

**Theme: Hearing and Doing**

James 1:19–27

<sup>19</sup> So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; <sup>20</sup> for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup> for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. <sup>25</sup> But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

<sup>26</sup> If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless. <sup>27</sup> Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

**Consider**

**1:19–20.** Who is the audience?

List the Christian's priority when he deals with others: "Let every [person] be—

- swift [quick] to \_\_\_\_\_ ,
- slow to \_\_\_\_\_ /
- slow to \_\_\_\_\_ ."

Discuss: practically speaking, what would this look like?

Why should we follow these instructions (1:20)?

**1:21.** Which behaviors must we "lay aside" before we listen to God's Word, the Bible? Why do you think this step is so important if we are going to be transformed by God's Word?

How should we receive God's Word?

Why do you think God's Word is called the "implanted<sup>8</sup> word"?

What is the effect of God's Word on the person who will hear it, receive it, believe it, and obey it?

**1:22.** How does *hearing* but not *doing* lead to someone being self-deceived?

What are some other ways people might deceive themselves? (1 John 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4; 1 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 6:3; 2 Timothy 3:13)

**1:23–24.** God gives us a picture of foolish self-deception (hearing and not acting).

- What does the man see in the mirror?

*Note: His natural face = "the face nature gave him," i.e., a face one has when waking up from a night of sleep.*

- What does he do with what he sees?
- How does this analogy compare to how believers might read the Word of God? (Compare this with the analogy given in Proverbs 12:27. What do both pictures tell us?)

**1:25.** This verse begins with the word "but," indicating a contrast to the previous verse. What contrast are we given?

What "nickname" is given to the Word of God here? The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. Why do you think James calls the Bible this name?<sup>9</sup>

*Note: In the book of James (and throughout the Bible), a "law" is a rule of conduct and provides a basis or reason for why you do what you do. In the Old Testament, the Law of God provided the rules for how the Jewish nation should act in every-day life. This new law—the Law of Liberty—is part of the New Covenant (predicted in Jeremiah 31:31–33) and forms the foundation for our decision-making. Following Christ is a liberating experience!*

What is the result of the person who looks, continues, and does what the Bible reveals? Read 2 Corinthians 3:17–18 for help in describing the kinds of blessing that might follow.

**1:26.** What other example does God give us of someone who is aware of the truth but does not

<sup>8</sup> This word means to be "permanently established in the individual."

<sup>9</sup> Consider cross references like 2 Corinthians 3:17, Galatians 5:1, 13.

obey the truth? How might Christians fail in this area?

What does the word “bridle” mean? What does the word “bridle” imply about the struggle of controlling our tongue? Easy or difficult?

**1:27.** How does God illustrate “pure and undefiled” (both these words mean something clean, not dirty) religion? Which element is vertical in nature (between God and you)? Which element is horizontal in nature (between you and others)? Is one of these more important than the other? Why or why not?

### Ask Yourself

What are some ways I might receive God’s Word?

How do I prepare to hear God’s Word, the Bible? What should I do (on a regular basis) to ensure my heart is ready to receive the Truth?

Do I listen to God’s Word and apply its message when I hear and read the Truth? If so, what are some things from this past week that I have believed and implemented in my daily walk with God?

What is happening if I am exposing myself to God’s Word on a regular basis, but God’s Word does not seem to be having any significant impact on my life?

Who are the “orphans and widows” (2:27) in my life, and how can I serve them?

### Cross References

1 John 1:6, 8, 10

<sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

<sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

1 John 2:4

He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 Corinthians 3:18

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.

Galatians 6:3

For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

2 Timothy 3:13

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Proverbs 12:27

The lazy *man* does not roast what he took in hunting, But diligence *is* man’s precious possession.

Galatians 5:1, 13

<sup>1</sup> Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. [. . .] <sup>13</sup> For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Jeremiah 31:31–33

<sup>31</sup> “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—<sup>32</sup> not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup> But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

2 Corinthians 3:12–18

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—<sup>13</sup> unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. <sup>14</sup> But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. <sup>15</sup> But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. <sup>16</sup> Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.<sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. <sup>18</sup> But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

1 Peter 2:16

As free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.