

James: Lesson #75 – Prove Yourselves Doers of the Word
Notes for Parents to Study With Their Children
For Sunday, Feb. 15th

Read James 1:21 – 2:26 (a simplified explanation of the text will be supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: James 2:20 “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”

God’s Word Must Be Planted in Your Heart

- Remember when Jesus told the parable of the sower. He said that God’s Word is like seed planted in peoples’ hearts. The point of His parable was that some people’s hearts are prepared for God’s Word, and some are not.
- Putting God’s Word in a dirty heart in lives that are very sinful, won’t accomplish anything. That’s like trying to plant a seed to grow a vegetable by just dropping the seed in with a bunch of weeds. Gardeners get rid of the weeds before they plant. We have to be willing to put away bad things in our lives for the seed to grow. James says, for instance that people who want to be hateful and do mean things to others, have to be willing to get that out of their hearts for God’s Word to properly grow.
- God’s Word is a powerful force that can help change our lives and save us from doing more bad things. It can make us ready to go to heaven.

We Must Be Doers of the Word

- When you plant seed, you don’t just throw it on the ground. There are things you have to do to make it grow. You have to dig up the ground so that it isn’t so hard. Once the seed is planted you have to water it and fertilize it. If new weeds come up you have to keep getting rid of them.
- When God’s Word is planted in our hearts, we have to be willing to yield to it. By yielding to it, I mean that it has to be obeyed. We can study the Bible and come to church and Bible class and learn what it says. But if we aren’t obeying what it says, we are just fooling ourselves. God’s word can’t help us if we don’t obey it.
- James says it’s like when you get up in the morning. You look in the mirror before you go to school and you see that your hair is all messed up and your face is dirty. But what if you get busy eating breakfast and getting ready for school and forget to comb your hair and wash your face. It really didn’t do much good to look in the mirror.
- God’s Word is like a mirror. It helps us see what we really look like. It shows us if we are doing right or wrong. But James asks, what good is it to look in the Bible mirror if we leave it and forget what we saw? If we aren’t looking at our Bibles to see how to live and where we need to change, then it won’t help. But if we start doing something about what we read, then God’s Word will really help us.

Serving God is More Than Just Knowing Bible Facts

- What if someone claimed to know the Bible and go to church, but then you heard them lie about people, and later on you heard them saying bad words? That person claims to serve God, but they really don't, because they don't control what they say.
- Serving God is not just about learning Bible facts, but it's about living what the Bible teaches. It's about being willing to help other people, and do good for them. It's helping people like older women whose husbands have died, or children whose parents are dead. It's not just about knowing what is wrong, it's about keeping our lives free from sin.

Serving God Means We Must Treat People Fairly

- If you are going to truly be a Christian, you can't judge people just by whether they have money or not.
- What if someone came to Bible class and looked real poor -- Their clothes were old and dirty? What if you decided right away that you didn't like that person, that you didn't really want them to come to your Bible class? What if you acted rude to them, made fun of them, and told them not to sit by you. That wouldn't be very nice would it?
- We shouldn't look at people's appearance and decide they are good or bad. We shouldn't treat anyone shamefully. God expects you to be friendly and kind to everyone.
- Remember, we are told to "Love your neighbor as yourself." The Bible says that in the Old and New Testaments. Jesus said that was one of God's greatest laws. It means we should treat other people the way we would want to be treated. If you were out of town and visited another church, you wouldn't want to go somewhere and be made fun of and treated rudely, would you? So don't do that to anyone else.

God Will Judge Us by All of His Laws

- You can just obey some of God's Laws, you have to obey all of them to please Him. We can't obey the ones that are easy and forget the ones that are hard.
- When we are good and kind to others and God will be good and kind to you. You forgive others and God will forgive you.

Don't Just Claim to Have Faith, Show Your Faith By Your Works

- Just claiming to believe in God doesn't prove much. If you say you have faith, but don't do good things, what good would that faith do you? It won't save you.
- Here's an example to think about: What if someone really needs your help? What if they were hungry, but didn't have any food? And what if it was cold outside, but they didn't have a coat? If they asked you for food or a coat, would it do any good for you to say, "I hope you find something to eat and a coat to wear"? How would just saying that help anyone? In the same way, how will just saying I believe in God, help us if we don't do what God says?
- James says that if your faith doesn't have any works to go with it, then your faith is dead? Really the best way to prove that you have faith is not to just claim to have it, but really do what God tells you.

- Just believing in God is not enough. Did you know that the Devil and his demons all believe in God and Jesus? They do believe, but they don't obey the Lord.
- Abraham believed in God. But he showed his faith by doing what God commanded. Think about the time Abraham was told to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham believed in God and obeyed God. That's a good example to us. Have a faith that does what God commands. We can never be right with God if all we have is faith only.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

Let God's Word Be Planted in Your Heart

1:21 Therefore put away all the things that are filthy and overflowing with wickedness, put away malicious, and hateful behavior, and receive the Word implanted with a spirit ready to yield to it. For God's Word has the power to save your souls.

Its Important to Do What God's Word Says

22 But as you receive the Word be sure that you don't just hear it, but that you do it. Otherwise you'll just be deceiving yourself.

23 Because if all you are is just a hearer of the Word, you'll be like a man looking in a mirror at his actual face.

24 Then after he's looked at himself, he goes away and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

25 But when a person bows down and looks into the perfect law of liberty and stays with it, not being a forgetful hearer, but one who does the work – that man will be blessed in what he does.

Being Religious is More That Just Believing Right Things

26 If anyone thinks of themselves as religious, but they don't put their tongue in a bridle to restrain it, they are deceiving their own heart. That kind of religion is vain.

27 Religious service that is pure and unstained with our God and Father is this: Give attention to orphans and widows in their times of trouble and distress and watch carefully guarding your life so that you are not stained by the world.

If Your Religious, You Should Be Fair With People

2:1 My brethren, don't hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ by receiving people just on the basis of their outward appearance.

2-3 For if a man entered into your assembly wearing a gold ring and the finest clothing, and then there came in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you showed great regard for the man wearing the nice clothes, telling him, "You sit here in this good place." But then you say to the poor man, "Sit over there" or "You sit down here by my feet."

4 Aren't you making a judgment inside your own heart and haven't you become a judge that decides a man is evil just by his appearance?

5-7 Listen, my beloved brethren, didn't God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom that He promised to those who love Him? But you have treated them shamefully.

And as for the rich, aren't they the ones who use their power against you and who drag you into the courts to have you judged. Aren't they the ones who speak blasphemy against that precious Name by which you are called?

8-9 If you fulfill the Scripture's royal law, "Love your neighbor as yourself", your doing the right thing. But if you are judging people just by what they look like and how fine their clothing is, then you're committing sin and under the law you've been convicted as a transgressor.

Remember, God Will Judge Us By His Laws

10-11 For anyone who keeps the whole law, and then stumbles in one of those laws, is guilty of all; because the same God that said, "Do not commit adultery" also said, "Do not kill." Now if you don't commit adultery, but you do kill, you transgressed the law.

12 Speak and act like people that will judged by the law of liberty.

13 For there will be judgment without any mercy for those who show no mercy. And mercy is more glorious than judgment.

Don't Just Claim Faith, Show Your Faith By Your Works

14 If a person said they had faith, but didn't have works, what benefit or advantage would there be to that? Could faith save that person?

15-16 If a brother or sister did not have enough clothing and didn't even have enough food for that day, and one of you told them, "Go in peace, stay warm and well fed", but you don't given them the things they needed for their body, how were your words of any benefit?

17 Well in the same way, faith, if its by itself and doesn't have any works, is dead.

18 Some people make big claims to faith, but you don't see many worthwhile works in their life. So we might tell them something like this: "You claim to have faith and I claim to have works. Show me your faith without doing any works. Then I'll show you my faith by my works."

19 You believe there is one God – that's good! The demons also believe and tremble.

20 But are you willing to learn and understand, you empty person, that faith without any works is dead?

21 Wasn't our forefather, Abraham, considered right before God by the work he did in offering up Isaac on the altar?

22 Do you see how faith worked along with his works, and how the works Abraham did made his faith complete?

23 And the earlier statement of God in Scripture that, "Abraham believed God, and was counted as righteous," was fulfilled when Abraham offered Isaac. And Abraham was called the friend of God.

24 So you see how a person is considered righteous by their works, and not by faith alone.

25 In a similar way, wasn't Rahab the harlot considered righteous by her act of receiving the men who had been sent in as spies and then helping them escape?

26 When the body separates from the spirit, it is dead. In a similar way, faith separated from works is also dead.