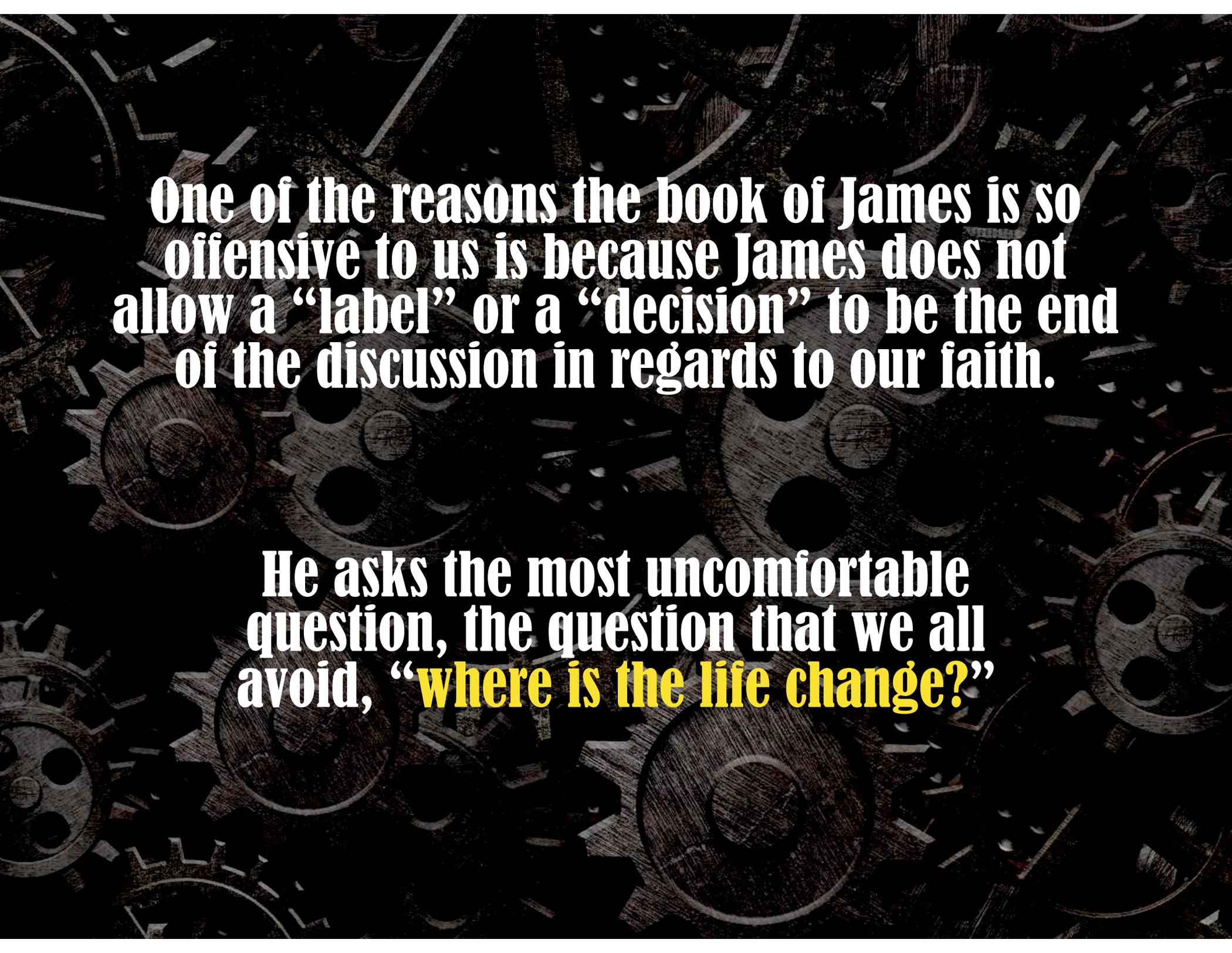
A current **popular myth** in evangelical circles is that salvation is **based on a personal decision** for Christ and that such a decision may or may not result in a changed life. In this paradigm, a child from a Christian home may make a decision at summer camp “to invite Jesus into his heart.” He goes forward at the closing song after a meeting. He gets some follow-up, is given a Bible and told to read it every day. Perhaps when he gets back to his church, he is baptized. He attends church every Sunday, because that’s what his family does.

A Receptive Heart, Steven J. Cole

But as he gets older, he **finds church to be boring and irrelevant**. He prefers having fun with his worldly friends to hanging out with the church crowd. His friends introduce him to drinking, drugs, pornography, and sex. He drops out of church. He never reads his Bible. He has no desire to know Christ in a deeper way. And yet his parents will say, **“But he’s saved, because he made a decision for Christ as a boy at church camp!”**

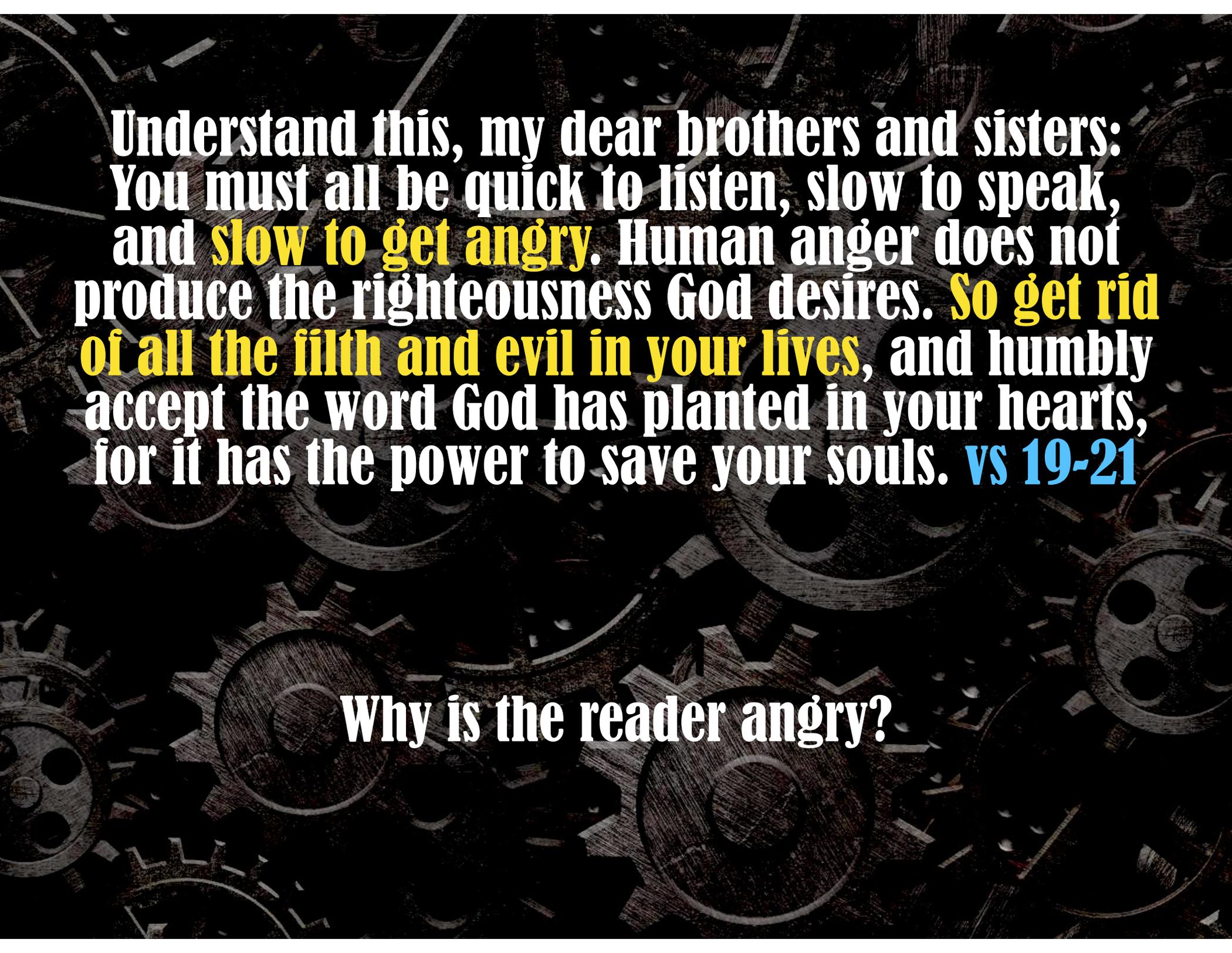
A Receptive Heart, Steven J. Cole

But the important question in situations like this is, “Is there any **evidence** of a changed heart or new life in Christ?”



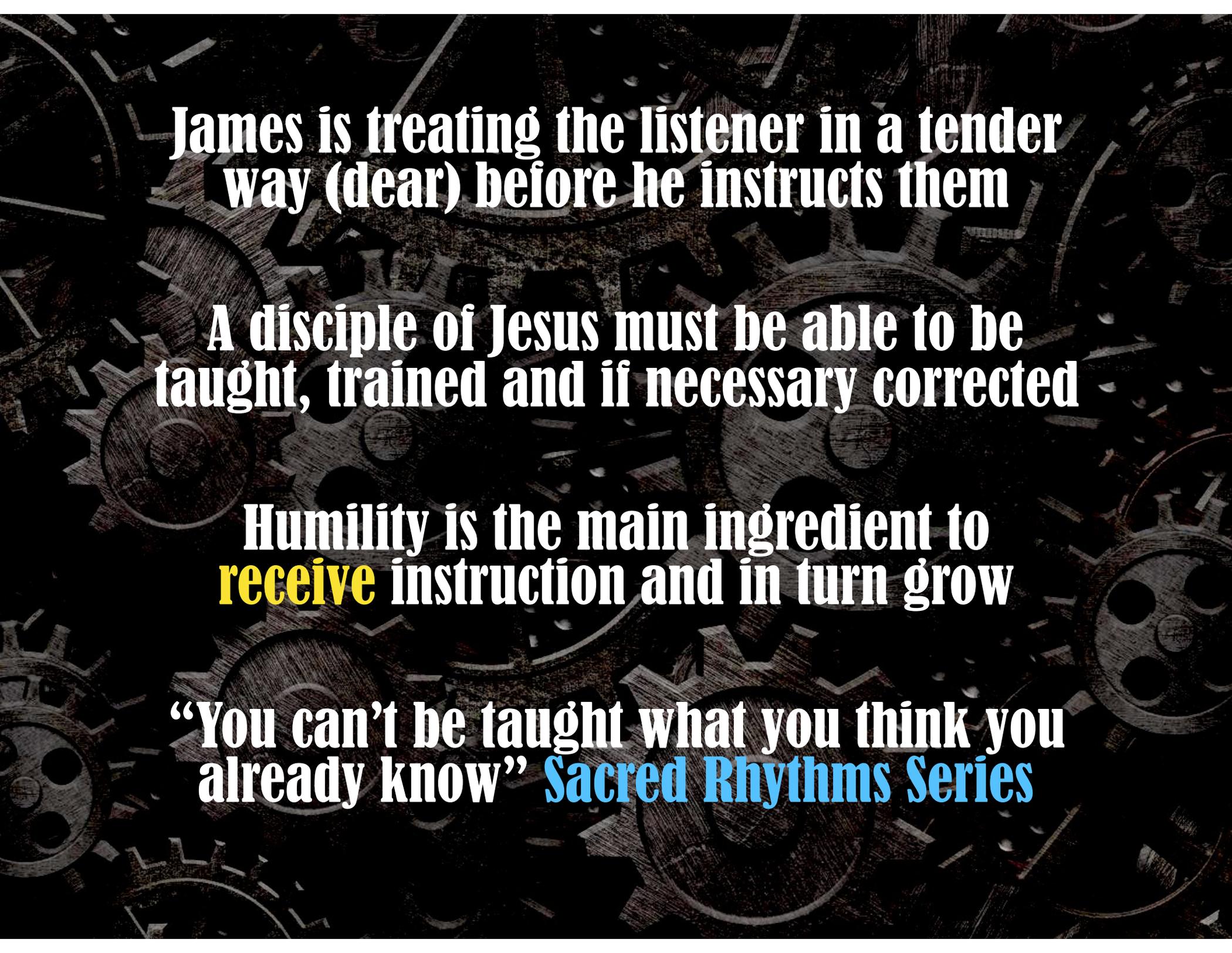
One of the reasons the book of James is so offensive to us is because James does not allow a “label” or a “decision” to be the end of the discussion in regards to our faith.

He asks the most uncomfortable question, the question that we all avoid, “where is the life change?**”**

The background of the image is a dark, textured pattern of interlocking gears, suggesting a mechanical or industrial theme. The gears are rendered in shades of dark grey and black, with some highlights that give them a three-dimensional appearance. The overall tone is somber and complex.

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters:
You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak,
and **slow to get angry**. Human anger does not
produce the righteousness God desires. **So get rid
of all the filth and evil in your lives**, and humbly
accept the word God has planted in your hearts,
for it has the power to save your souls. **vs 19-21**

Why is the reader angry?

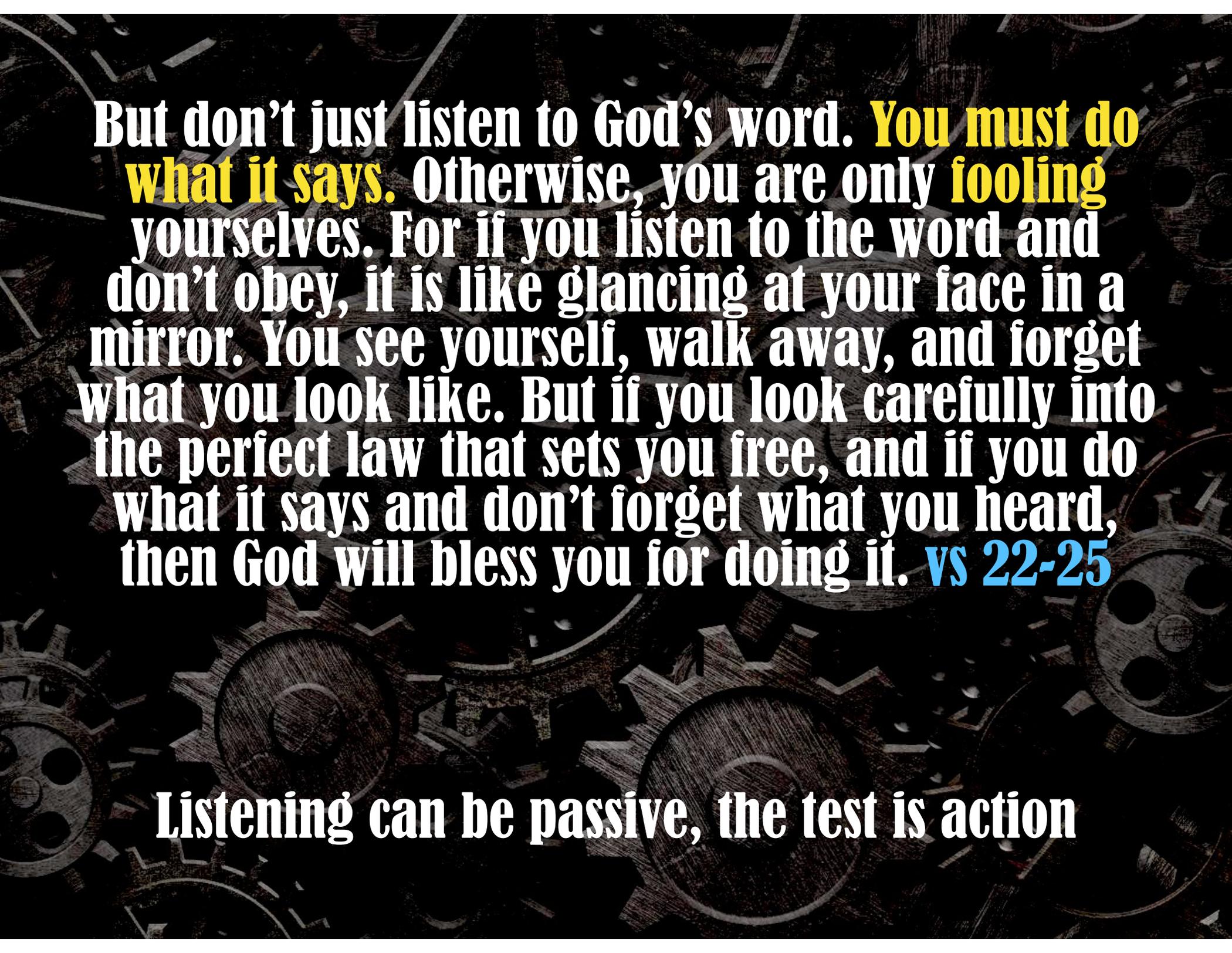
The background of the entire image is a dark, textured pattern of interlocking gears of various sizes, creating a mechanical and complex visual effect.

James is treating the listener in a tender way (dear) before he instructs them

A disciple of Jesus must be able to be taught, trained and if necessary corrected

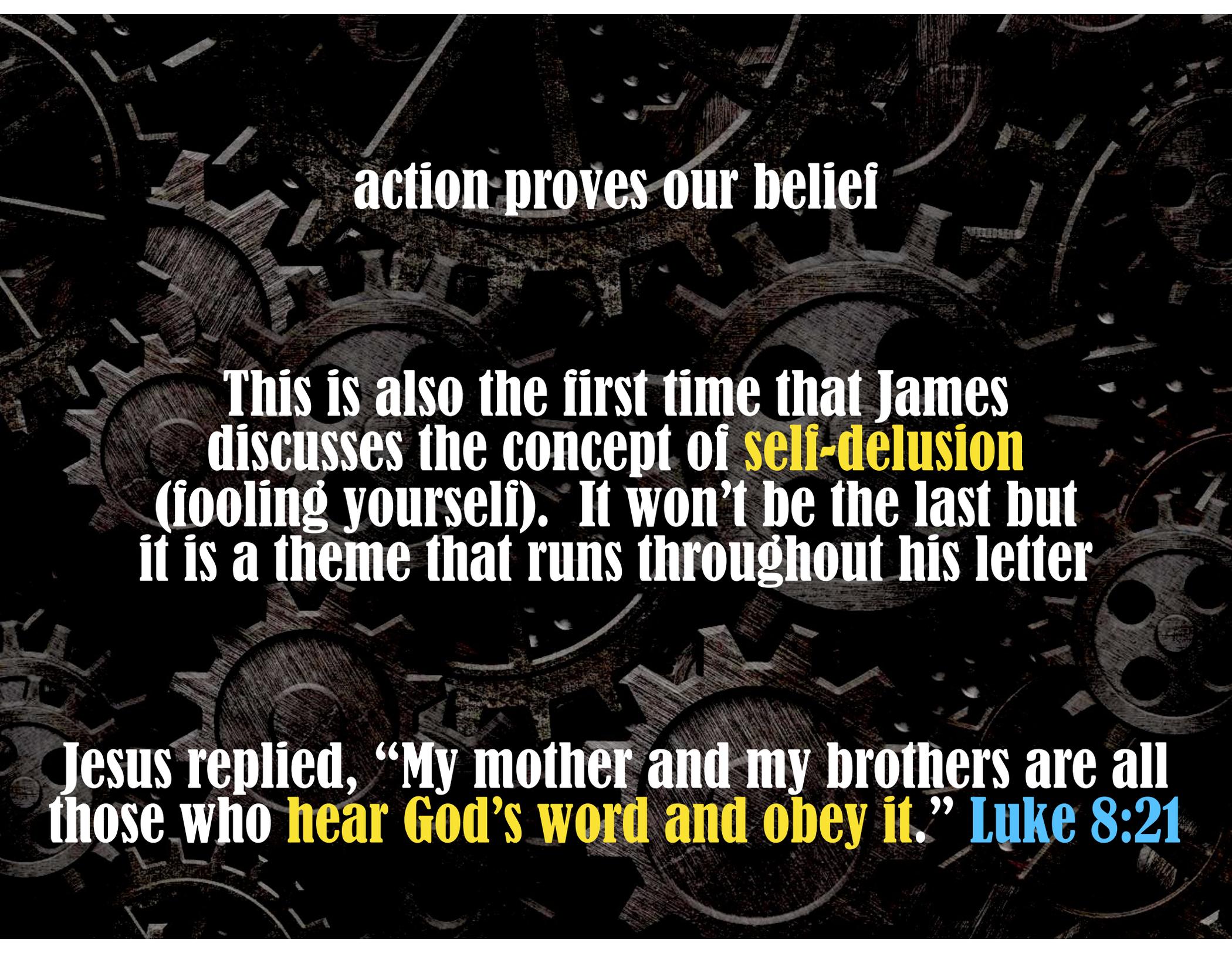
Humility is the main ingredient to **receive instruction and in turn grow**

“You can’t be taught what you think you already know” Sacred Rhythms Series

The background of the image is a dark, textured pattern of interlocking gears of various sizes, creating a mechanical and industrial aesthetic. The gears are rendered in shades of dark brown and black, with some highlights that suggest depth and movement.

But don't just listen to God's word. **You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only **fooling** yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. **vs 22-25****

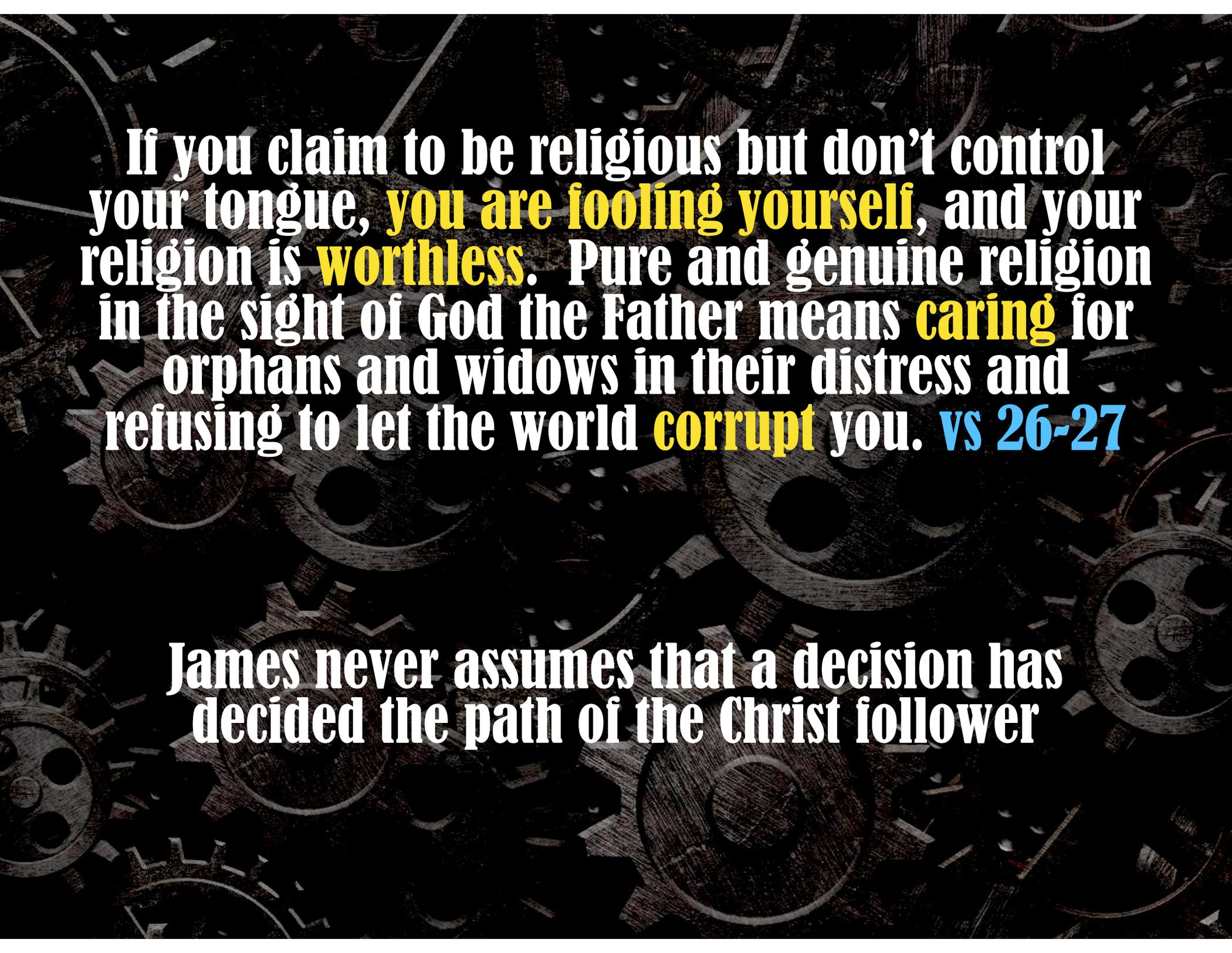
Listening can be passive, the test is action



action proves our belief

This is also the first time that James discusses the concept of **self-delusion (fooling yourself). It won't be the last but it is a theme that runs throughout his letter**

Jesus replied, “My mother and my brothers are all those who **hear God’s word and obey it.” **Luke 8:21****

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If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, **you are fooling yourself**, and your religion is **worthless**. Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means **caring** for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world **corrupt** you. **vs 26-27**

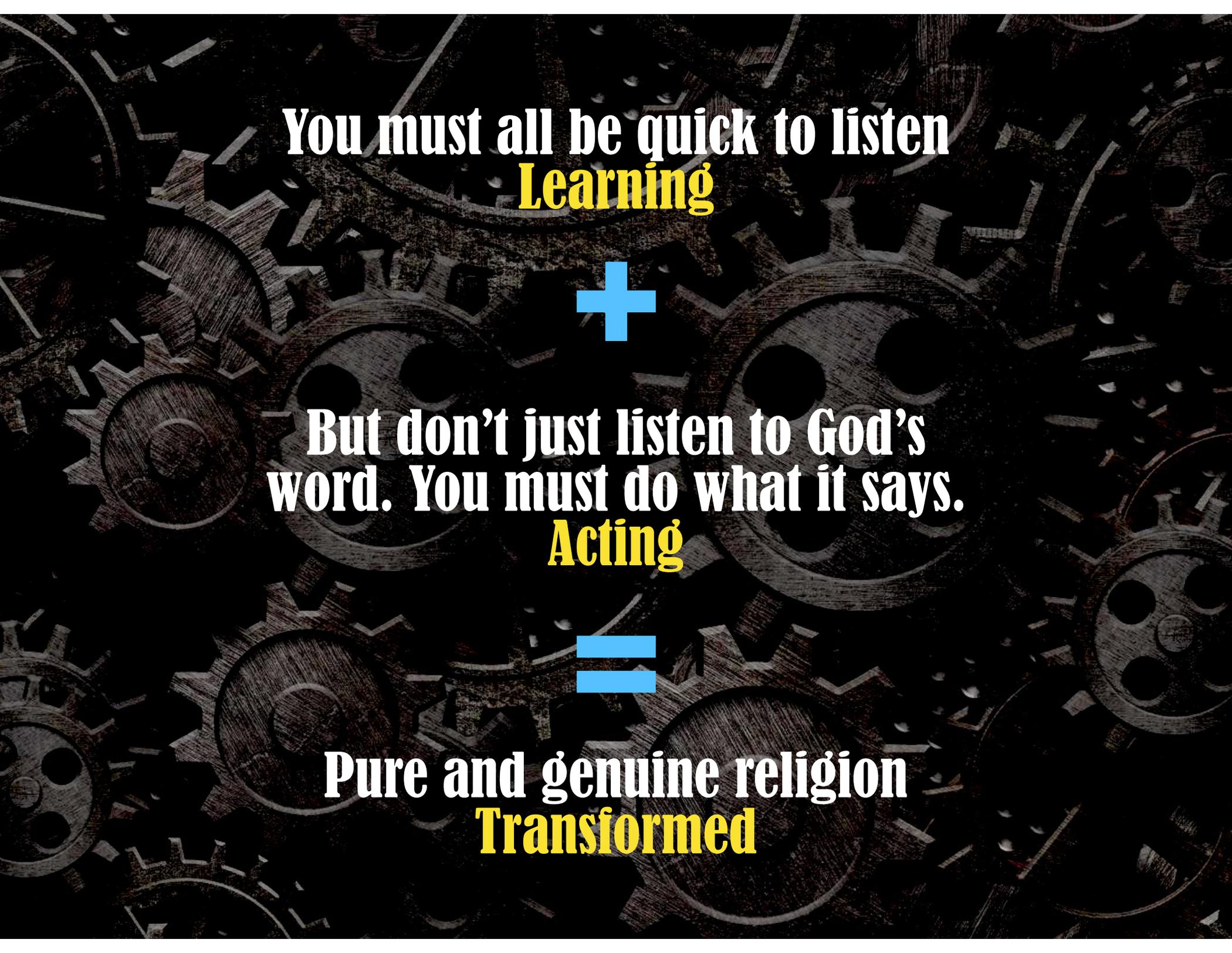
James never assumes that a decision has decided the path of the Christ follower



James' true religion has two parts

orphans and widows
(**outward, behaviour**)

refusing to let the world
corrupt you (**inward, belief**)

The background of the entire image is a dense, dark field of interlocking gears of various sizes and orientations, creating a complex, mechanical texture.

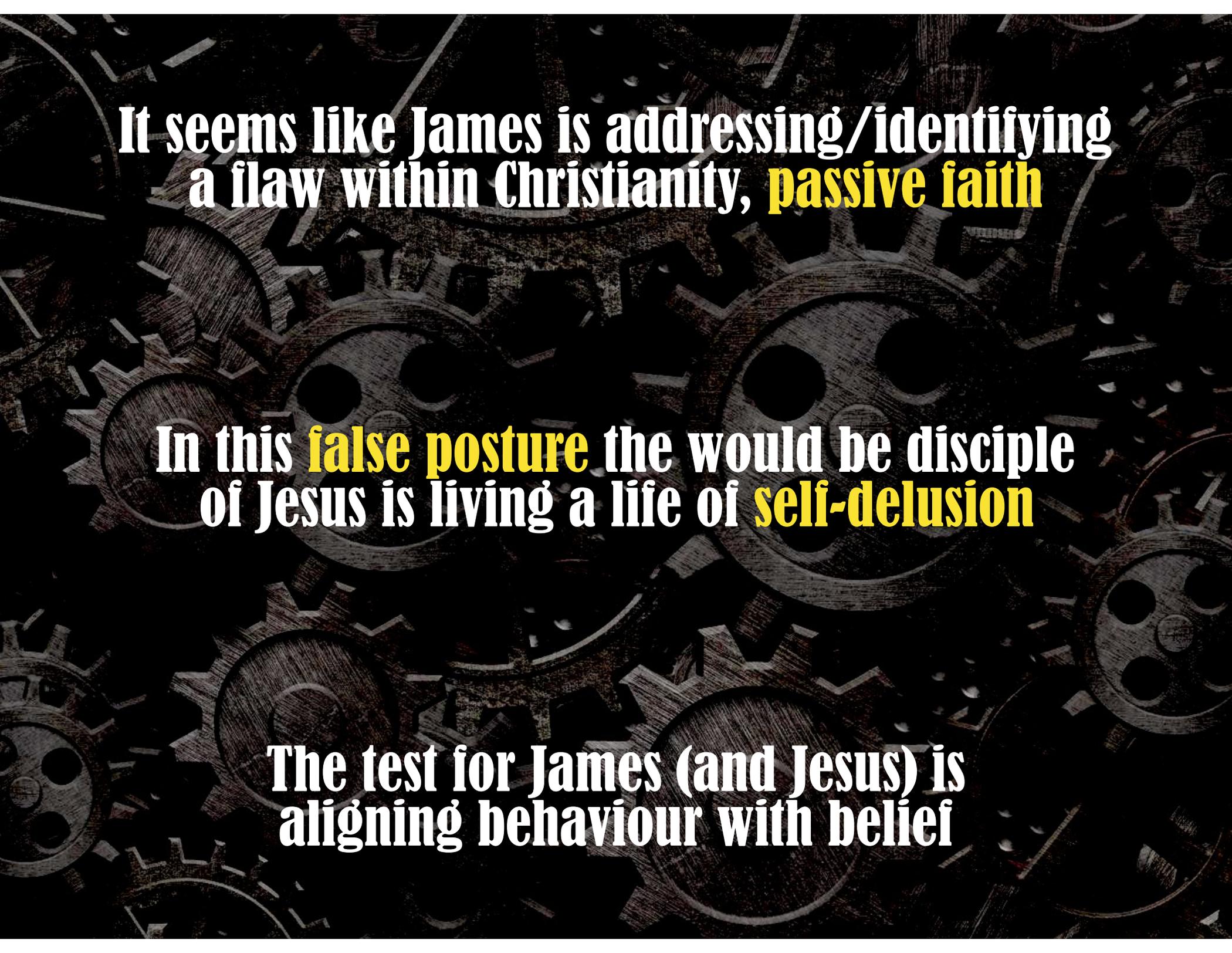
You must all be quick to listen
Learning

+

**But don't just listen to God's
word. You must do what it says.**
Acting

=

Pure and genuine religion
Transformed



It seems like James is addressing/identifying
a flaw within Christianity, **passive faith**

In this **false posture** the would be disciple
of Jesus is living a life of **self-delusion**

The test for James (and Jesus) is
aligning behaviour with belief

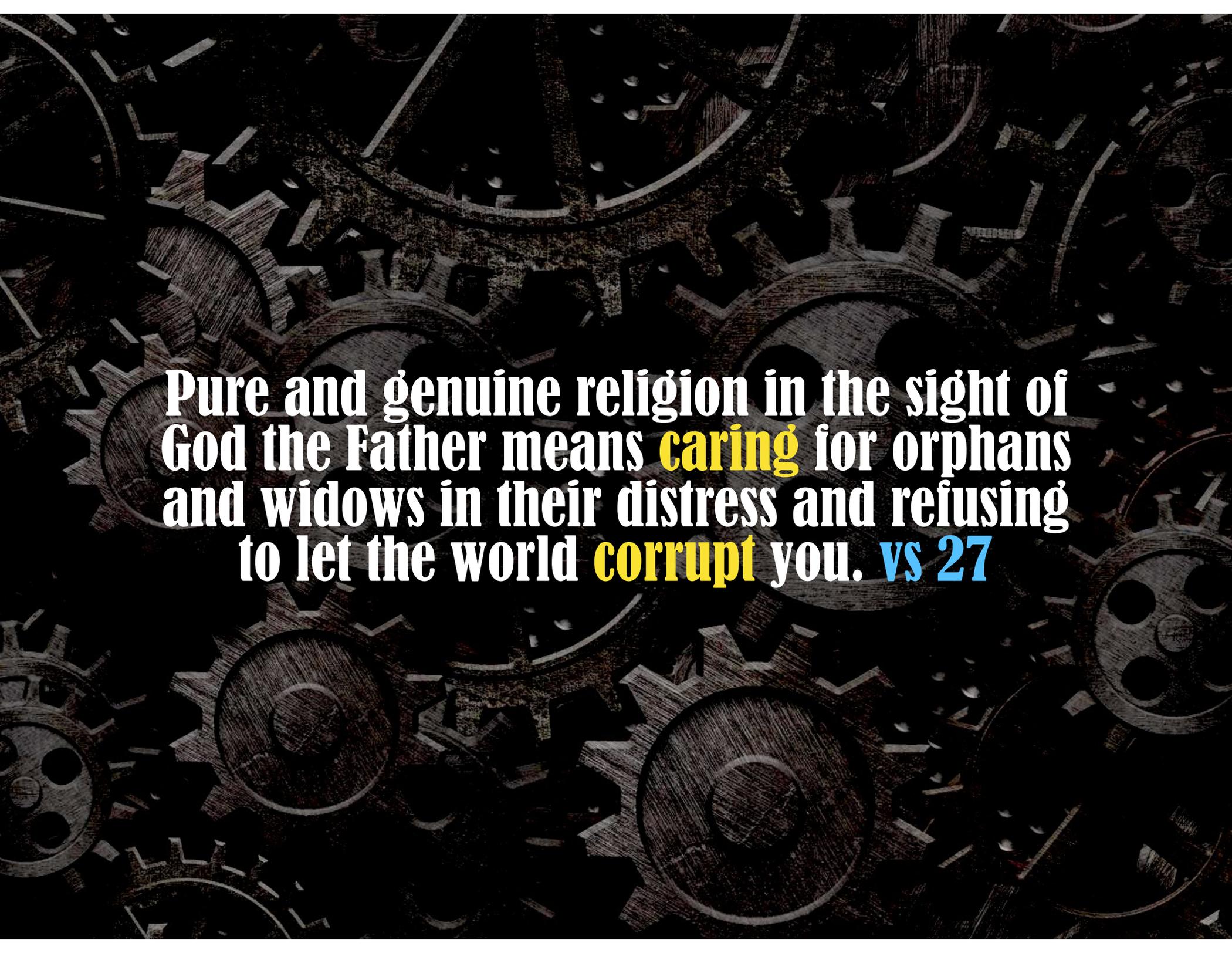
Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient (**shema**)." **Exodus 24:7**

The word that means "hear or listen," shema (pronounced "shmah") is an excellent example of the difference between Hebrew, which **stresses physical action** and Greek and Western culture that **stresses mental activity**.

Listening, in our culture, is a mental activity, and hearing just means that our ears pick up sounds. But in Hebrew, **the word shema describes hearing and also its effects** - taking heed, being obedient, doing what is asked.

"... Christianity served as a **revitalization** movement that arose in response to the misery, chaos, fear, and brutality of life in the urban Greco-Roman world. . . . Christianity revitalized life in Greco-Roman cities by providing **new norms and new kinds of social relationships** able to cope with many urgent problems. To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, **Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachment**. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, **Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity**. And to cities faced with epidemics, fire, and earthquakes, **Christianity offered effective nursing services**. . . . For what they brought was not simply an urban movement, **but a new culture capable of making life in Greco-Roman cities more tolerable.**"

Rodney Stark, The Rise of Christianity



Pure and genuine religion in the sight of
God the Father means **caring** for orphans
and widows in their distress and refusing
to let the world **corrupt** you. **vs 27**