

James wk.7

Intro: Back to James 1 again. Though you could say that last week we began a new section. Verses 2-18 could be generally said to be discussing trials and temptations or the testing of our faith – things like that. Beginning in v.19 and running nearly through the end of ch.1 is a section that changes to the topic of how we interact with God's word, the Bible. A week ago we looked at vv.19-21 and discussed what sort of responses we bring to the Bible as James encouraged us to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. This also led us to a brief look at these points as advice on how we talk with others. The primary meaning though has to do with how we approach or deal with what God says in his word. This next section puts a cap on those thoughts.

Missing The Point: (Jms.1:22-25) Our next section is critical in the book of James - it's critical for the spiritual life! It speaks clearly of a person who misses the whole point of why God gave us his Word. We are offered a clear warning about something we are all guilty of from time to time. This is something I have spoken of many times already and here it is again, right here in James 1. (**Jms.1:22-25**) God did not give us his word just so we can understand it intellectually, not just so we know what it says. He gave us his word to *change* us, we are supposed to *obey* it, it is supposed to be our *field manual* for how to *live life*. And of course, we know that the Word is able to save us too, as James wrote in the end of v.21, (we'll deal with that some later, time permitting). But here James used just a few simple words to make one of the most clear and crucial statements in all of the Bible here in **v.22** – I love the NIV here... (v.22) **Do what it says**. In the context of growing in Spiritual maturity, this is both necessary FOR spir maturity and evidence OF spir maturity. In other words, coming to know AND doing what the word says is an essential part of how we engage in the process of becoming more like Christ (that's necessary FOR) And a person who has made a habit of hearing and doing what the Word says over a period of some years is rightly seen as a person who is spiritually mature (that's evidence OF). And by the way, that statement to be a "doer of the word" ... let me add... He doesn't just say **to do** what they should... but to BE a doer. This means that our entire personality should be characterized by that reality of doing what God says. Let's be reminded that Jesus can certainly chime in on this subject. [Matt.7:21, 28:20](#)

What NOT To Do - Now James supports his point by talking about this from the negative perspective – those that DON'T do what it says. First, I want you to see what he says about this person in **v.22**...that they **deceive** themselves. The Greek word used here means to cheat or deceive by false reasoning. It also has a mathematical idea – the idea of a miscalculation. And what is the deception here, how is their thinking wrong, where do they miscalculate? It's clearly thinking that the "hearing" the reading about, the knowing about, is *enough*. It's thinking they have done all that is necessary when actually listening to the Word is only the beginning. In **vv.23-24** James gives that very clear illustration of what the listening and not doing is like. **[retell and expand a bit about looking intently in a mirror and then doing nothing about problems we see]** Please folks, don't settle for ignorant mediocrity! Don't settle for just coming to church, don't settle for flipping open the Bible now and then to just *check the box* of spending time in it. God has so much for you in there to know and TO DO! So let's talk about the good side –

What TO do - In v.25 James describes the way we ought to interact. ([read v.25](#)) We intently dig into God's word, not just now and then or once in a while. Many times per week we open it up, we read to understand it, we mull over, we meditate on... the things we have "seen" in the perfect mirror of the word... and we look to know how that can apply to us personally. Then, we act on those things, we obey what we see there.

Sometimes you hear people say "I wish God would just come out and tell me what His will is for me". Well... He has! He has told you plenty and there is much that is crystal clear. Start with that! Read it to know, Do it to grow.

The Result - Now, we could wish that believers would respond this way simply because it's the right thing to do, it just makes sense. I mean, look at everything that God has done for YOU! Salvation first and foremost and so much more besides. That alone ought to make us want to do what God wants. Listen to these passages... [1Cor.6:19-20](#), [Rom.12:1](#). But as if that isn't motivation enough, James goes on here to say that there is a result that comes from rightly responding to God's word - one that we all would claim that we want - to be blessed by God. This is a perk, this is a benny... to have the blessing of God. Again, Jesus can chime in from [Jn.13:15-17](#). But there's a problem with these blessing statements – if people think it is referring to material blessings in this life. This is the lie of the prosperity gospel teachers, the health and wealth charlatans. "God wants you to be rich and healthy here and now, you just have to speak the word, believe and it will happen. Give money to my ministry and God will give you more money and better health!" These false teachers make hundreds of millions of dollars, and have huge numbers of followers but it's a false gospel and is ruining lives and keeping people out of heaven! So no, blessed does NOT mean that everything is always just peachy keen! God's blessing can include things going well in life and enjoying some of the good things that this world has to offer, but typically God's blessings are WAY more significant than that, because they are spiritual and lasting rather than earthly and fleeting. The blessing here is particularly referring, I believe, not to business dealings and investments or things like that, but in the closeness of our fellowship with God through Christ.

Wrap Up: James has offered us today a resounding call to respond to God's word. Certainly for salvation initially, but particularly this message is pointed toward those who do know the Lord. Yes, read and learn what God's word says (that was last week more) but then most importantly, do what it says, obey it, put it into action. Be a doer of the word.