

Counseling James
Testing for Genuine Faith Part 3
Key passage James 1:23-25, misc Scriptures
Key words: Word, Bible, obedience, faith
Reading James 1:18-27

Introduction

I. What has to be put aside to embrace the Word (vs21)

A. "Putting Aside"

1. Command to put aside or "get rid of"

- a. Word picture given that mens to get rid of old clothes and it's common in the New Testament.

(1) Eph. 4:22-24

(2) Col. 3:8-10

(3) Heb. 12:1

B. "Filthiness" (moral filth, vs 21)

1. Dirt

- a. moral filth means your life is not clean before the Lord.

2. All" means every instance of filthiness

- a. Be comprehensive in the laying aside of sin

(1) "Big" sins, "little sins" have to be fought because our entire lives since the day we were born again are bound up in God's Word.

(2) God's expectation is that we fight sin and that we make progress.
(Progressive Sanctification)

(3) For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Ro 6:14, NASB)

C. "Wickedness" (evil)

- a. Unclean, impure, moral evil, especially in regards to intent

b. Basic idea is that there is a lot (abundance) of wickedness in their lives and all of it has to go.

II. Now Welcome the Word (vs 21)

A. “Humbly”

1. Means “in humility

a. It means how to accept the Word of God

b. It speaks of an inner attitude in the inner person-the heart

c. “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. (Matt 5:3, NASB)

2. The attitude is in contrast to the attitude in vs 19-20

a. Instead of reacting in anger they are to humbly accept the Word regardless of how sharp it is.

b. If anger is your default position it means that your new default position is to become docile, easily bent and directed by the Word.

B. “Receive”

1. There is a sense of urgency when James uses the word “receive” or “accept.”

2. What is required here of the “hearer” is to make a decisive decision about the Word.

a. Will I accept the Word whole heartily?

b. Or, let me think about it? (counting the cost)

(1) Luke 9:23–24

C. “Implanted”

1. The Word must be implanted by God because it is not native to our hearts.

2. And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. (Matt 13:23, NASB)

a. Ja. 1:18 is in reference to the initial act of salvation but here in vs 21 James is viewing the Word in its ultimate sense of future salvation when we go to be with the Lord.

III. Now, Obey the Word (vs 22)

- A. Genuine Faith manifests itself through habitual obedience to the Word of God
 - 1. Continual process (keep on being a doer)
 - 2. The idea is that the character and lifestyle of a genuine believer is regulated by God's Word.
 - a. Observable, actionable, habitual
 - b. Contrasted with merely hearing
 - (1) "merely" illustrates that hearing is right and proper but "merely" the first step before acting upon it
 - (2) If we "merely" hear but fail to act we are "deluding ourselves."
 - 3. Deluding means to be self-deceived
 - a. Jame's point about being self-deceived
 - b. He means to say you believe you are saved but there is no proof to the claim
 - (1) The delusion is continual.
 - (2) The delusion comes from a person's own false reasoning or rationalization.
 - c. It adds up to tricking yourself (and trying to trick others)
 - (1) Any response to the gospel that does not include obedience is self-deception. If a profession of faith in Christ does not result in a changed life that hungers and thirsts for God's Word and desires to obey that Word, the profession is only that — a mere profession MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). James (p. 84). Chicago: Moody Press.

IV. The Character of the Hearer only (vs 23-24)

- A. The man who looks (speaks of intensity)
 - 1. The person is a careful looker
 - 2. They are careful when they look so they understand what they see.
 - 3. When they walk away from the mirror they forget what they have seen.
 - a. "immediately" means what they saw in the mirror made no lasting impact
 - (1) Matthew 7:26

b. Idols of the heart interference

(1) Idols of the heart are all the things that capture the heart and hold its attention.

(2) The Word of God does not have first place in the heart so something else does.

B. The character of the hearer then is...

1. They look at themselves, go away and then forgets.
2. They hear, even understand, but it's only for a moment.
3. what is understood is discarded

C. "The sluggard buries his head in the dish, and will not even bring it back to his mouth." (Pro. 19:24)

1. The person is a spiritual sluggard.
2. it is powerful imagery of a person who merely listens, but does not do what the Bible says.
3. As others observe the pattern they wonder if the person's faith is genuine.

D. Doer Verses

1. 1 John 2:3-4
2. 1 John 3:10
3. 2 Pe 1:10

V. Six Qualities of Character of the Doer (vs 25)

A. Serious student of the Word

1. "looks intently"

a. indicates a stooping down and looking into or at something or leaning forward to look intently with intensity or to carefully examine.

B. The Bible is Central in the Person's Life

1. "at the perfect law of liberty"

a. "at" means into and indicates a penetrating examination -in other words a serious student of the Word

b. "law" here does not refer to the Mosaic law; it refers to the law that is binding on the believer-the Scriptures

c. Psalm 19:7-11

d. James is emphasizing in particular our Lord's commands, the law of liberty meaning a focusing on the redemptive power of freeing us from the dominion of sin and freeing us righteous obedience. " Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). Exposition of James and the Epistles of John (Vol. 14, p. 62). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

2. The Word is of such a nature that it gives us liberty, or freedom.

a. To be a doer of the Word should not be a heavy task for the believer.

b. It should be joyful and natural.

C. The Person is Consistently in the Word

1. doesn't go to the Word only when times are rough

2. The person is captivated by the Word so it's consistent

D. The Doer Obeys the Word

1. The hearing of the Word affects a person at the level of actions.

2. The doer obeys what the Word says and is not like the hearer who forgets what they have just heard.

3. The genuine believer is marked by a persistent, consistent submission to what they hear.

E. The Doer of the Word is Worthy of Imitation

1. James is holding up the doer for all to see.

2. It would be like being in a crowd and James yanking out one person and saying "be like that guy."

3. To be a person who obeys what he hears is an enviable thing and worthy of imitation

F. The Doer is Blessed

1. God expects obedience and he blesses it.

a. Joshua 1:8 (NASB95) “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (or act wisely)

b. Matthew 11:28–30 (NASB95) “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

(1) Come to me...

(a) James makes reference to the Sermon on the Mount many times, both directly and indirectly. Come to me echoes Matt. 5:3 Matthew 5:3 (NASB95) “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(b) Take Jesus’ yoke

(c) You will find rest from your souls

(d) The yoke is grace, the burden light