

DON'T DECIEVE YOURSELF

(James 1:19-27)

A. In our last study we left off in chapter 1 verse 18.

1:18 – Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

1. God brought about our new beginning as His new creation by means of His Word.

B. As we learned previously, God's Word also teaches us how to respond to our trials & temp's.

1. So if we will allow His Word to direct us in good times & bad – then our faith will be “perfect & complete lacking nothing.”

2. But once we are “brought forth by the word of truth”, to grow we must continue to hear His Word – thus, we read in verse 19...

1:19 – So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath

A Bible teacher in Alabama was teaching a group of young men how to preach. Their first assignment was to come up with a five minute talk. Exactly five minutes. So they worked very hard on their timing. One young student from south Alabama (a slow talker) gave his talk & finished right on time. He was very proud of himself. The teacher advised him, “Now, son that was a good speech & you finished right on time, but if you're going to make a preacher you're going to have talk a little faster.” The young man responded, “Don't you know that the Bible says, to be slow to speak?”

3. The emphasis in this section is on the dangers of self-deception (James 1:22, 26).

1. Many have deceived themselves into thinking they are saved when they are not (Matt 7:22-23).

2. The same thing can happen to us (Rev 3:17).

[A proper relationship to God as Father can only result from a proper understanding of His Word (John 17:17).

The better we understand His Word, the less likely we are to deceive ourselves & become dishonest & hypocritical.

Seems like James is a book that we borrow verses from without considering the context – *this part of chapter one is about the proper attitude toward the Word of God.*

We have 3 duties toward God's Word that will keep us from deceiving ourselves about our standing with God.]

I. RECEIVE THE WORD

1:19-21 – So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be **swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath**; 20 for **the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God**. 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness & overflow of wickedness, & **receive with meekness the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls.

A. **The Word of God** cannot make us “perfect & complete” unless we receive it in the right way.

1. Too many people have “hearing [but] they hear not, neither do they understand” (**Matt 13:13**).
- a. They are “dull of hearing” (**Heb 5:11**) because they have no interest in what God says.

2. But if the seed of the Word is implanted (engrafted) in our hearts, then we will follow these three instructions.

B. Swift to hear (19).

1. Jesus encouraged hearing, “He who has ears, let him hear” (**Matt 13:9**)!
 - a. “If you want to know what God says, listen carefully to My words” (**cf. Rom 10:17**).
2. As the servant is quick to hear his master's voice, & the mother to hear her baby's cry, so we should be quick to hear the Word of God.

David was hiding from the Philistines who were in possession of Bethlehem. He yearned for a drink of the cool water from the well in Bethlehem, a well that he had often visited in his boyhood & youth. He did not issue an order to his men; he simply said to himself, “Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate”. Three of his mighty men heard their king sigh for the water, & they risked their lives to secure the water & bring it to him (**2 Sam 23:14-17**). **They were “swift to hear.”**

C. Slow to speak (19).

1. Again, think of this admonition in the context of how we should receive the Word of God.
2. We have two ears & one mouth, which ought to remind us to listen more than we speak.

Prov 10:19 – In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise. **17:27** – He who has knowledge spares his words, & a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.

3. In the early church, services were informal; & often the listeners would debate the speaker.
 - a. It happened to Jesus (**Lk 10:29**).
 - b. It led to fightings & wars among the brethren to whom James was writing (**Jas 4:1**).

D. Slow to wrath (19).

1. Remember the context; James is emphasizing a Christian's attitude toward the Word of God.
 - a. Be "swift to hear" – listen carefully to the reading or teaching of God's Word.
 - b. Be "slow to speak" – don't be too hasty to respond to what you hear.
 - c. Be "slow to wrath" – when you do respond, don't be driven by anger (**Prov 19:29**).
2. There is a saying, "Temper is such a valuable thing; it is a shame to lose it!"
 - a. Temper gives steel its strength –The person who cannot get angry at sin does not have much strength to fight it.

- b. But James warns us against getting angry at God's Word when it reveals our sins to us.
- c. Like the man who broke the mirror because he disliked the image in it, people often rebel against God's Word because it tells the truth about them & their sinfulness.
- d. To avoid such a state of mind, James tells us to prepare our hearts to receive God's Word.

E. Prepare the heart (21).

1:21 – Therefore *lay aside all filthiness & overflow of wickedness*, & receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

- 1. James pictures the heart as a garden, the soil of which must be prepared for the seed.
- 2. The phrase “overflow of wickedness” gives the picture of a garden overgrown with weeds.

- 3. A heart given over to the wickedness of the world is unprepared to receive God's Word.
- 4. How do we prepare the soil of our hearts to receive the seed of God's Word?
 - a. We develop “meekness” (gentleness).
 - b. When you receive the Word with meekness, you accept it, do not argue with it, & honor it as the Word of God. You do not try to twist it to conform it to your thinking.

[If we do not receive the implanted Word, then we are deceiving ourselves.

The second duty we have toward God's Word...]

II. PRACTICE THE WORD

1:22-25 – But **be doers of the word**, & not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word & not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, & immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 **But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty & continues in it, & is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work**, this one will be blessed in what he does.

A. **It is not enough** to hear the Word; we must do it.

1. Many have the mistaken idea that hearing a good sermon or Bible study is what makes them grow.
2. It's not the hearing of the Word that brings the blessing, but the doing of it.
3. Too many Christians mark their Bibles, but their Bibles never mark them!
4. James warned that if we think we are spiritual because we hear the Word, then we are only deceiving ourselves.

B. James earlier compared the Word to seed; but in this paragraph, he compared it to a mirror.

1. A mirror is something we use to make an examination of ourselves (23-25).
 - a. Though we may want to, it would be silly to break a mirror because of the image we see of ourselves in it.
 - b. Likewise is it foolish to be angry with God as His word shows us clearly our true character.
 - c. {Many religious people get angry because the God's word is silent about many of those things they want to practice.}

[Our first responsibility is to receive the Word, & then we must practice the Word to keep from deceiving ourselves.

This leads to a third duty toward God's word...]

III. BE DEVOTED TO THE WORD

1:26-27 – *If anyone among you thinks he is religious*, & does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. 27 **Pure & undefiled religion before God & the Father** is this: to visit orphans & widows in their trouble, & to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

A. **The word translated** “religion” means “the outward practice, the service of a god.”

1. “Pure religion” is not just something that is practiced when the saints meet; it is one's devotion to God in everyday life.

B. **Pure religion** means being devoted to God's service in these three areas of life.

1. **Speech** (26).

- a. The tongue reveals the heart (**Matt 12:34-35**)
- b. A controlled tongue means a controlled body (**Jas 3:1 ff**).

2. **Service to others** (27).

- a. Words are no substitute for deeds of love (**Jas 2:14-18; 1 John 3:11-18**).
- b. And no one can practice pure religion for us.

3. **Separation from the world** (27).

- a. “The world” is “society without God.”

Satan is the prince of this world (**John 14:30**).
The lost are the children of this world (**Luke 16:8**).
We are in the world but not of the world (**John 17:11-16**).
We are sent into the world to win souls to Christ (**John 17:18**).

- b. The world will “spot” or stain the Christians “pure religion.”
- c. First, by “friendship with the world (**Jas 4:4**), which can lead to a love for the world (**1 John 2:15-17**).
- d. Then we become conformed to the world (**Rom 12:1-2**), & ultimately condemned with the world (**1 Cor 11:32**).
- e. Jesus was “unspotted” (**1 Pet 1:19**), & yet He was the friend of publicans & sinners.
- f. The only way that we can serve this world is by keeping pure from the defilements of the world.

GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION:

Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ; read it in your Bible: Acts 2; 3; 13; Rom 10:17

Believe Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Son of God and Savior: Acts 2:36; John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:4

Repent of your sins: Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ: Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins: Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21

Be obedient to the Lord, He will be your Judge: Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48