

PRACTICAL FAITH

A Letter from James



Not Silos, but Gardens - James 1:19 -25

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INTRODUCTION

- While we are never promised that following Jesus is a path of ease in this world, yet we are unequivocally promised blessed-ness.
- “Blessed” is a notoriously difficult word to define or describe.
 - Jesus marks some features of the blessed in the SotM (Mt5:3ff)
- How is it then, with all we have access to by way of resources and information, that we can find ourselves lacking a sense of the blessedness promised by Jesus?
 - Sometimes it appears to be a “dark night of the soul”
 - Sometimes it is that we treat the Word of God as if we are silos to store truth, rather than gardens to bear fruit

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HEARING THE WORD (19-20)

Know this, my beloved siblings:
 let every person be quick to **hear**,
 slow to **speak**,
 slow to **anger**

for the *anger of man* does not produce
 the righteousness of God.

*The great talker is rarely a
 great listener, and never is
 the ear more firmly closed
 than when anger takes over.
 ~Motyer*

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RECEIVING THE WORD (21)

Therefore **put away** all filthiness and rampant wickedness and **receive** with meekness the *implanted word*, which is able to *save your souls*.

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DOING THE WORD (22)

But be **doers** of the word, and **not hearers** only, *deceiving yourselves*.

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ILLUSTRATED: MIRROR OF THE WORD (23-25)

For if anyone is a **hearer** of the word and **not a doer**, he is like a man who looks *intently* at his natural face in a *mirror*.
For he *looks* at himself and *goes away* and at once *forgets* what he was like.
But the one who looks into the *perfect law, the law of liberty*, and *perseveres*, being no hearer who forgets but a **doer who acts**, he will be *blessed* in his doing.

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RESPONSE

•The Silo Christian

- Receives, even eagerly, the Word of God for *storage and distribution* (particularly for the instruction of others and theological debates)
 - This has always been trouble for the church, salvation by secret knowledge, going back as far as ancient *Gnosticism*
- Another way this shows, for someone who actually desires change, is someone who keeps looking for *special information or experience*: the next book, the powerful conference, the new podcast, the bold preacher, the zealous church, the right prayer, the deep theology that will change them

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RESPONSE

•The Garden Christian

- Receives the Word of God primarily for growth and transformation, bearing fruit, bearing blessing to God, ourselves, and those around us
 - Understands this is garden work: ongoing, attentive, and tiring with setbacks, varying seasons, and necessary perseverance
- Most of us have more than enough of the Word to bear fruit
 - Getting it out of the silo of the mind into the soil of everyday living is the way that fruit is produced

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RESPONSE

- And so, a vital question with anything we take in from the Word is "What is to be **our response?**"
 - Examples: Scriptural truth, promises, commands, and warnings
- This is not salvation *by* works, but salvation *that* works in us to bear much fruit as the person in Psalm 1 and field of Matthew 13
- This isn't to earn God's love through merit, but longing for a fruitful life as a thanksgiving offering to the God and Savior who has saved us for his glory - John 15:8

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