

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## The Infinite Value of Hearing & Receiving the Word of God

2 Timothy 3:16-17 and James 1:19-21

Keywords: Bible, Word of God, Scripture, James 1, Spiritual Growth

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: The Word of God is powerful, so says the writer of Hebrews. But exactly how is that power manifested? In this sermon Pastor Henry shows six specific ways that the Word of God is used to transform a person into the likeness of Jesus.

- I. Introduction.
  - A. Introduce 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
    1. The flow of the text.
    2. From there we went to Psalm 19.
      - a. David speaks highly of the power of natural revelation.
        - (1) The purpose is to show and declare the glory of God.
        - (2) At the core of all problems in this world.
    3. But the story Creation gives is limited. Man needs special revelation to be able to be in a right relationship with his creator. That is where the Word of God comes into play.
    4. We saw six ways that God uses the Bible in the lives of His people. Three examples.
      - a. It restores the soul from deadness.
      - b. It makes wise those who are simple.
      - c. It enlightens the eyes that we may see and do rightly.
  - B. Today I want to look at a passage that is often misunderstood and show you the incredible value of hearing and doing the Word of God (James 1:19-21).
  - C. Review of James.

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1. Primary message is the nature of true, saving faith. What it looks like and how it function in the life of one who truly follows Jesus.
2. Not a series of proverbial statements. Rather a careful expression of practical, living faith.

## II. Hear the Word.

- A. Notice that in verse 18 all who are saved are saved by the Word.
  1. The instrument God used in saving you and me was the Word.
- B. Notice also in verse 21 (not a new paragraph from vss 19-20) the word “therefore.”
  1. This shows that what follows is naturally attached to the prior verses.
  2. James says in verse 21 that by putting away that anger of verse 19-20 we can then receive, welcome, entertain, or embrace the Word of God.
- C. “This you know. . .”
  1. This refers to the fact that the readers already knew that their salvation was from God, not themselves.
  2. “But” then stops them and lets them know that there is much more to the Word of God than merely saving them.
- D. “Let everyone . . .”
  1. Here James gives the command.
  2. These three qualities are to characterize each of your live.
  3. “Everyone” points to each individual.
    - a. No one is excluded.
    - b. Its not a vague statement to the whole group.
    - c. Its like he is sitting each person down and talking to him or her privately.
    - d. NOTE: The Word of God will never affect you unless you actively cooperate.

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- E. “Be quick to hear.”
1. James is telling the church to “be quiet and listen to God’s Word” and do it quickly, right away and without delay.
  2. Therefore, your responsibility is to be looking eagerly for ways to grow in hearing the Word.
  3. One man said, “Listening is the art of closing one’s mouth and opening one’s ears and heart.”
    - a. Proverbs 22:17 “Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your mind to my knowledge;” (no, let go and let God thinking)
    - b. Jeremiah 7:24 “Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.”
  4. The first mark of true faith is that the person eagerly and submissively listens to the Word of God.
- F. You are to be slow to start speaking the Word of God.
1. This is the other side of the coin.
  2. It is a brief precursor, or glimpse, of what James discusses deeply in chapter 3.
  3. “Speak,” means, rash, immature, thoughtless talking.”
    - a. It refers to a specific act of speaking, and the context indicates that the type of speech is that of teaching.
    - b. Within this context it shows two applications.
      - (1) One, Someone is trying to teach before he ought.
      - (2) Two, someone is sensing he needs to say his opinion regarding the teaching and then living to regret it forever.
  4. This also involves the idea of not reacting too quickly to what is heard.
    - a. Being reactionary. Making shallow, immature statements just to be heard.

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- b. Proverbs 10:19 “When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.”
  - c. Proverbs 29:20 “Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”
- G. You are to stop being angry about the Word of God.
- 1. Again James calls for self-restraint.
  - 2. “Anger,” means to have a strong and persistent attitude of hostility or resentment. Often revenge is its goal
  - 3. At issue in the phrase are two things:
    - a. First, you may be around people who don’t practice the first two points, as a result reckless speech wounds you and provokes you to anger.
    - b. Second, and primary to the intent of this passage, James is warning you away from an attitude of anger in the process of teaching.
      - (1) Out of religious zeal, coupled with immaturity you verbally blast the people using anger.
      - (2) You allow emotions to control as you debate a doctrine.
      - (3) The bible, the gospel, no longer is a tool to express God’s grace and mercy to people; rather it is a tool to further your agenda. It becomes a blunt instrument in the hands of a angry person.
  - 4. “For” (verse 20) James gives us a simple, yet important reason for it:
    - a. Simply put, it achieves nothing eternal.
    - b. Listen beloved, probably each of you at sometime in the past got upset over something.
      - (1) You “knew” that your anger was a righteous indignation.

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- (2) You “knew” you needed to speak quick and harsh.
- (3) In the process you have destroyed a relationship with a fellow brother or sister in the Lord!
- c. Notice some simple observations.
  - (1) “Of man” and “of God.”
    - (a) Literally this is how it reads. It is showing the dichotomy, the distinction. There is man’s way and God’s way.
    - (b) It is reminiscent of Proverbs 14:12, “There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” Man thinks he knows the right way to handle a situation, but it always ends in destruction.
  - (2) “Achieve,” is a business term describing achievement or accomplishment.
    - (a) It indicates a goal; goal-oriented.
    - (b) Any good teacher of the Bible will tell you, they teach so that people would grow.
    - (c) If that is true, then those of us who are in the position to teach need to do it through God’s means, not ours.
    - (d) This is why an elder, in Titus 1 must not be “self-willed, not quick-tempered.” And must be one who is “Self-controlled.”
- H. This brings us to the “therefore” vs 21. . . .
  - 1. He is saying that instead of anger there is a different response for the believer.
  - 2. James, having told them to become attentive listeners, now moves them further by showing them the core problem. They have evil within their hearts and it is hindering their lives as Christians.

## III. Receive the Word.

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- A. James tells us that we must deal with the evil in our lives.
1. The command is to “get rid of” or “put aside.”
    - a. This concept is relatively common in the New Testament. The picture this word gives is that of stripping away old clothes.
    - b. This term is most commonly used metaphorically to refer to stripping off sinful patterns and attitudes..
      - (1) Example: But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, (Col 3:8-9)
      - (2) This is often used to refer to the “old man” and the “new man.”
      - (3) Another example is Hebrews 12:1, “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,”
    - c. The way this command is constructed in the Greek tells us that James is calling each of us to make a definite change in their lifestyle.
    - d. It is also probable that James is specifically referring to immoral, filthy speech.
  2. Notice that there are two things that we are to strip off of ourselves.
    - a. “Filthiness” (“moral filth”).
      - (1) This refers literally to the idea of dirt.
      - (2) It is most often used in the Bible to refer to that which is morally dirty.
        - (a) Your life is not clean before the Lord. There is sin in your life.

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- (b) Your life has sinful patterns.
  - (3) “All” refers to every instance of filthiness.
    - (a) He is telling you that you are to be comprehensive in your stripping away of sin.
      - i) Picture the clothing of a homeless man. You would not even one article of his clothing on you.
      - ii) When Jesus died he died for your entire being; therefore God wants all of you.
  - b. “Wickedness” (“evil”).
    - (1) This is not a hard one to understand. It simply refers to anything that is impure or unclean.
      - (a) The idea is that there is a lot of wickedness in their lives and all of it must be removed.
      - (b) He is very blunt here. There is no nice way to say that the root problem in your life is that you are letting rebellion and your own pleasures determine your choices rather than a humble pursuit of bring God honor.
- 3. Having given you all of this detail I don’t want you to miss the point of this first half of the verse.
  - a. James is leading up to the call to embrace the Word of God.
  - b. Why then doesn’t he just say that?
  - c. The construction of this text is such that he is telling you and I that we can never truly embrace God’s Word into our lives if we refuse to strip away this filthiness and wickedness

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- d. One of the marks a true faith in Jesus is that the person who is truly saved will desire to live a life pleasing to His Master, who is Jesus Christ.
  - (a) In chapter two James says that this type of person has a dead faith.
  - (b) In the next verses we will see that that person is called merely a “hearer” of the word.
- B. James now tells us that must welcome the Word of God.
  - 1. Notice that James now abandons the metaphor of clothing and moves to a metaphor of agriculture.
    - a. He does not tell us to put on something proper; rather, he now speaks about the planting of the Word of God into our hearts
    - b. The fruit of this implantation is salvation which tells us that the core of the Word is the gospel.
  - 2. “Humbly” is in the emphatic position in the Greek text.
    - a. It literally reads “in humility” or “in the sphere or arena of humility.”
    - b. He is telling us how we are to accept the Word of God.
    - c. He is stressing the need for a proper inner attitude toward the Word of God.
    - d. This humility is the opposite of the wrathfulness of verses 19-20.
      - (1) Instead of brashly asserting themselves in anger, they are to humbly receive the Word.
      - (2) There are many who listen but to actually accept, to welcome, the Word requires a humble heart.
      - (3) Humility is a rare item in humanity yet it is precious in the sight of our Lord.



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- (a) Psalm 51:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.”
  - (b) Micah 6:8 “He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?”
- 3. The word “receive” (“accept”) is written in a way which conveys urgency.
  - (1) The force of the verb is to make a definite acceptance of the Word.
  - (2) It is an decision of the will.
    - (a) You decide that you will begin to strip off filthiness and wickedness.
    - (b) You decide to be humble.
  - (3) He is telling us that we need to not be mere passive hearers of the Word; rather, we are to welcome it as an active force in our lives.
  - (4) We are to prepare our hearts so that the Word might have good soil to be implanted and readily grow.
- 4. “Implanted”.
  - a. The Gospel was placed within us by God.
    - (1) Here is the point. According to James 1:18, the Word was the vehicle in which we were saved.
      - (a) It is already there.
      - (b) Now, through stripping away the sin we are able to welcome it, stimulating it to grow in us.
      - (c) In other words, I can stand up here and preach to you all day long, but if you do not

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apply these truths into your life you will not grow in respect to your salvation.

- (d) That is the meaning of the phrase “which can save you.”
  - i) In verse 18 James referred to the initial act of salvation.
  - ii) Here he is viewing in its ultimate sense of our future salvation when we go to be with our Lord.
    - a) Philippians 2:12, “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;”
    - b) 1 Corinthians 1:18, “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”
- (2) Here then, is the next mark of true faith; that we humbly welcome the Word of God into our lives so that it can begin to change us.

## IV. Conclusion.

- A. My argument I am trying to craft over these last two weeks is how God has ordained the life of His children to triumph and blossom through the bible.
- B. It is the way you mature and flourish. But only when you submit yourself to it.
- C. The challenge for many is the temptation to seek to cause the Word of God to conform to our desires and goals rather than conforming ourselves to our Lord’s word.

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- D. We need to see its value, we need to be quick to hear it taught, and we need to receive it with clean hearts. And when we unleash it into our lives in that manner, exciting and yet frightening things begin to occur.

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## Small Group Questions

- Why do you think it is easier to speak about the Word than listen to it being taught?
- (It might be worth discussing the need to not merely hear the Word taught but to take care in the type of teachers you hear.)
- What do you take away from the fact that to receive the Word you need to put away sin as vs 21 says?
- Thinking over the last year, what has changed for you in your life as a result of hearing and receiving the Word.