

James 1:21–27

- 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.
- 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
- 23 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;
- 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.
- 25 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.
- 26 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.
- 27 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.

The Importance of Hearing and Doing the Word of God **James 1:21-24**

INTRO:

Trials, temptations and the word of God, this is a great summary of the first chapter of the book of James. James desired to touch on areas of real importance for the Jewish Christians who were a part of the diaspora. If they were going to be Christ's scattered abroad, they needed to understand how to handle trials, where temptation comes from and how to battle it, and third, how to feed themselves spiritually. This third part of **James 1** is about how to handle the Word of God. James advice falls into two parts.

I. The Principle (v.21-22)

II. Illustration (v.23-24)

I. The Principle (v.21-22)

James 1:21-22 *“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*

A. Do you recognize where we left James? **Verses 19-20** said, ***“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”***

Because we must emulate our God, James wrote we need to be careful how we handle the Word of God. We cannot copy the character of God if we are not immersed in the Bible. We easily think we can please God and live like He wants us to live without being regularly in the Word of God and having the Word of God dwelling in us. The fact is we can't. James trumpets this here with the ***“Therefore.”***

B. How then must we handle the Word of God? First, we must prepare ourselves.

“Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness.” We need to deal with our sin, confessing it to God before we try to study the Bible. This sounds a lot like **1 Peter 1:2-3** ***“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.”***

The main reason we do not crave the Bible like babies crave their mother's milk is because we like our sin too much. James says before you read, deal with your sin against God.

C. Second, we must have the proper attitude to what we read or hear.

“Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

We must approach the Bible recognizing it is the very revelation of God. It is the true and living eternal God speaking to us. We must take it as coming directly from Him. And we approach it with ***“meekness.”*** What is ***“meekness?”*** This is a difficult to understand. It means gentleness, kindness, humility. Jesus said in **Matthew 11:29** this is a quality we need to learn from Him. Wiersbe wrote “meekness isn't weakness but power under control.” I would define it as “before God we have no rights.” We come to the word without arguing with God about what He says. We believe it. We receive it, and we do it.

DC. We come to the Bible with our sins confessed are hearts prepared to receive what God said, and finally, we come ready to be ***“Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*** God did not write His Word just to hear Himself talk. He wrote it for us to hear, grow and carry out His Word. Do you remember the acid test Jesus gave for our obedience? ***“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”*** (John 14:15). It is vital that we do not lose the balance here. The Christian life is not just doing. Do you remember Martha and Mary in **Luke 10:38-42**. Hearing as Mary did is important, but serving is important also. James says hear. But, if all you do is hear, you have missed the point. Hearing and doing is where the blessing is found.

II. Illustration (v.23-24)

James 1:23-24 *“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; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”*

A. The **“for”** here is **“because.”** Why should we be careful to not only hear the Word, but also obey it? We must hear it and do it because, ***“If anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”***

This illustration brings me back to my childhood. I quite often was told. “Go look in the mirror.” I always obeyed, but I didn’t often do anything about what I saw. What do we do with what we see in the mirror?

B. Do you remember **2 Corinthians 3:18**?

2 Corinthians 3:18 ^(AMP) *“And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit.”*

The Spirit of God takes the Word of God and transforms us into the image of Christ.

What do we learn?

1. First, the big hindrance to receiving what God wants us to get from the Bible is our sin. We must confess our sins before we read.
2. Second, we must approach the Bible recognizing it is different from any other book. It is God’s revelation of Himself and His communication to us. We must receive it recognizing that before God we have no rights.
3. After reading or hearing we must practice what He told us. Just hearing is not the way to blessing, nor is just doing without hearing.

Hymn #395 Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord