

DOERS OF GOD'S WORD

James 1:19–27

As we read James 1:19-21, picture a group of 20-30 Jewish men and women gathered in a home listening to the reading of Scripture. They have the Hebrew Scriptures and James' letter. It was very unlikely they had personal copies of the Scriptures. So when these believers met together they would listen to God's Word as it was read. Knowing his Jewish brothers and sisters and their propensity to argue, James wrote the following instructions beginning in verse 19...

What is the point of James 1:19-21? You need to receive God's Word, not argue about it!

What is one of the main purposes for studying God's Word? To be changed by it. Arguing about what it says or what it means may be a really fun sport, but if that's all we do with God's Word we're missing the point entirely. This was James' concern for his people. We don't have a problem in our Sunday morning studies with arguing and getting angry about the Word. But it can and does happen in some of our mid-week Bible studies. We definitely encourage questions and discussions in our studies, but at the end of the day our commitment must be to apply God's Word so that we're changed by it.

Instead of arguing about God's Word, James admonishes his people to receive it.

Why do we need to receive the Word?

Because our souls still need to be saved.

To save means to deliver.

If we are already Christians, as were the original readers of James, from what, then, do our souls need to be delivered?

Christians still need to be delivered from the *practice of sin*.

By faith in the blood sacrifice of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead, we have been saved from the penalty of sin - we have been delivered from the Great White Throne Judgment and Lake of Fire. This is justification salvation.

Now, as Christians, we are undergoing the second aspect of our salvation and that is the process of being saved from the practice of sin. This is sanctification salvation.

James refers to this sin from which we need to be delivered, as filthiness and wickedness.

If we receive God's Word and do what it tells us to do, we will be delivered from sinful attitudes and habits to live righteous, fruitful lives for God.

In the next paragraph James emphasizes that it is not enough to hear and know what the Scriptures teach. There are plenty of Christians who know the Bible, but their lives are a mess. The missing component is obedience. Knowledge without obedience most often produces arrogant, self-righteous Christians.

God's Word can only transform us if we obey it. (James 1:22-25)

We learn from James 1:22-25 that just hearing God's Word will not deliver me from the practice of sin, I must act on it.

Looking intently in a mirror reveals flaws that need fixing. For men its stubble, nose hairs, greasy forehead, bed head. For women its...(I'm not going there). A mirror shows us what needs fixing on our face. God's Word shows us what needs fixing in our hearts and hands.

A major reason we fail to act on God's Word is because we fail to develop a practical plan. (Example of acting on Ephesians 4:29). The saying goes, "Those who fail to plan, plan to fail."

James 1:26-27 teaches us that God's goal is to make us good people who do good to others.

No matter how knowledgeable, a Christian with an out-of-control tongue is not spiritually mature. James has in mind those who want to debate and argue over the Scriptures read in the meeting of the church as described in verse 19. Such a person sees themselves as a guardian of the faith when, in fact, they misrepresent it.

At the end of the day, what is God's goal for our lives? To transform us to become like Jesus in character and conduct. Jesus was unstained by the world, that is, He was morally pure. Jesus cared for orphans and widows, that is, He cared for others without expectation of return.

To be a person of good moral character who selflessly does good to others is the best life we can have. Who can argue with that?

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM JAMES 1:19-27?

- We Christians still need to be delivered from the *practice of sin*.
 - If we receive and do God's Word, it will deliver us, but to do God's Word takes a plan.
 - God's goal is to make us good people who do good to others.
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VOM January Donations: heavy duty light colored tarps (8'x10") / financial donations for tarps / band aids.

Women's Ministry Worship Gathering: Friday, January 28th, 6PM

Men's Horseshoe Tournament: January 29th, 12Noon

Baptism Class: Sunday February 6 & 13.