“Be Doers of the Word”

James 1:19-27

*INTRODUCTION*: Have you even experienced something in life that was so monumental that you have never been the same? Perhaps it was the birth of your child, or a particular job that you landed. Maybe it was the death of a loved one… For me it was the day I met my wife. I can still remember the day my eyes first saw her walk into church with this pretty little yellow dress. And I can still remember the moment in time when I knew that she was going to be my wife. Since that moment, my life has never been the same…Today in James 1:19-27 James is going to argue that the new birth that occurs at the moment of salvation is so monumental that our lives can never be the same. After the moment of salvation, will long to know and live for God, and our daily actions will never be the same. James is going to argue that the transformation that occurs will be one that will influence us all day, every day. So let’s jump into the text God has for us today..

*If you are using one of the Bibles we have provided The passage can be found on page\_\_\_*

*Read James 1:19-27*

* I love how practical the book of James is for us. Right off the bat in verse 19 James is giving clear practical encouragement to believers to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.
* In giving this exhortation, James is simply echoing other Jewish wisdom literature on the misuse of the tongue and the anger that can result.
  + James echoes Proverbs 17:27-28 which says, “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.”
* Upon reading the rest of the book of James, it becomes obvious that these believers were struggling with the use of their tongues.
  + In five other places throughout the book, James addresses the use of the tongue, including one in the passage we are covering today.
  + If you are like me, you often struggle with this same thing.
    - I have been married for nearly a year and a half and I have often been the one who was slow to listen and quick to speak. Countless times disagreement and frustration could have been avoided if I would have simply listened more and spoke less. I know a few of you can vibe with me. ☺
* So James tells these believers that a lack of listening, combined with a quick tongue will, more often then not, result in ill-tempered action.
* But in addressing this specific problem among these believers at the beginning of this passage, James is introducing a larger idea.
  + Look at the reason why these believers are to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger in verse 20… “for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God”
    - “The righteousness of God” that James references in this passage is referring to morally acceptable behavior before God; actions that bring pleasure to God.
    - Those who have been born again, will naturally strive to live in a way to bring pleasure to God!
* We saw last week in James 1:18 that Christians are those who have been sovereignly “brought forth by the word of God.” They have been spiritually reborn to now live for glory to God for the rest of their lives.
  + 1 Peter 1:3 describes the new birth all Christians experience this way, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”
  + We are spiritually BORN AGAIN as believers escaping the enslavement of sin, and to now live our lives for the pleasure and glory of God.
  + So in this encouragement from James to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger he is encouraging us to…

**#1—Live in light of your spiritual new birth.**

* If we have experienced the spiritual new birth given by God, then we ought to be striving to live in a way that brings pleasure to our God who saved us.
* In the remaining verses James is going to tell us **HOW** we are to live in light of our new birth.

*TRANS: Let’s look at verse 21.*

*Read 1:21*

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

* In this verse James gives us two specific ways to live in light of our new birth…and one glorious result!

Put Away Sin

* So James tells these believers to “put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness” in their lives.
  + The words “put away” (or “putting aside” NASB) gives the picture of stripping off dirty clothes
    - ILLUSTRATION: Think about after you workout or are finished doing some manual labor on a hot sunny day. Often the first thing I want to do when I walk in the door is toss my dirty stankin’ clothes aside. I’m ready to get the nastiness off and hop in the shower to get squeaky clean.
  + And to continue with the same illustration, the “filthiness and rampant wickedness” spoken of in this verse would be the “dirt” or “stank” on your clothes.
  + “Filthiness and rampant wickedness” is James’ description of our sin.
    - * These specific words give a descriptive reminder of how detestable and offensive our sin is to our heavenly father who is holy.
      * Our sin is filth and wicked to God…and those who have been reborn will long to put it aside for the glory and pleasure of God.
* So James tells us that we are to live in light of our new birth by putting aside all sin in our lives. He also tells us to…

Receive the Implanted Word

* So we are to put away sin, which is detestable and repulsive to our heavenly father…and “receive with meekness the implanted Word.”
* What is the “implanted word”?
  + The reference to the “Word” in verse 21 is the same Greek word used in verse 18—referring to the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ
  + But the adjective “implanted” gives the gospel the property of rooting itself in ones heart like a seed that has rooted itself in the ground.
  + We are to allow the gospel to take root in our lives and to produce fruit for the glory of God!
* How is this done, how do we receive the implanted word?
  + When we are born again!
    - When we are spiritually born again, the Spirit of God makes the gospel of Christ effective in our lives.
    - We are given belief in the Word and God gives us salvation. The word is then implanted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and God gives us new desires, wants and affections. We will desire the more of word!
    - This is how the Lord puts it in Jer. 31:33 “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: *I will put my law within them*, and *I will write it on their hearts*. And I will be their God and they will be my people…for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest…for I will *forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more.*”
  + We also receive the word by being exposed to it throughout the rest of our lives.
    - Reading the word, hearing the Word, and meditating on the Word.
* What about you? Have you received the implanted word initially? Believers, are you exposing yourself to the gospel everyday?

James tells us the result of putting away sin and receiving the implanted Word is that we will..

Be Saved by the Word

* This reference to salvation gives light to God’s all encompassing salvation
  + **Justification**—at the moment we turn from our sin and embrace Christ as Lord we are declared righteous by God granting *immediate salvation from sin*,
  + **Sanctification**—as we continue to live our lives the Holy Spirit takes the Word and makes us more like Christ..this is our *progressive sanctification*
  + And ultimately there will be a **glorification** when we are ushered into the Kingdom of God and made completely righteous like Christ!

*TRANS: In the remainder of this passage James is going to expound upon what it means to receive the implanted word. His primary encouragement to the believers is also the second truth for us…*

**#2—Do not merely hear the word but obey the word.**

*Read 22-25*

* James makes it crystal clear in this passage that successfully receiving the word occurs only when our receiving results in actually doing the Word.
* When James commands the believers to “do the word” he is really commanding them to “obey the word”
  + So to be a “doer” of the word is to be a person who “obeys” the word.
* Remember what we saw to be true in verse 21, that the result of receiving the implanted word is the salvation of our souls. And in verse 22-25, James makes it clear that we receive the word by doing the word.
* Look at what James says at the end of 22: “But be doers of the word not hearers only, DECEIVING YOURSELVES.”
  + Deceived of what?
  + Deceived into thinking you have received the word and thus received salvation.
* James is warning these believers of the possibility of thinking they have salvation when they really do not. They were hearing the words of gospel, but were not doing it, they were not allowing it to transform the way they lived!
  + Redemption Hill Church, LISTEN:
    - It is possible to sit in church services and hear the gospel of Christ for our entire lives, but yet never truly receive salvation! DID YOU HEAR THAT?
  + Merely hearing the word and not being practically transformed by it is to be DECEIVED into thinking we have been given salvation!
* Look at these two passages…and allow yourself to feel the weight of these verses from God:
  + Romans 2:13 “For it not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.”
  + Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”
  + “…the DOERS of the law will be justified” … “…the one who DOES the will of my Father who is in heaven.”
* You may be asking, “But how can this emphasis on what we do coincide with our salvation being dependent upon faith in Christ? Doesn’t the Bible say that our salvation is granted through faith in Christ alone?”
  + YES! Our salvation is dependent upon faith: Rm. 10:13 “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
    - Praise God for this truth!
    - Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved—all who see and believe that they are separated from a holy God because of their sin, deserving his full wrath as punish, but also believe that by trusting in Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice on the cross that they can be saved…WILL be saved!
    - We don’t have to do anything to earn salvation, or work our way to salvation…we must simply PLACE FAITH in Christ’s work on the cross!
  + **BUT…**our faith is ALWAYS displayed and lived out through what we do. For Jesus himself said that “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever DOES NOT OBEY the Son SHALL NOT SEE life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” Mt. 3:36
    - WHAT WE BELIEVE IS SEEN BY WHAT WE DO!
* Being deceived into thinking WE have salvation is a very real possibility…as we continue to go through this passage, I encourage you to examine yourself and pray to God to reveal to you your position before him.

*Let’s continue on in the passage to see exactly what a hearer and doer tangibly look like…*

* James gives us a contrast between the “Doer” of the word and the “Hearer” of the Word in verses 22-25.

First let’s look at the “Hearer” of the word in verses 23-24:

* James gives us an illustration of the hearer of the Word:
  + The hearer looks intently at his face in the mirror, then walks away and forgets what he looks like.
  + One would have to be pretty foolish to forget what you look like after looking *intently* into the mirror.
  + Further Illustration: You’re about to go out on the town for night with some friends or your significant other…you look in the mirror and see a HUGE white pimple in the middle of your forehead...after looking at it for a couple seconds you shrug your shoulders and walk away to start getting dressed, nice shirt/fresh kicks/looking super fly…BUT YOU totally FORGET about the white pimple on your face and do nothing about it! This would be foolish right?!
* James is communicating through this illustration the folly of simply hearing the word but not acting upon it.
* The key failure of the “hearer” of the word is forgetting. In pointing this characteristic out about the “hearer” James is touching upon a pervasive and important biblical theme.
  + In the OT, God was constantly warning the people not to forget his mighty acts on their behalf, but to remember his abundant mercies and law!
  + It was Israel’s tendency to forget the word that let the Lord to give exhortations like the one found in Deuteronomy 6:6-9
    - “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”
  + It is the very act of forgetting what God has done, and what he has said that often leads us to sin and destruction.
* So to sum up the characteristics given of the “hearer”, they…
  + Look intently into the Word
  + Do nothing about the truths they see
  + They forget the truths of God
  + And they are ultimately deceived of their salvation

Now let’s look at the “Doer” of the word in verse 25:

* James says the “Doer” of the word “looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty”
  + Notice that James switches from using the term “word” to the term “law” in this verse. The term “law” in this verse is referring to the OT law as it has been interpreted and fulfilled in Christ.
  + In James 2:8-13, James reminds his readers that one could not keep the OT law completely, because if you committed one sin you had broke the whole law. Therefore, the law was one of enslavement because it could not be completely kept and because of that, brought condemnation to all who were under the law.
  + BUT, Christ came to fulfill the Law completely. He lived righteously, upholding every dot and iota of the law and then bore the punishment we deserve for breaking the law on Himself! BY FAITH and the power of the Holy Spirit, the gospel of Christ provides us freedom from sin that comes from breaking the law.
* “looks” – this verb is one used to convey investigating and deeply examining
  + So the Doer of the word doesn’t give a few minutes a day to take a glimpse at a little Scripture so they can get by.
  + The Doer of the word STUDYS the word, looking for the deeper meaning and how it applies to their day-to-day life.
  + Is this how we treat the word of God during our daily devotion or bible reading?
* So the “Doer” of the Word is one who has accepted the freedom from the law given by faith in Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit looks into the law of Liberty seeking to apply it truths into their lives.
* Because the Doer of the word has received the liberty and freedom from the law, they “persevere, being no hearer who forget but a doer who acts”
  + The doer of the word perseveres in obeying the word of God! The consequence for not upholding the law perfectly has been in erased by Christ, and we can now obey the word of God out of joy and not of fear!
  + This makes sense right, once we find an activity or manner of life that makes us happier or more joyful, we stick to it. We persevere in doing it!
    - The Doer of the word has found that obeying God’s word is the most enriching thing to do in life, therefore they persevere in it!
* Lastly, James tells us that the Doer of the Word is “blessed in his doing”
  + He is assured of the future blessing of being with Christ, and experiences the day-to-day blessing of being in the will of God, which results immense pleasure!

I encourage you to ask yourself these questions:

Does my day-to-day actions reflect that of a hearer of the word, or a doer of the word?

Am I currently experiencing the blessing of obeying God’s word?

*TRANS:* In these last two verses James is going to give us the encouragement to…

**#3—Demonstrate your salvation by applying the word to your daily life.**

*Read 1:26-27*

* In these passages James uses the word “religion” in a positive sense. He is referencing the external forms of worship and religion.
  + So for RHC this would include our Sunday gathering, our community groups, and the different serve teams and serve efforts that we do as a church.
* This is what James is saying to US:

To take part in the external forms of the Christian life, but to not be internally changed by the gospel in such a way that it results in practically obeying God’s word, is to have OUR hearts deceived and OUR external forms of Christianity to be considered worthless by God. (*REPEAT SLOWLY*)

* So for us to show up here on Sunday morning to worship, hear the word preached, and to serve in different capacities, but to not live for God throughout the week is WORTHLESS to God.
  + This passage hits me square in the jaw!
  + So many times I show up on Sunday morning to worship or to CG and do my Christian duty, but then live the rest of the week unchanged. God tells me that this is worthless to him…not pleasing! Oh God change my heart! Make me into a doer of the Word!!
* But God also shows us what type of religion is pure and undefiled before him…religion that is the resulting overflow of a life transformed by the gospel of Christ!
  + When we are transformed by the gospel, we will bridle, or control, our tongues.
  + When we are transformed by the gospel we will desire to care for those who are afflicted in this world such as the orphan and the widow.
  + And when we are transformed by the gospel, we will long to keep ourselves unstained from the world, passionately seeking after God and His glory!

*TRANS: So to bring this thing down to a close I want to give you James’ main point in the passage*.

James is communicating that: **If we have been given new life in Christ, then we will be transformed by the gospel of Christ, which is evidenced by obeying His Word.**

So what about you?

Maybe you are someone here who is searching out this Jesus thing. I plead with you to no longer merely be a hearer of the word. There is condemnation for all who live a life apart from Christ. But God loves you and has made a way for you to be saved from the just wrath that will come upon your sin! Jesus came to this earth and died so that you may receive the implanted word and be saved! Respond to the gospel of Christ and receive this glorious gift of salvation.

Maybe you are here today and upon hearing God’s word are thinking that your life may characterized with more of the hearer James describes in the passage.

* Have you seen that your day-to-day life doesn’t match up with your religion that takes place on the weekends?
* If so, cry out to God to implant the word in your heart! Ask God to transform your desires, longings, and wants. Deception of our salvation is a real thing. It is not to be taken lightly or messed around with…these are eternal matters we have been going through today.

Authentic saving faith is evidenced by obedience to word of God. What if we became a church that wasn’t known for anything else but obedience to God? What people saw in Redemption Hill a radical devotion to obeying Christ’s every word?

* Our lives would be blessed, our city would be blessed, and our God would be supremely glorified!

**Let’s Pray (make sure to pray long enough for the band to come up.)**