

## **Hearing and Doing** **James 1:22-27 (NKJV)**

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.

Now if we are going to “lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” we are going to be a doer of the word and not a hearer only.

It is so simple and yet profound. For many listen to the word of God and read the word of God but still do not do the word of God.

That seems to be the hard part doesn't it.

You can read and learn it and even teach it but to live it is the difficult part.

Over the years I have encountered many Christians who fell into that trap in one way or another.

- I. Be doers of the word, and not hearers only
  - A. The word of God must do more than touch the eye and the mind. It must be implanted in the heart.
    1. When people are blessed with regular, in-depth preaching and teaching of Scripture, they may become so enamored with their knowledge of God's Word that they become self-satisfied with that knowledge and forsake the effort to live out the profound truths they have come to understand. *John MacArthur, MacArthur New Testament Commentary – James, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 79.*
  - B. The commands of God do not become a list that we reference when we determine our conduct. They have become a part of who we are. We could no more get them out of our head and our hearts than we could remove our own arm.
  - C. What God has done is to write His word in our heart so that it is now a part of our programing.
  - D. It is now natural for us to hear and obey the Lord while before is was not.
    1. Matthew 7:24-27 (NKJV)
      - a. 24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does

them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

## II. Deceiving yourselves

### A. James' illustration

1. 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.
  - a. Have you seen these mirrors that magnify, wow.
  - b. But what good does it do if you cannot discern what you look like.
  - c. What if you can't recognize yourself.
2. The purpose of the mirror is to show us what we look like and for some of the ladies to change that.
3. Well the purpose of God's word is to show us what we look like.
4. So that we might see all the things that are out of sorts.
5. I am not one to look at my self a lot in the mirror.
6. And then when I do I see that my hair makes me look like the mad professor and I have been that way all day.

### B. Do you remember back in high school when they would take our senior pictures and then they would touch them up and when we got them we wondered who that nice looking person was.

1. Well today that call that photo shopping and they have made that quite easy.
2. Want us to take off a few pounds or put them on.
3. What us to remove that spot or change the color of your hair or give you a tan.
4. James would say we are deceiving our own selves or at least the people who look at the picture.

### C. The purpose of the mirror is to give us a realistic likeness of our selves as we really are.

1. Why, hopefully so that we can change.
2. What the Christian today needs is real change not just to be photo-shopped.
3. To change the photo does not change us.
4. And distorting the mirror so that it make us look better does not change us.

III. Therefore we must constantly look into the perfect law of liberty, the word of God.

- A. 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.
- B. The word of God will point out to us our faults and will tell us how to change.
  1. John 8:31 (NKJV)
    - a. 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.
- C. In some people groups they are convinced that pulling your teeth make you look much better.
  1. But it doesn't, take my word for it.
  2. Don't listen to the world tell you what will make you look good.
  3. Instead, look into God's word and pray for discernment.
    - a. Psalm 119:9 (NKJV)
      - (1) 9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.
- D. God's word makes beautiful people.
  1. In the movie *Shallow Hal* Hal starts out seeing like we all see, the outward appearance.
  2. But then something happens and he sees people only as they are seen on the inside.
  3. Isn't that what really counts?
  4. Isn't that how God see us?
  5. Working on your outward appearance may impress some people but not the people that really count for those people are looking at what you are on the inside.
  6. The next time you look into the mirror of God's Word, make certain that the stain or blemish you saw when you looked into it at first has been confessed and cleansed. *Lehman Strauss, Lehman Strauss Commentaries*

– *James, Your Brother: Studies in the Epistle of James*, (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1967), *WORDsearch CROSS e-book*, 62.

John 13:17 (NKJV)

17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

James 4:17 (NKJV)

17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.