



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

TRUE FAITH IS BEING “DOERS OF THE WORD”, Part 3 – JAMES 1:25

COLORADO

MAY 7, 2017

Dan File, P.O. Box 1088, Lake City, CO 82135-1088/303-345-8830 | filefamily@centurytel.net

We have looked at the example in James 1:23-24 of a man who observes his face in a mirror and goes away, forgetting what he looks like. James will contrast this in our study today with a man who observes the Word, perseveres by it, remembers it, and acts on it. That man is truly blessed. The former is deluded and is merely auditing Christianity, being a forgetful hearer only and not a doer of the Word. That man is deceived about the genuineness of his faith and is not blessed. Are you the forgetful hearer that James talks about or the “effectual doer” of God’s Word in James 1:25?

I. HEARING AND DOING THE WORD-JAMES 1:25

“But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.” James 1:25

James would say that hearing God’s Word without doing, without obeying grossly miscalculates the importance of obedience to the Word as a part of true faith. James doesn’t make light of this one who has forgotten what he has seen in the mirror of God’s Word and walked away. This forgetful hearer is contrasted with the “effectual doer” of the Word in James 1:25.

A. LOOKING AT THE WORD OF GOD– JAMES 1:25A

“But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty...” James 1:25a

James contrasts the one who observes his face in a mirror then goes away and forgets what he looks like with the one who looks at the perfect law, who perseveres, remembers and acts upon it. The first man is deceived and the second one is blessed. Hearing the Word of God will never be an end in itself. The end must be maturity and that requires obedience to what the Word teaches.

Maturity begins with “one who looks intently” at the Word of God. James uses a different word for “looks intently” than he did in verses 23 and 24.

“looks intently” Greek word **“*parakupto*,”** meaning to bend over and carefully examine something from the clearest possible vantage point.

This is the same word Luke used in Luke 24:12, “*But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at that which had happened.*” Peter bent over and carefully examined the empty tomb of his Lord Who had been crucified and died on the cross three days earlier. Don’t you know he examined this empty tomb with incredible, meticulous carefulness.

The bending and stooping implies humility. As we look intently at God’s Word, it is with a humble desire to discern with careful precision what is revealed on the pages of Scripture. Remember the exhortation in James 1:21, “*Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.*” We are to receive the Word in purity and humility, because it is this Word which is able to not only save our souls but bring about godliness in our lives.

1. LOOKS AT THE PERFECT LAW– JAMES 1:25A

“But one who looks intently at the perfect law ...” James 1:25a

“perfect” Greek word **“*teleios*,”** means to grow to fully grown, adulthood in contrast to infancy, to what is highest and pre-eminent.

This man looks humbly, intently and diligently at the perfect law of God which is His Word and gives way to the Word in his life. In James 1:17, this word refers to the “*perfect gift*”, which comes from the Father. It is that which fully meets the needs of a person. In James 1:4, the word is used “*let endurance have its perfect result*”, which refers to not lacking in anything whatsoever. God’s Word will completely meet our needs with absolute sufficiency, for it is not lacking in anyway.

God’s Word is perfect because the Author is God Himself and it thus reflects His perfect character of holiness and completeness. Therefore, “*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*” as 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says.

God’s Word brings about the maturity God desires to produce in our lives as we submit to Him. But we must keep in mind that true faith is not just hearing or possessing knowledge, it is obeying and humbly submitting to the Word each and every day in all that we think hear, say and do.

2. LOOKS AT THE LAW OF LIBERTY– JAMES 1:25A

The second point James makes about the Word of God is that it is the law which brings liberty. Liberty from what? Often when we think of a law, we don’t think of freedom but rather something that’s restrictive, something we can’t do and don’t want to do. We forget that our sin puts us in bondage and we are slaves to sin. We have no choice but to sin. But, obedience to God

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is not bondage. God’s Word does a saving work in our lives as James 1:18 conveys, setting us free from our bondage to sin. Romans 8:1-2 says, *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”* Jesus Christ has freed us from our bondage to sin through His redemptive work on the cross and sets us free to serve Him. So not only does God’s *“law of liberty”* free us from the slavery and bondage of sin through salvation, but it meets every need and liberates us to serve God as we humbly and deliberately submit to the principles of God’s Word following salvation. We are freed and enabled to honor God through righteous living as we submit to God’s work in our lives through His Word. And this is true freedom!

1 John 5:3 says, *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”* God’s commandments are not a cramp in our lifestyle. His Word is there to protect us from conforming to the world’s mold by revealing God’s pattern for our lives. The *“law of liberty”* then sets us free to please God, to obey His will and fulfill His desire for us as His own. Keep in mind that James’ emphasis is not just in the hearing of this *“law of liberty”*, but in the doing of what we hear.

B. ABIDES BY THE WORD OF GOD– JAMES 1:25B

“But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer...” James 1:25b

“abides” Greek word **“parameno,”** meaning to remain, to stay.

This contrasts a *“bearer”* with a *“doer”*. The one who continues to look humbly and intently at God’s Word with a willingness to submit to it, is blessed. A persevering believer will stoop down to humbly and carefully place his/her life under the purifying light of the Word of God continuously throughout their life. The one who is only a *“bearer”* forgets the Word, but the *“doer”* remains under the work of the Word, continues under its life changing course and submits to its transforming power.

The problem is that most people don’t want to be under the scrutiny and accountability to Scripture on a continual basis. They are deceived into thinking that this is where the real bondage lies. But James says this one is deceived, and is a hearer only.

James makes a clear and distinct contrast between one who merely hears God’s Word, and one who is an obedient *“effectual doer”* of the Word.

Knowledge of the Word of God is not enough. Sadly in our world, there are many *“hearers”* that have not become *“doers”*. *“Faith is what you think and what you do. The point of hearing God’s Word is not to simply know it; the point of hearing God’s Word is to do it.”*¹

C. BLESSED BY THE WORD OF GOD– JAMES 1:25C

“But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.” James 1:25

“blessed” Greek word **“makarios,”** means to be fully satisfied and indicates the state of the believer in Christ. One being fully independent of dependence on the world for satisfaction.

The one who abides under the careful work of the Word of God and obeys it will be blessed, fully satisfied by God Himself. Keep in mind that the blessing comes not in the hearting, but in the doing! Receiving and responding to the Word of God is a lifestyle that will characterize all true believers.

What would happen if believers actually lived life this? If believers actually submitted to God’s Word and obeyed it? What would happen if believers remained under the examination of the Word and surrendered to its revealing and life changing work? Our world would never be the same. How do you approach God’s Word? Do you want your sin revealed? Is your attitude one of wanting God to show areas in your life that need to change and then being willing to obey Him?

James clearly lays out a contrast we dare not miss. The *“bearer”* looks at the Word of God and contemplates what is revealed. But hearing is not enough and that one grossly miscalculates the importance of *“doing”* for true godliness will result only from obedience to the Word. But an *“effectual doer”* looks at the perfect, liberating Word of God on a continual basis and is willing to abide under its purifying work, responding to the truths therein and thus please God. That man is the blessed man. *Which are you?*

¹Dever, Mark. The Message of the New Testament. Wheaton, Illinois: Good News Publishers, 2005.