

# Receive the Word

## James 1:19-25

Last week we dealt with verses 16-18 and then briefly worked down to verse 21. It was my goal to show the continuity between v. 18 and v. 21. I did that to show the connection between “the word of truth” in v. 18 and “the implanted word” of v. 21. James gives ALL THE GLORY to God for our salvation and points to the fact that God uses HIS WORD to draw sinners to Himself.

Conservative modern commentators have worked to show that James DOES have system and order in his epistle. It’s not right on the surface, and admittedly, it’s not the tight logical system that we find in the Apostle Paul – but we can see James builds his case in his own way.

We bypassed verses 19-20 last week.  
That is where we start today.

## I. James Pastoral Exhortations 1:19-20

We could point to numerous Scriptures that tell us these truths.  
These truths are embedded in the Word of God.

What we see here is an introduction to a theme that James himself will expand upon.

-- Swift to hear – slow to speak.

We will deal with the issue of THE TONGUE in detail when we get to chapter 3.

-- slow to wrath – because man’s wrath does not produce God’s righteousness.

We will deal with unrighteous anger in chapter 4.

It’s an obvious transition happens in v. 21 – which tells us to TAKE OFF (like taking off filthy clothing) wickedness and the exhortation moves to the positive, which is to properly receive God’s Word, and this exhortation takes us to the end of the chapter.

## **II. Receive the Word with Meekness v. 21**

First, what does it mean “to receive”?

### **A. Receive**

Receiving is a **PASSIVE** activity.

That may sound contradictory – but it’s not.

In fact, that is exactly what **RECEIVING** is.

You **receive a present** – because someone **GAVE IT** to you.

**You can’t receive what isn’t given.**

In football – you have a receiver.

It’s his job to catch passes.

But he can’t catch a pass unless it is thrown to him.

If the QB doesn’t throw the ball his way, he’ll never catch a pass no matter how talented or aggressive he is!

We **RECEIVE** the **WORD**.

It **COMES** to us.

And the Word comes to us **IN POWER**.

### **B. The Implanted Word**

We are changed by **THE IMPLANTED** word.

Just as **RECEIVE** reminds us that we are dependent upon something outside of ourselves before anything can happen.

Something that is implanted comes to us from the **OUTSIDE** – **IN**.

So here is an exhortation or a command **TO BELIEVERS**.

This is something that lost men cannot do – because lost men do not have the Word of God implanted in their hearts.

**Turn to Jeremiah 31:33**

James is an OT expert.

He probably has this verse (or thought) in mind.

**READ 31:33-34**

THIS is the promise to every NC Christian.  
God's truth is written on our hearts.  
We can say God's Law is written on our hearts.

In fact, when we get to verse 25 of James 1 – instead of “Word” James changes his language to “perfect LAW of liberty” – which probably another way of saying what Jeremiah says and is the same thing as THE IMPLANTED WORD.

**Ezekiel 36:25-28**

James is making a NT application to this OT promise:

Some are waiting for this to be fulfilled with the physical nation of Israel.

Peter and James, both Jews, saw Christ as the fulfillment of the OT – and Christians as the true people of God who inherit the promises made.

To the Jew first – but also to the Greek.

**READ** (we break into a large context)

Back to James 1

How do we receive the implanted Word?

**C. With Meekness**

We are to receive the Word with MEEKNESS or HUMBLLY.

WE receive it in GENTLENESS – not fighting against it.

We are not the masters of God's Word.

We sit under the authority of the Word of God.

BUT – because our hearts are changed –

WE LOVE the Word of God.

WE AGREE with the Word of God.

WE ARE GRIEVED when our actions to do align with the Word of God.

Lost men are naturally enemies of God – and fight against His will – seeing His commands as grievous and oppressive.

Christians love God’s Word and find their greatest FREEDOM in the Word of God.

If the Word of God becomes a bondage to us:

1) Either are misusing the Word of God and falling into the horrible trap of LEGALISM which we must avoid at all costs.

Or

2) We are fighting against that very inward conviction of the Holy Spirit and our new heart – which desires to do the will of God and agrees with the Word of God.

There are boundaries in the Word of God.

The Word of God creates SPIRITUAL FENCES.

Fences keep the bad guys out – true.

They also create boundaries that are for our good.

God’s Word creates these boundaries for His glory and our good.

Think of how God’s Word comes to us:

The very things God tells are to do are a reflection of His own character.

God says DO NOT **MURDER** – God is the giver of life.

God says do not commit **adultery** – God is faithful to His people.

God says do no **steal** – God is generous – He gives good gifts

God says Do not **bear false witness** – God’s Word is true and God always keeps His promises.

God says **to be kind to orphans and widows** – God is a father to the fatherless and a help to the helpless.

For the NT Christian -- what God requires of us in His Word flows from the very character of God – and is for our benefit.

James says **MEEKLY RECEIVE THE WORD!**

It is able to save our souls.

- It **was** used by God to save our souls.
- It **is being** used by God to save our souls.
- Our souls **WILL CERTAINLY BE SAVED** – because of the truth and power of God’s Word!

But what does it mean to **RECEIVE THE WORD?**

### **III. Receive the Word with Obedience v. 22-25**

Here are some of the most famous verses in the entire Bible. Again, they speak **RIGHT TO THE HEART** of the true Christian.

**A. The Word is Implanted, but that doesn’t mean Hearing is unnecessary.**

He doesn’t say **DON’T HEAR IT**.  
Pastor James says don’t **JUST** hear it.

Those that hear the Word and do not act according to the Word are **SELF-DECEIVED**.

Remember v. 16 – DON'T BE DECEIVED.

And self-deception is the worst kind of deception.

It's terrible when someone lies to you – but  
You might find out if someone is lying to you.

It's terrible when someone tries to take advantage of you – but  
You can discover that someone is trying to gain advantage of  
you.

But if you are DECEIVING YOUR OWN SELF – what remedy is  
there?

How will you find out?

One way is to sit under the authority of someone TELLING  
YOU that you are self-deceived.

And that is what the mirror of the Word does.

It humbles us – and takes us out of ourselves and back to the eternal  
reality that is God's Word.

That brings us back to the pre-eminence of God's Word.

We need to sit under the preaching of the Word.

We need to read the Word.

We need to meditate on the Word.

We need to memorize the Word.

We need to be students of the Word – as best as we can – so we  
can learn HOW TO GLORIFY GOD.

## **B. The Illustration**

James illustration here is very straight-forward and understandable.

I am sure even the young ones among us can understand what James  
is saying.

There is no need to elaborate upon an illustration that James himself uses that is quite straightforward.

#### **IV. Receive the Word – Peter’s Exhortation 1 Peter 1:22-2:3**

James and Peter served in the same church for a number of years. James and Peter appear to have much of the same background.

So, it is not surprising that many of the themes that appear in James appear also in Peter’s epistles.

The Greek in 1 Peter and also in James is excellent Greek.  
Either these men studied and learned grammar.

Or they had help from others in forming their epistles in this second language.

Whichever, we know both were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the things they did for our profit.

##### **A. The Word Purifies v. 22**

We are purified by the Holy Spirit using the means of the Word.

1. State: Since you have purified yourself
2. Means: By obeying the truth, through the Spirit
3. Result: Sincere love of the brethren
4. Command: So love one another fervently with a pure heart.

As Christians in this world – we have responsibilities.

1. To the world around us – we are to show our moral character.
2. In regards to ourselves – we are to be self-controlled.
3. To other Christians – we are to show love and kindness.

**As Christians, the great hindrance we have to our love for the brethren, is our love for ourselves.**

No wonder Paul exhorts us to “*let each esteem others better than himself.*”  
It’s not natural.  
It’s not normal.  
It is exactly the Spirit Christ showed as He gave His life for us.

## **B. The Word Brings Life v. 23**

All human beings have all been born in the natural way  
Christians have been “born again”.

In John 3, Jesus said, “Ye must be born again”.  
This is not the same Greek Word.

In John 3, literally Jesus said, “*You must be born from above*”.

Here, Peter is using a different word, the very word the Scriptures  
use for **begetting**.

Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, etc.

It is the Word of God that is used by the Holy Spirit to bring life.

How can I know if I have been born again?

There are marks that every Christian will have – some to a greater extent and  
some to a lesser, but they will have these marks.

1. I have morally purified myself and I strive to obey God’s Word
2. I dedicate my life to obeying God by loving Him and my brothers
3. Because of my new birth – I realize I have an innumerable number of  
brothers and sisters

## **C. The Word Endures Forever v. 23b-25**

A direct quote from Isaiah 40:6-8.

Only two things are going to last from this present world: The Word  
of God and the souls of men.

## **D. The Word is our Message v. 25b**

If our gospel is anything other than THE WORD it is a false gospel.



## **E. The Word is Opposite of all that is Evil 2:1**

### **1. All malice**

Have you ever been so angry, you HIT someone in anger.

That is malice.

Remember what it felt like inside of you before and after you hit the person in rage?

That feeling is sin. It is a poison to the soul.

Malice is a desire to inflict pain, harm or injury on another.

### **2. All deceit**

Falsehood, craft, seduction, trickery.

Deceit takes on the appearance of truth – and often usually carries with it partial truth, which makes it all the more dangerous.

### **3. Hypocrisies**

*Hypocritas*

Interestingly, it is in the plural, as are the last two categories of sin.

Peter uses this word often in his epistle.

Probably influenced by the ministry of Jesus, where often Jesus denounced the Scribes and Pharisees as HYPOCRITES.

### **3. Envy**

We know what it is to envy.

All kinds of “envy” which is a brother to covetousness must be put away.

We are talking about jealousy. That spirit of selfishness that is so natural to each one of us.

### **5. All evil speaking (pasas kata-la-li-as)**

An all encompassing description.

Anything wrong that comes out of our mouths.

Words of anger or hatred are included.

Foul language is included.

Gossip or slander

Blasphemy

## **F. The Word must be the Christian's Desire 2:2-3**

Instead of a list of virtues to replace the sins we see above, there is one remedy given.

The Word of God.

Desire the Word, as much as a baby desires his mother's milk.

He desires it earnestly.

He desires it fervently.

He desires it vocally.

He desires it **FULL STRENGTH**.

We are not to water down the Word.

We are to take it **FULL STRENGTH**, so to speak.

There was a famine in Africa, and we sent cases and cases of powdered formula for their malnourished babies, but the babies kept on dying.

Why? After a little investigation, it was discovered that these poor mothers were trying to stretch the formula, and make it last by watering it down **WAY MORE** than it was intended.

The mothers were not trying to harm their babies.

In fact, they were trying to protect their babies.

But, they weren't giving them **PURE MILK**.

If you have "indeed" tasted that the Lord is gracious, you should desire the Word.

Have you lost your desire?

The thing about the Scriptures is – the more you read it – the more you hear it – the more you desire it.

-- The more you obey it – the more you desire it.

-- The more you neglect it – the easier you forget it.

-- The more you go against it – you soon lose your taste for it.

Of course you cannot lose your salvation.

But you can lose your zeal.

Renew the zeal by digging back into the Word.  
Make use of the means of grace.  
Don't let anything hold you back.