

3. James quickly says “BUT”...

Don't just “hear” the word, but be a “doer” = Adopt and Act

²² *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

^{25b} *...being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

Hearer only - forgets

²³ *For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.*
²⁴ *For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.*

Doer of the Word - Acts

²⁵ *But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

4. Two Tests: How to know if you are a “Doer”

Test 1 - Can you bridle your tongue?

Hearers only - unbridled

²⁶ *If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.*

Doers of the Word - Quick to hear

¹⁹ *...my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;*

Test 2 - Do you have the same concern for the poor as God does?

Hearers only, have little concern

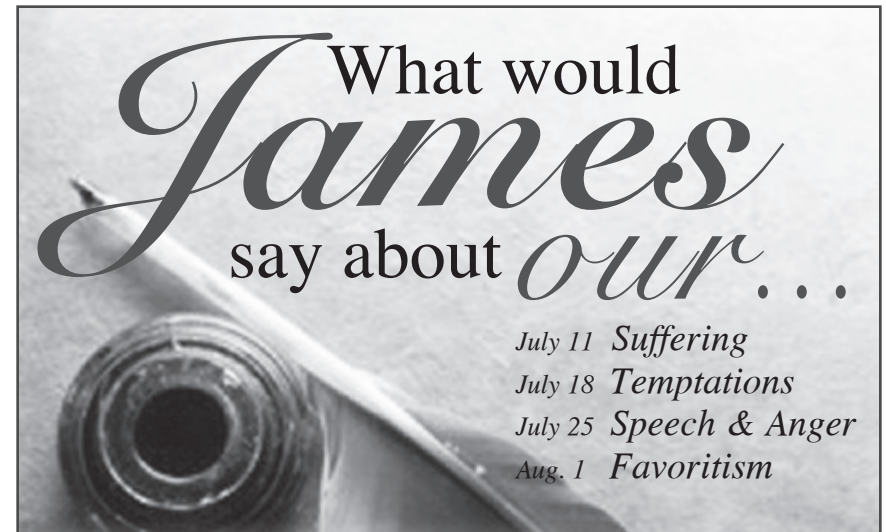
Doers of the Word - Visit

²⁷ *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*

Next Sunday, July 25, 2010:

What would James say about our... “Favoring the Rich”

We humans rank ourselves and others on various scales and show partiality and favor to those who are high on these scales. We measure externals like wealth, beauty and status, as well as achievements in athletics, academics and business. So what happens in your mind when a two people enter the church service: One is poor and shabby and the other is dressed in fine clothing? Who will you think of most positively? Who will you give attention to?



James 1:17-18
Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

James 1:19-27
¹⁹ *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

every person be quick to hear - The first of three commandments James addresses to all his “beloved brothers” is to listen. What is James commanding we “hear”? In the context these verses it is the “word of truth” (1:18); the “implanted word” (1:21b). While these three commands clearly apply to wise communication between people, in this context James is saying we need to listen carefully to the Word of God. Prov. 18:13, 15 *If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. ¹⁵ An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.*
slow to speak - Prov. 17:27-28 explains this command: *Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.*
slow to anger - Proverbs 14:29 *Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly. Proverbs 16:32 Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty.... Proverbs 22:24-25 Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.*
the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God - Why seek to be slow to anger? First is it a wise and mature way to behave, but secondly, it is the fruit of God's transformational

²¹ *Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

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 who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.* ²⁴ *For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.* ²⁵ *But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

work. While the anger of man does not produce the righteousness which God wants to produce in our hearts, one sign of godliness being produced would be that we have the ability to “bridle” (vs. 26) our speech.

Therefore put away - Throughout the New Testament Christians are instructed to “put away” or “put off” (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9) certain ungodly actions and attitudes and to “put on” or “receive” other godly ones. Here James summarizes all that is evil as “filthiness” and “rampant wickedness” and instructs us to put it away.

receive with meekness the implanted word - What is to be received into our Christian souls and transform our lives, replacing the old actions and attitudes, is the “implanted word”. We are to receive the Word in “meekness” - if we lack meekness we will find it easy to disregard the instructions of the Word. If we lack meekness we will not be aware of our sinfulness and unworthiness of God’s grace. If we do not receive the word with meekness we will be quick to speak and quick to anger.

be doers of the word and not hearers only - James sees some in the church who hear the Word yet never quite apply it to their lives. He says they are like someone who looks in a mirror intently, walks away from the mirror and immediately forgets what he saw. The Word of God is a mirror to our souls. We see our own level of purity and holiness and love in comparison to God’s and it calls us to adjust and change. Doers of the Word (the perfect law) act on what they have hear and learned from the Word - they persevere in apply it to their lives. The Word applied changes and transforms - producing a righteousness God desires.

²⁶ *If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.* ²⁷ *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*

thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue - James returns the focus back to our speech and our anger. He is giving us a test we can use to evaluate whether we are “Doers” or merely “Hearers” of the Word. The test: Can you bridle your tongue? Can you be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger? A doer of the word is learning how to bridle his tongue and be quick to hear. **to visit orphans and widows** - James gives us another way to evaluate whether we are a “Doer” or merely a “Hearer” of the Word. A doer of the word has adopted God’s concern for the poor and afflicted and does something about it - a “doer” demonstrates care to orphans and widows while a “hearer” does little or nothing.

1. Great Proverbial Wisdom - *We should be...*

- *quick to hear*: Attentive, Carefully listening, Hear God’s Word.
- *slow to speak*: Restrained speaker (yet a speaker), Patient, Careful
- *slow to anger*: Anger and sin are never far apart, Anger and unbridled speech are often seen together. The sin of anger is filled with self: self-interest, self-importance, self-assertion, intolerance of others and stubbornness.

A far greater concern than wise communication is this:
Is the righteousness of God being P_____ in you?

James 1:20 *for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

2. So James says “THEREFORE”...

- Put off and Receive: Replacing old ways with God’s ways
- *put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness*
 - *receive with meekness the implanted word*