



James

How to Live the Christian Life!

Living by the Word

James 1:19-27

Message #3 of 12 – S660

Sermon given on October 25, 2015



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Living by the Word

James 1:19-27

Opening Comments

- Turn to **James 1**
- Today, we continue our series through the letter from James **How to Live the Christian Life**
- There may be some of you who might be thinking you don't need someone to teach you how to live the Christian life
- You might say, 'I do it every day! I'm not perfect, but I am doing pretty well?'
- How do you know that is true?
- There was a time in this country when there were good Christian examples in all areas of life
- But over the last sixty to seventy years, this country has drifted further and further from God's Word
- And frankly, it is getting harder and harder to find good examples of Christian faith in our culture
- So that makes it imperative that we understand what the Christian life is supposed to look like, and then do everything we can to live that life in a God-less culture
- But just because we are left without a lot of examples, doesn't mean we are left without instruction to live the Christian life in a way that Glorifies God, blesses us, and grows our faith
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today's text as a sign of reverence for the Word of God
- Read **James 1:19-27**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Living by the Word**
- God gave us His Word so that we would know what we needed to know
- He also gave us the Holy Spirit so that we could understand it, and be able to apply it

- James opened his letter by addressing two big areas of concern in the lives of all believers; trials and temptations
- James is going to tell us the key to dealing with trials and temptations is found in the Word of God **J. Ronald Blue**

Ultimately the key to responding to trials and resisting temptation is to be found in one's reaction to God's Word.

- In today's message we will look at three keys to living by the Word
- First key – **Accept God's Word**
- **James 1:19-20**
- 'So then' = not a new section, but a continuation of what he was saying earlier about trials and temptations
- 'be swift to hear' – hear what? The 'word of truth' from verse 18
- Some like to think it means we ought to listen to other people – which we should
- But this is about us listening to God's Word and His Spirit **Hebrews 5:9-11**

And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

- 'slow to speak' – as we respond to trials and resist temptation – we probably need to talk less
- Could mean, don't argue with God about your situation or what His Word says
- Also applies to how we are talking to others – wait for the Holy Spirit to lead you, and then speak the truth in love
- 'slow to wrath' – don't get mad at God because of your trial or the temptation
- And don't express anger to others –wrath or anger is sin **Ephesians 4:31**

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

- God's want us to be put it away from us because it is sin and is a terrible witness of Christ
- Says 'does not produce righteousness of God' – can't because it is sin

- **James 1:21**

- We have to do something to accept God's Word

- ‘lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness’
- Some of you might be thinking, that doesn’t apply to me, I’m not that bad
- That phrase can be summarized with one word – sin
- Until you start seeing any and all of your sin as ‘filthiness and overflow of wickedness’ – sin will always have a place in your heart
- Sin clogs our ability to receive God’s Word
- ‘receive with meekness’ – if you want the Word to be implanted into your heart – takes humility – pray before you read, before you hear sermon **Isaiah 66:2**

“For all those *things* My hand has made, and all those *things* exist,” says the LORD. “But on this *one* will I look: on *him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.*”

- Must get rid of sin, and humble ourselves if we want to benefit from God’s Word
- ‘the implanted word’ – reminds me of Jesus’ parable in Matthew 13
- Four different soils, hard path, stony ground, ground with weeds, and fertile ground
- ‘lay aside’ and ‘meekness’ = breaking up hard parts of unbelief in our heart, removing stones of sin, and removing weeds of the cares of this world
- ‘which is able to save our soul’ – talking to believers – not about salvation/heaven – talking about saving us from the impurity of this world and our fleshly desires
- To live by the Word, first we accept God’s Word
- Second key – **Act on God’s Word**
- It is not enough just to accept God’s Word
- Just knowing God’s Word is not going to help you respond to trials or resist temptation
- Just knowing God’s Word will not help you to live the Christian life
- James says you have to do something with what you know
- **James 1:22**
- If you know what God’s Word says and you are not doing it, you are deceiving yourselves

- It is bad enough when we allow Satan to deceive us, but James says we can lie to ourselves
- Then gives an illustration of what that kind of person is like
- **James 1:23-25**
- James describes three mistakes we make when we are handling God's Word
- First – **Not observing ourselves**
- In this illustration God's Word is described as a mirror
- In it we see 'the perfect law of liberty' – we see the perfection of God
- Also, we are able to see ourselves reflected against the perfect law of liberty
- 'like a man observing his natural face' – he glances at the mirror
- Notice he uses a man in this illustration, because a woman probably can't just glance at a mirror
- The first step to acting on God's Word is study ourselves as we read the Bible or hear a sermon
- And ask ourselves, 'What is this revealing about me that God would like me to respond to?'
- Second mistake – **Forgetting what kind of man he was**
- Mirror will tell us to wash, shave, comb, brush, or put on makeup
- Bible will tell us things about ourselves
- Do you close the Bible and forget what He showed you
- Can't remember – write it down
- Third mistake – **Don't do what it says**
- V25 – James expresses this point in the positive
- But is saying, if you don't do what the Word says, will not be blessed, as a Christian, you won't be happy if you don't do what the Word says
- 'he who looks' = looking intently – literally stoops down for a closer look
- 'into the perfect law of liberty' – Hey, we're not under the law
- That's right, not under the law of Moses, but under the law of liberty

John 8:31-32

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

- The Law of Moses made me guilty, proved I was in bondage to sin
- But Jesus set us free from that bondage – new law – love God and others
- Under the ‘law of liberty’ I am free to do what is right
- This person doesn’t make the mistake we mentioned earlier
- They look intently into God’s Word, the mirror
- They pay attention and choose to remember what they see
- And then they do what the Word says to them
- This person will be blessed or happy **John 13:17**
If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
- Opposite also true
- Trials and temptations will come into the lives of all people
- If we want to live a better life – accept God’s Word and act on it
- Third key to living by the Word – **Abide in God’s Word**
- Once we have accepted God’s Word and decided to act upon it, it needs to show up in our life
- James describes that with a comment on our religion
- **James 1:26-27**
- The word religion is not used frequently in the New Testament
Definition: Religion – the outward expression of worship in ritual, liturgy, and ceremony.
- This description could describe any religion or cult
- James is talking to Christians, and so he is referring to their Christian acts of worship
- Even in Christianity there is something that, according to James, is pure religion
- Interestingly, he doesn’t refer to the rituals, liturgy, or ceremony
- The Bible doesn’t dictate to us much about how the Christian religion is to be practiced
- Instead it focuses on relationships
- James gives us three marks of pure religion
- The absence of these three marks makes our religion ‘useless’
- First mark – **Personal Control**

- If your tongue is out of control – using it to harm others with anger, wrath, grumbling, complaining, backbiting, gossip, slander, being critical, and judgmental – then your religion is useless
- Second mark of pure religion – **Personal Ministry**
- The orphans and widows of James’ time were often left with no one to provide basic needs like food or clothes
- They represent, for us, all who are in need around us or bound under the pressures of life
- James says that if we are not reaching out to them, our religion is useless
- Calling all believers to have some kind of personal ministry
- Inside or outside the church – right now we have a need in Children’s Ministry
- Will have to close a classroom, because we don’t have volunteers to minister to the children
- Third mark – **Personal Purity**
- We have to live in this world, but we don’t have to let the world live in us
- Trials and temptations are going to be a part of our lives as long as we are alive –To live by the Word, we accept it, act on it, and abide in it.
- By living by the Word we can endure - and by enduring we bring glory to God, bless others, and grow in our faith
- Amen
- **Pray**

May the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever.

Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21