

JAMES 1

A STUDY THROUGH THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Just Do It

James 1:22-25

Last Week

We heard the word in 1:19.

We received the word in 1:21.

This week we learn
obedience.

Big Idea for Today

There is always a direct connection between receiving the gifts of God and doing the will of God according to His Word.

It is an inseparable union of truth and action.

THIS

Colossal

LIGHT
OF MINE

A lit candle is positioned in the lower center of the image. The flame is bright yellow and orange, casting a warm glow. The candle itself is a light yellow color and appears to be melting slightly at the top.

James 1:22-25

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **24** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

James 1:22

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

*This is an imperative statement.

James Loves “the word”

- 1:18 – “He brought us forth by the word of truth”
 - The “word” gave you new life and salvation
- 1:21 – “in humility receive the word implanted”
 - The “word” is permanent and within you
- 1:23 – “prove yourselves doers of the word”

And so, if the word has brought salvation, if it is dynamic in the life of the believer, then it is imperative that believers do what the “word” says.

“doers” ποιητής (*poiētēs*)

- James may be hearkening back to an OT idea.

- **Exodus 24:7** –

“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!”



“hearers”
ἀκροατής (*akroatēs*)

We Are NOT Merely “Hearers”

We Are

μαθητής (*mathētēs*)

DISCIPLES

Matthew 13:3-8

3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; **4** and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. **5** Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. **6** But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. **7** Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. **8** And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

What Do All Of
These “Seeds”
Have In
Common?

Remember 1:16?

“Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.”

In v. 22, we meet deception’s good friend:

Delusion

“hearers who *delude* themselves”

“delude”

παρολογίζομαι (*paralogizomai*)

- Literally, misconstrue; in this case, deceive.
- There is a sense of “defraud” here; the deception leads to a bad exchange.
- Mere profession is wrong and brings salvation into question.

**GET OUT OF HELL
FREE**

**THE GIFT OF GOD
IS ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH
JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD**

ROMANS 6:23
(SEE BACK FOR DETAILS)



"IN MODERN DAY EVANGELISM, THIS PRECIOUS DOCTRINE [OF REGENERATION] HAS BEEN REDUCED TO NOTHING MORE THAN A HUMAN DECISION TO RAISE ONE'S HAND, WALK AN AISLE, OR PRAY A 'SINNER'S PRAYER.' AS A RESULT, THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT THEY'VE BEEN 'BORN AGAIN' EVEN THOUGH THEIR THOUGHTS, WORDS, AND DEEDS ARE A CONTINUAL CONTRADICTION TO THE NATURE AND WILL OF GOD."

PAUL WASHER



I Know We Don't Always Obey

- But a Christian who doesn't act based on the word of God that brought them forth and is implanted within them may not be a Christian at all.
- **For James, fruit must be produced.**
- Doing what Scripture says is not a question of acting quickly or slowly but acting at all!

No One

**Who has called upon
God for wisdom can or
should think that an
inactive faith is a true
faith.**

James 1:23-24

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **24** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.



“looks”

κατανοέω (*katanoeō*)

- The Greek word here refers to “careful observation”; it is not a hasty glance.
- It is used in Hebrews 3:1 –
“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, *consider* Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”

The Scary Truth

James is not simply talking about the person who has had minimal contact with the truth; he is speaking even to those who have been in church their entire lives.

A Negative Analogy

“For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror”

- Paul uses a mirror analogy, as well, in 1 Corinthians 13:12 –

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.”

In Paul's Analogy

- It is the reflected image of God that is dim because of our inability as sinful human beings to perceive God and His truth.
- Of course, we will ultimately see God face to face, and our perception will be changed from dimness to absolute clarity.

In James' Analogy

- We see our reflection all too clearly.
- The man who looks in the mirror has heard the word of truth, but it is only transformative in those who would receive it.
- Many gaze into the mirror of truth (God's law) and never stop to contemplate the truth of God.

Two Mistakes for the “Hearer”

1. The Word is being treated like a theory—a detached mental image with no connection to reality or the external world.
2. The message of the Word is received and ignored.





Connect This Back to v. 19

“be quick to hear, slow to speak”

- An unconcerned and casual encounter with the word may have eternal consequences.
- James says, “he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.”

One for the Parents



The Ultimate Failure of the “Hearer”

He does not recognize the
necessity of remembering and
acting accordingly.

The truth is readily available and
accessible, but the hearer chooses
to walk away and forget.

The Insinuation:

Those that have heard,
and possibly even
professed belief, and
walked away unchanged
are **NOT** disciples of the
Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:19-20

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Which part of this is optional?

James 1:25

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

“the law of liberty”

- James will call it the “royal law” in 2:8 and again “the law of liberty” in 2:12.
- The NT conveys the idea that Christ brought a new law (1 Cor. 9:21).
- And therefore, to serve Him is to served the law; to truly serve the law is therefore to serve Him.
- If you study the law, you study Him.

But One May Say...

**I Am Not Under
The Law. I'm
Saved by Grace
Through Faith!**

Law in the New Testament?

- **Romans 8:2** – “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”
- **1 Corinthians 9:21** – “to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.”
- **Galatians 6:2** – “Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”

Simply Put:

There has always been a law, there is a law now, and there will always be a law based on the character of God, Himself.

In Contrast to the “Hearer”

- The believer who learns about himself and what God requires by concentrating on the mirror of the Word will be blessed.
- I look intently into Scripture in order to find out where I am lacking and what I should do to better serve the Lord.
- This guards against forgetting and motivates doing.



Every Believer

Walks back into life and away from moments of hearing the Word of God in preaching or reading, but it should never be in the same way.

Why Do/Are We...

- “Consider it joy” when we face trials?
- “Endure” trials?
- “Ask for wisdom?”
- Not “doubt?”
- Not blame God?
- Not get “carried away and enticed by...lust?”
- Not “deceived?”
- “Quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger?”
- “Put aside all filthiness?”
- “Doers...and not merely hearers?”

Because

**We've looked intently into
the mirror that is the
Word of God and seen our
absolute unworthiness
and His unbelievable
grace.**

The Result?

“this man will be blessed in what he does.”

- **Luke 11:28 –**

But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

Matthew 7:24

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

Can You Relate?

**To know one's
identity as a child of
God is itself
blessedness.**

Matthew 5:14-16

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; **15** nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **16** Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

