

Living Out Your Faith

A Study in the Book of James

LESSON TWO

Being a DOER of God's Word **(James 1:17-27)**

Prayerfully read through James, chapter 1:17 through verse 27.

After having written to his readers about enduring through our trials and temptation, James makes a stark contrast between the progression of our sinful desires, and where they lead us, to the good gifts that come from God.

1. What does James say about the Giver of these gifts in **verse 17**?

2. James specifies the greatest good and perfect gift given to us in **verse 18**.
What is it?

3. God has given us amazingly good and perfect gifts, that are in such stark contrast to what the world, with all its temptations, could ever give us. Look up the following Scriptures and write them down, reflecting on the good gifts you have received.

Ephesians 1:13 -

Colossians 1:5 & 6 -

Colossians 1:13 -

4. James draws a conclusion to these two contrasting truths regarding the lust of our flesh and the good gifts that come from God in **verse 19**. He states, **“So then.....”** *because the path of sin and temptation leads to death, and the good gifts of God lead us into everlasting life.....* What instruction does he give to us **in response** to these truths?

Commentator **Albert Barnes** states, **“The connection is this: “since God is the only source of good; since he tempts no man; and since by his mere sovereign goodness, without any claim on our part, we have had the high honor conferred on us of being made the first-fruits of his creatures, we ought to be ready to hear his voice, to subdue all our evil passions, and to bring our souls to entire practical obedience.”**

5. This instruction can apply to how we respond in times of trial and temptation, as well as in a general sense. **Swift to hear** and **slow to speak** are things we should all strive for. Especially when it comes to **hearing the truths of God’s Word** and **responding to them in obedience**. Look up and record the following Scriptures that speak of this.

Proverbs 8:32-34 -

Proverbs 13:1 -

Proverbs 19:20 -

1 Thessalonians 2:13 -

6. Desiring to **hear** more than to **speak** is a sign of humility and being more “other centered” than “self centered.” **Record** these Scriptures and their admonitions below.

Proverbs 10:19 -

Proverbs 13:3 -

Proverbs 17:27

Proverbs 21:23 -

7. The Greek word used in **verse 19** for wrath is “**orge**” and can also be translated as **anger, indignation, or vengeance**. Being **swift to hear** and **slow to speak** is the first step in learning to be **slow to wrath**. In **James 1:20** he gives us the reason why we need to be **swift to hear** and **slow to speak** and **slow to wrath**. Record that reason below.
8. What is the remedy that James gives us to these behaviors, seen in **verse 21**?
9. “**Therefore lay aside.....**” James is giving us a command here, which means this is something we **choose** to do. It’s a **choice** that we make. What does **Ephesians 5:8** say about this subject?

10. All of these behaviors James speaks against in the previous verses are behaviors that promote **our agenda, not God's**. How does this speak to your heart? Is responding quickly and harshly to a comment, circumstance or situation, something that you struggle with? How do the Scriptures in **James 1:19-21** and **Ephesians 5:8** minister to you?

11. In **verse 22**, James instructs us in how we are to **hear**, to **listen** and to **respond** to God's Word. What does he say?

12. James states that those who "hear" God's Word but don't "do" it are deceiving themselves. We can probably see many examples of this in our churches today. Attending church and hearing God's Word taught, without "heeding" God's Word and putting it into practice, is a great self-deception. Yet, many people consider themselves Christians simply because they attend church on Sunday, without ever truly surrendering their lives to Christ's Lordship. How does James describe these people in **verses 23 & 24**?

"I fear we have many such in all congregations; admiring hearers, affectionate hearers, attached hearers, but all the while unblest hearers, because they are not doers of the word." (Spurgeon)

Albert Barnes states: **“It is implied here, that by merely hearing the word but not doing it, they would deceive their own souls. The nature of this deception was this, that they would imagine that that was all which was required, whereas the main thing was that they should be obedient. If a man supposes that by a mere punctual attendance on preaching, or a respectful attention to it, he has done all that is required of him, he is laboring under a most gross self-deception. And yet there are multitudes who seem to imagine that they have done all that is demanded of them when they have heard attentively the word preached. Of its influence on their lives, and its claims to obedience, they are utterly regardless.”**

13. In contrast to the person in **verses 23 & 24**, how does James describe the person who listens and obeys in **verse 25**?

14. **“looks into...”** The Greek word for **“looks”** is **“parakupto”** and it means to “bend beside, lean over, stoop down” so as to **examine intently**. We are to examine God’s Word intently, and then using it as a mirror, we are to **examine ourselves**. What do the following verses say concerning this?

1 Corinthians 11:31 -

2 Corinthians 13:5 -

Hebrews 12:15 –

Adam Clarke states that this is one that **“takes time to see and examine the state of his soul, the grace of his God, the extent of his duty, and the height of the promised glory.”**

15. James refers to God's Word as the **perfect law of liberty**. The **Bible Knowledge Commentary** says, **“The “Law that gives freedom” seems like a paradox. Law seems to imply restraint and therefore a lack of freedom. Not so with God's Law. His perfect Law provides true freedom.”** What does **Jesus** say about this in **John 8:31 & 32**?

16. Still looking at **verse 25**, James says we are not only to look intently into God's perfect law of liberty, but we are to **continue in it**. What do the following Scriptures teach us about this?

John 14:21 -

John 15:4 -

1 Timothy 4:16 -

1 John 2:24 –

17. What is the promise for the one who hears, examines and obeys, found in the last part of **James 1:25**?

18. In the last two verses of this chapter, James give practical examples of the person who is both a “hearer” and a “doer” of God's Word. In **verse 26** James speaks about the one who has deceived himself in his own heart. What does he say about them?

19. James will go on in following chapters, speaking about the tongue and its power to both kill and destroy or to give life and encouragement. Our tongues are the key to bridling our whole being. What did Jesus say concerning this in **Luke 6:45**?

20. James give a very practical picture of **pure, undefiled religion** in **verse 27**. Write down this practical example below.

21. We see both a horizontal response and a vertical response in the one who practices a true faith. The first part of the verse speaks about the horizontal response. James will expound more on this in the next chapter. Look ahead to **James 2:16** and record what it says.

22. What do these other verses say about this?

Galatians 5:6 -

Galatians 6:10 -

1 John 3:17 & 18 -

23. The second part of **James 1:27** speaks of our vertical response, as those who have been called out from this world's system, unto Christ. How do the following verses speak to this?

Romans 12:2 -

2 Corinthians 6:17 -

Colossians 3:1-3 -

2 Peter 3:11 -

24. What was your greatest take-away from Lesson Two in our study of the Book of James?

“The one and only way of making holy impressions permanent is by translating them into Christian living. It is not enough to see ourselves reflected in the mirror of God’s Word; we must *so continue*, not as hearers who forget, but as doers that perform. Many appear to think that blessedness results from *hearing*, and are always on foot to attend new conventions. No; the true blessedness accrues from *doing*. The heart of our Christian faith is purity, the stainless garb of the soul, and thoughtful ministration to the widow and orphan-but these are possible only through the indwelling of Christ by the Holy Spirit.” F. B. Meyer

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2025