I saw in my dream that as they continued on, Faithful, who just happened to look toward one side of the road, saw a man whose name was Talkative. He was walking beside them, but at some distance away, for in this place there was room for them all to walk. He was a tall man and more handsome far away than up close. Faithful addressed him in this way:

Faith. “Friend, where are you going? Are you going to the heavenly country?”

Talkative. “I am going to the same place you are.”

Faith. “Good! Then I hope you will travel with us.”

Talk. “I would be delighted to accompany you.”

Faith. “Come on, then, and let’s go together. Let’s spend our time talking about things that will be profitable.”

Talk. “I would be happy to talk about things that are good, with you or any other. And I am glad that I have met people like you who are inclined to this type of conversation. To tell you the truth, there are very few people who care to spend their time in this kind of conversation while they are traveling. Most choose to speak about things that do not profit anyone. This has bothered me.”

Faith. “That there are so few people is, indeed, regrettable. What could possibly be a better use of our tongues and mouths than to talk about the things of the God of heaven?”

Talk. “I like you very much, for what you say is full of conviction. And I agree, what could be as enjoyable and profitable as talking about the things of God?

“What things are as enjoyable? (What I mean is, if a man gets any joy from talking about the things that are full of wonder). For instance, if a man enjoys talking about the history or the mystery of things; or, if a man loves to talk about miracles, wonders, or signs. Where would he find things written that bring as much joy as that which is recorded in the Holy Scriptures?”

Faith. “That’s true. But we should plan to talk about the things that profit us.”

Talk. “That is what I said. To talk about those things is most profitable. By doing that, anyone may gain knowledge about a lot of things - like the emptiness of earthly things and the benefit of the things above. To be more specific, people can gain knowledge about the necessity of the new birth, the insufficiency of our good works, the need for Christ’s righteousness, and so on. In
addition, a man may learn what it means to repent, to believe, to pray, to suffer, or other things like these. A man may also learn the great promises and consolations in the gospel, and those will bring him great comfort. Finally, a man may learn to refute false opinions, to vindicate the truth, and also to instruct those who do not understand.”

**Faith.** “All this is true, and I am glad to hear these things from you.”

**Talk.** “I am so concerned because the lack of this kind of knowledge is the reason so few understand the need for faith and the necessity of a work of grace in their souls in order to have eternal life. They ignorantly live by the works of the law, by which no man can obtain the kingdom of heaven.”

**Faith.** “With your permission, let me say that heavenly knowledge of these things is the gift of God. No one can attain them by human effort or by talking about them.”

**Talk.** “I know all of this very well. For a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven - all is by grace, not of works. I could give you a hundred Scriptures to confirm this.”

**Faith.** “Well then, what is that one thing we should base our conversation on now?”

**Talk.** “Whatever you wish. I will talk about heavenly things or about earthly things; things moral or things evangelical; things sacred or things secular; things past or things to come; things foreign or things at home; things that are more essential or things circumstantial - provided that all be done for our profit.”

**Faith.** Then Faithful began to wonder. Stepping over to Christian (for he had walked all this while by himself), he whispered to him, “What a brave companion we have! Surely this man will make an excellent pilgrim.”

**Chr.** At this, Christian modestly smiled and said, “This man whom you so admire will deceive with his tongue twenty people who do not know him.”

**Faith.** “Do you know him then?”

**Chr.** “Know him! Yes, better than he knows himself.”

**Faith.** “Tell me, who is he?”

**Chr.** “His name is Talkative. He lives in our town. I am amazed that you are a stranger to him, but I do realize that our town is large.”

**Faith.** “Whose son is he? And where does he live?”

**Chr.** “He is the son of Saywell. He lived in Prating-row and is known by all who live there. Except for his fine tongue, he is a sorry fellow.”
Faith. “Well, he seems to be a very fine man.”

Chr. “That is true for those who do not know him well. He seems to be on his best behavior when he is away from home. But near home, he is seen for who he really is. Your speaking of him as a fine man brings to my mind what I have observed in the work of an artist, whose pictures look best from a distance; but near, they are not as appealing.”

Faith. “I am inclined to think that you are kidding me, because you smiled.”

Chr. “God forbid that I should jest - though I smiled - in this matter, or that I should accuse anyone falsely. I will tell you more about him. This man will mingle with anyone and will talk about anything. The way he just talked with you is the same way he will talk when he is sitting at a bar. And the more he drinks, the more he talks. Religion has no place in his heart, or house, or way of life. All he has is his tongue, and his religion is to make noise with it.”

Faith. “Really? Then I have been greatly deceived by this man.”

Chr. “Deceived! You may be sure of it. Remember the proverb, ‘They say things, and do not do them; the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power.’ He talks of prayer, of repentance, of faith, and of the new birth, but he only knows how to talk about them. I have been with his family and have observed him both at home and abroad. I know that what I say about him is the truth. His house is as empty of religion as the white of an egg is of flavor. There is no prayer or sign of repentance in his home. The animals serve God far better than he does. He is the very stain, reproach, and shame of religion to all who know him. Religion can hardly have a good word said about it in the part of town where he comes from. Even the common people who know him say, ‘A saint abroad, and a devil at home.’ His poor family will tell you the same thing. He is such a scoundrel, such a violent complainer with his servants that they do not know how to serve him or speak to him. Men that have any dealings with him say that it is better to deal with a Turk than with him, and they will get a fairer deal with them than with him. This Talkative, if it is possible, will do worse than they will. He will defraud and deceive and even surpass them in it. Besides, he brings up his sons to follow in his steps. And if he finds in any of them a tender conscience, he calls them fools and idiots. He will not give them work to do nor will he speak favorably about them in the presence of others. As for me, I am convinced that he has, by his wicked life, caused many to stumble and fall. If God does not prevent it, he will be the ruin of many more.”

Faith. “Well, my brother, I believe you, not only because you say you know him, but also because you give your reports of others like a Christian. I cannot believe that you speak these

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1. “So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach” (Mt. 23:3).

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power” (I Cor. 4:20).

2. “You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: ‘God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.’ Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised” (Rom. 2:23-25).
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things because you wish anyone harm, but only because it is just as you say it is.”

**Chr.** “If I knew him as little as you do, I might have thought of him like you did at first. If I had received my information about him from those who are enemies of religion, I would have thought it was slander (something that often happens when bad men slander the names and professions of good people). But I can prove he is guilty of all these things and a great many more that are just as bad. Besides, good people are ashamed of him. They do not call him brother or friend. The very mention of his name among them embarrasses them - if they know him!”

**Faith.** “Well, I see that saying and doing are two things. From now on, I will look out for this distinction.”

**Chr.** “They are two separate things and are as different as the soul and the body. For as the body without the soul is but a dead carcass, so ‘saying,’ if it is by itself, is but a dead carcass also. The soul of religion is the practical part. ‘This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.’ Talkative is not aware of this. He thinks that hearing and saying will make a good Christian, and thus he deceives his own soul. Hearing is like the sowing of the seed. Talking is not sufficient to prove that fruit is in the heart and life. Let us assure ourselves, that in the final day, men will be judged according to their fruits. It will not be said then, ‘Did you believe?’ but, ‘Were you doers, or talkers only?’ They will be judged accordingly. The end of the world is compared to our harvest. You know that men at harvest time only have regard for the fruit. Not that anything can be accepted that is not of faith. But I speak this to show you how insignificant the profession of Talkative will be on that day.”

**Faith.** “This brings to my mind Moses, who described the animal that is clean. It is one who has a cleft hoof and chews the cud. The rabbit chews the cud, but it is unclean, because it does not have a cleft hoof. This resembles Talkative. He chews the cud; he seeks knowledge; he chews only words. But he does not divide the hoof; he does not separate himself from the way of sinners - but, as the rabbit, he has the foot of a dog, or bear, and is therefore unclean.”

**Chr.** “You have spoken, as far as I can tell, the true gospel sense of those texts. And I will add another thing. Paul calls some men - and those who are great talkers, too – ‘sounding brass and tinkling cymbals;’ that is, as he explains them in another text, ‘lifeless things that make sounds.’”

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3. “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it - he will be blessed in what he does. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (Jas. 1:22-27).

4. See Mt. 13 and 25.

5. Lev. 11; Dt. 14.

6. “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can
‘Lifeless things,’ - that is, without the true faith and grace of the gospel. Consequently, they will never be placed in the kingdom of heaven among those who are the children of life, even though their sound be like the tongue or voice of an angel.”

**Faith.** “Well, I was not that fond of his company from the beginning, but I am certainly sick of it now. What should we do to get rid of him?”

**Chr.** “Take my advice and do as I tell you. You will find out that he will soon be sick of your company too, unless God touches his heart and turns it.”

**Faith.** “What would you have me do?”

**Chr.** “Go to him and enter into a serious conversation about the power of religion. Ask him plainly (when he has approved of it - and he will) whether he has religion in his heart, house, or in his behavior.”

**Faith.** Then Faithful stepped forward again and said to Talkative: “How are you? How is it going?”

**Talk.** “Well, thank you. I thought we would have talked quite a bit by this time.”

**Faith.** “Well, if you are willing, we can do it now. And since you left it up to me to state the question, let it be this: How does the saving grace of God make itself evident when it is in the heart of a person?”

**Talk.** “I see, then, that our conversation must be about the power of things. Well, it is a good question, and I am willing to answer you. Here is my brief answer: First, when the grace of God is in the heart, it causes a great outcry against sin. Secondly - ”

**Faith.** “No, wait. Let us consider one at a time. I think you should say instead, that it shows itself by inclining the soul to abhor its sin.”

**Talk.** “What is the difference between crying out against, and abhorring, sin?”

**Faith.** “A great deal! A person may cry out against sin as a formality, but he cannot abhor it, except by virtue of a godly hatred of it. I have heard many cry out against sin in the pulpit, yet are unable to live righteously in the heart, in the home, or in conversation. Potiphar’s wife, who tried to seduce Joseph, cried out with a loud voice as if she had been very holy, but would have willingly committed adultery with him.7 Some cry out against sin, even as a mother might cry move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing” (I Cor. 13:1-3).

“I even the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes?” (I Cor. 14:7).

7. “When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house” (Gen. 39:15).
out against her child in her lap and calls her ‘slut’ and ‘naughty girl,’ but then begins to hug and kiss her.”

**Talk.** “I perceive you are just waiting to see if you can trap me.”

**Faith.** “No, not I. I am only trying to set things right. But what is the second thing you were about to mention by which the work of grace in the heart is made evident?”

**Talk.** “Great knowledge of gospel mysteries.”

**Faith.** “This sign should have been first. But first or last, it is also false. For knowledge - great knowledge - may be obtained about the mysteries of the gospel, and yet no work of grace may be accomplished in the soul. If a person has all knowledge, he may still be nothing, and consequently, no child of God. When Christ said, ‘Do you know all these things?’ and the disciples answered, ‘Yes’, he added, ‘Blessed are you if you do them!’ He does not bless anyone for knowing them, but for doing them. There is a knowledge that is not connected with doing: ‘he that knows his Master’s will, and does not do it...’ A person may know as much as an angel and yet not be a Christian. Therefore, your evidence of the grace of God in the heart is not true. To know is a thing that pleases talkers and boasters. But to do is that which pleases God. I do not mean that the heart can be good without knowledge, for without that, the heart is nothing. There is, therefore, knowledge and knowledge: knowledge that rests in the speculation of things; and knowledge that is accompanied with the grace of faith and love that makes this person do the will of God from the heart. The first of these will serve the talker, but without the other, the true Christian is not content. ‘Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart.’

**Talk.** “You are trying to trap me again. This is not edifying anyone.”

**Faith.** “Well, if you will, propose further evidence of how this work of grace manifests itself in the heart.”

**Talk.** “Not I. For I see we will not agree.”

**Faith.** “If you will not, will you give me the opportunity to do it?”

**Talk.** “Please feel free.”

**Faith.** “A work of grace in the soul manifests itself either to him that has it, or to those who observe him. To the one who has it, it brings conviction of sin, especially of the defilement of his nature, and the sin of unbelief. If he does not find mercy at God’s hand by faith in Jesus

8. See I Cor. 13.
9. Ps. 119:34.
10. “When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment” (Jn. 16:8).
11. “…in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me” (Jn. 16:9).
Christ, he is sure to be damned. This sense that he has produces sorrow and shame within him. He finds, moreover, that the Savior of the world is revealed in him, and the absolute necessity of giving his life wholeheartedly to him. He also finds himself hungering and thirsting after Him. The promise is made for those who hunger after righteousness. He has joy and peace according to the strength or weakness of his faith in his Savior. The same is true of his love of holiness and his desires to know him more and to serve him in this world. But, though I say it manifests itself in this way to him, yet he is seldom able to conclude that this is a work of grace, because the old man is still present and the mind is infected with sin so that he can easily misjudge the matter. Therefore, sound judgment is required of those who have this work of grace performed in them before they can, with assurance, conclude that this is a work of grace.

“This work of grace is manifested to those who observe a Christian in this way:

1. By a personal confession of his faith in Christ. 2. By living a life worthy of that confession, namely, a life of holiness - heart-holiness, family-holiness (if he has a family), and by behavior-holiness in the world. These things teach him to privately abhor his sin.

12. “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mk. 16:16).

13. “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” (Rom. 7:24).

14. “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

15. “I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin” (Ps. 38:18).

“After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth” (Jer. 31:19).

“Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified” (Gal.2:16).

16. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Mt. 5:6).

“He said to me: ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life’” (Rev. 21:6).

17. “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Rom. 10:10).

18. “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27).

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God” (Mt. 5:9).

“If you love me, you will obey what I command” (Jn. 14:15).

19. “You speak continually against your brother and slander your own mother's son” (Ps. 50:20).
and himself for his sin. They also encourage him to suppress sin in his family and to promote holiness in the world - not by talk only, as a hypocrite or talkative person may do, but by a practical subjection in faith and love to the power of the Word. And now, sir, if you would like to object to this brief description of the work of grace and how it is manifest, now is the time. If not, then allow me to ask you a second question."

**Talk.** “No, I do not want to object now, but only to listen. Let me, therefore, have your second question.”

**Faith.** “It is this: Have you experienced the first part of this description (i.e., a profession of faith)? And does your life and conversation verify that you have made a profession? Or, is your religion in word and in tongue, and not in deed and truth? If you answer this question, do not say any more than you know the God above will say ‘Amen’ to; only state what your conscience allows. The one who condemns himself is not approved. The only ones approved are those approved by the Lord. Besides, to say I am so and so, when my lifestyle and all my neighbors tell me I am lying, is a great wickedness.”

**Talk.** “Then Talkative began to blush. But recovering from it, he replied, ‘You have now come to experience, to conscience, and to God. You have appealed to him for justification of what you have spoken. I did not expect this kind of conversation, nor am I disposed to answer such questions. I cannot be accountable to answer your questions unless you take upon yourself the role of a catechizer. And even though you should do that, I may refuse to make you my judge. But will you please tell me why you ask me these kinds of questions?”

**Faith.** “I saw your propensity to talk and I did not know that you had anything else but opinions. Besides, to tell you the whole truth, I have heard of you, that you are a man whose religion lies in talk and that your way of life makes your profession of faith a lie. They say you are a blot among Christians and that religion is harmed by your ungodly life. Some have already stumbled by watching your wicked ways and more are in danger of being destroyed. Your religion, frequenting bars, covetousness, uncleanness, swearing, lying, and associating with the wrong kinds of people all stand together. The proverb is true of you that is said of a whore: ‘she is a shame to all women.’ You are a shame to all those who profess their faith in Jesus Christ.”

**Talk.** “Since you are ready to listen to reports and to judge as rashly as you do, I cannot do anything but conclude that you are a discontented or melancholic person, not fit to talk with. And so, goodbye!”

**Chr.** Then Christian came up and said to his brother, “I told you how it would happen. Your words and his lusts could not agree. He would rather leave you than reform his life. But he is gone as I said he would. Let him go. The loss is no man’s but his own. He has saved us the trouble of leaving him. He would have been a blot on our company if he continued with us. Besides, the Apostle Paul says, ‘From such withdraw yourself.’”

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20. “My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6).
Faith. “I am glad we had this conversation with him. He might think about it later on. However, I have dealt with him in a very clear manner, so I am clear of his blood if he should die.”

Chr. “You did well to speak so plainly to him. There is very little of this faithful dealing with people today, and that makes religion repulsive to many. These talkative fools have a religion that is in word only. They are depraved and vain in their lifestyles. And when they are admitted into the company of godly people, they cause the people in the world to stumble, they give Christianity a bad name, and they bring grief to those who are really sincere about their faith. I wish all people would deal with others the way you have done. Then, they would either change their lives to be conformed to the principles of the Christian faith, or the company of the saints would be too hot for them.”

Then Faithful said,

_How Talkative at first lifts up his plumes!  
How bravely doth he speak! how he presumes  
To drive down all before him! but so soon  
As Faithful talks of Heartwork, like the Moon  
That's past the full, into the wain he goes;  
And so will all, but he that Heartwork knows._

John Bunyan first published _The Pilgrim’s Progress_ in London after it was licensed on February 18, 1678. This edition was revised from the original in 1993 by John L. Musselman.

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