

James

A STUDY ON THE BOOK OF JAMES

UPSTATE GROUP MEMBER GUIDE

WEEK 3 - *JAMES 1:19-27*

LEADER NOTES

Last week, we talked about how there are two paths of life that everyone must choose: the path that leads to life and the path that leads to death. James teaches that the lives of those on the path of life should bear fruit accordingly. The life of a disciple should be marked not only by hearing the word of God, but obeying the word of God and bearing fruit. Life in this world is hard, but we must obey God's word. Our lives should be marked with self-control, a turning away from sin, and living on mission.

Please continue to complete the Gospel Connection's and Conversations form. You can find the form [HERE](#).

You can find other sermons from our Teaching Pastor's [HERE](#).

SCRIPTURE

TAKE THIS TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE TOGETHER. REMEMBER, THE GOAL IS NOT JUST TO CONVEY INFORMATION, BUT TO HELP PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP LEARN TO READ THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES.

THE POINT

VISIBLE FAITH PRACTICES WHAT YOU PREACH.

James 1:19-27

19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant 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 who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 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. 26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), James 1:19-27.

STUDY NOTES

Imagine a parent giving instructions to their child. The child is eager to play outside, but the parent knows there are rules to follow for safety. The parent says, "You can play outside, but remember, you must stay in our yard. Do you understand?"

In these essential words from James, we're reminded of the importance of listening and obeying. Just as a child needs to heed a parent's instructions, we too must pay attention to God's Word. James encourages us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Obeying God's Word isn't just about hearing it. Obedience is about action. It's like the child who, after listening to their parent's instructions, follows them diligently.

James was concerned believers were merely listening to God's Word and not living out its truth. James maintained that just listening to God's Word was insufficient. When one hears the Word and doesn't act on the commands contained in it, that person really is engaging in self-deception. Simply listening to the message isn't enough. For James, authentic faith and daily obedience go hand-in-hand. James compares merely hearing God's Word to looking at our reflection in a mirror but then forgetting what we look like as soon as we turn away. It's empty and futile if we don't live out what we've heard. In the bustling noise of life, it's easy to hear but not truly listen. What's the point of just reading and hearing the Word of God but not obeying it? The ramifications are clear—we risk living a life of deception and disobedience.

So, how do we bridge the gap between hearing and doing? It begins with intentionality. We must approach Scripture—not as passive spectators but as active participants—ready to heed its call and apply its teachings to our lives. Since the Bible is a living and active resource to follow God and deepen our relationship with him, it speaks to our lives at any moment. It's not a dated or irrelevant message, but one that's sharp today and for all eternity.

We've laid a foundation for the Book of James and addressed the fact that life is difficult—even for Christians. In life, especially when facing trials and temptations, we'll constantly face the same decision. Will we do what God's Word says? That question will present itself in different circumstances, yet underneath the surface, the central point is the same. Those who have true belief in Christ will act in accordance with God's Word.

Control Yourself

James identified our language, relationships, and attitudes as visible reflections of what's in our hearts. Just as a right understanding of God's Word produces godly action, so does it produce godly speech. Often we're tempted to not hold our tongues when we feel that we're being wronged in some way. Through the Holy Spirit, self-control should be evident in the life of those who have been redeemed by Jesus.

Turn From Sin

One of the great benefits of reading and hearing the Word of God is that it helps the sanctification process of believers—the process of turning from sin and looking more like Jesus. God's Word convicts our hearts of things that don't honor Jesus, and therefore shouldn't be a part of a believer's life. Turning from sin is obedience in Christ.

If our lives are built on merely listening to the words of Jesus and not obeying them and turning from sin, we will be deceived that our lives are okay, then one day our lives will eternally and ultimately end in destruction.

Live on Mission

True religion expresses itself in loving service and holy living. James uses the examples of taking care of orphans and widows as a way to live on mission. By caring for the most helpless members of society, the church body put God's Word into practice. As Jesus commands us to be humble, serve and love others, and reflect the work of God, we're to live on mission in a broken and fallen world. God's Word provokes action, and if there's no action from the Word, then clearly there's been no acceptance of the Word. This is the very nature of a faith that works. At the end of the day, James is saying you have deceived yourself if you think you're right in your relationship with God because you've listened to the Word of God, maybe even intently and consistently, but don't live out the Word of God in your life daily.

For more resources for this week's sermon and curriculum, click [HERE](#).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *How did James's earthly relationship with Jesus lend credibility and passion to his message of being a doer, not just a hearer, of truth?*
- *What role should God's Word play in our pursuit of Christ-likeness?*
- *How does a heart bent towards sin affect the way we receive God's Word? Have you ever seen this play out in your own life?*
- *How well does your speech reflect the truth of who you are in Christ? When are you most prone to lose control of your tongue?*
- *What did James mean when he said we deceive ourselves (see v. 22)? Why is it deceptive to hear God's Word and not obey it? How does listening but not doing hinder the gospel impacting others?*
- *How is James's call for obedience different from an attempt to earn right standing before God—that is, works-righteousness?*