

James 1:25 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE
To go directly to that verse
INDEX FOR ALL VERSES ON JAMES

- James 1:1 Commentary
- James 1:2 Commentary
- James 1:3 Commentary
- James 1:4 Commentary
- James 1:5 Commentary
- James 1:6 Commentary
- James 1:7 Commentary
- James 1:8 Commentary
- James 1:9 Commentary
- James 1:10 Commentary
- James 1:11 Commentary
- James 1:12 Commentary
- James 1:13 Commentary
- James 1:14 Commentary
- James 1:15 Commentary
- James 1:16 Commentary
- James 1:17 Commentary
- James 1:18 Commentary
- James 1:19 Commentary
- James 1:20 Commentary
- James 1:21 Commentary
- James 1:22 Commentary
- James 1:23 Commentary
- James 1:24 Commentary
- James 1:25 Commentary
- James 1:26 Commentary
- James 1:27 Commentary

Click chart to enlarge
 Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
 See also [Overview Chart](#) by Charles Swindoll

JAMES

Faith for Living

Motives for Works	The Place of Works: Outward Demonstration of Inner Faith					Outreach of Works
Jas 1:1-18	Jas 1:19-2:13	Jas 2:14-25	Jas 3:1-12	Jas 3:13-4:12	Jas 4:13-5:12	Jas 5:13-19
Trials & Temptations	Word & Works	Faith & Works	Tongue	Wars	Future	Others
Faith In Testings	Fulfill Favor	Fallacy	Fountain	Factions	Faith and the Future	Faith and our Fellowship
		FAITH AT WORK				

The Theme: The Testings of Personal Faith

The trials of the believer (James 1:2–12)

- A. The proper attitude toward trials (James 1:2–4)
 - 1. The attitude commanded (James 1:2)
 - 2. The reason indicated (James 1:3)
 - 3. The outcome to be realized (James 1:4)
- B. The use of prayer amid trials (James 1:5–8)
 - 1. The need for wisdom (James 1:5a)
 - 2. The request for wisdom (James 1:5b)
 - 3. The bestowal of wisdom (James 1:5c–8)
 - a. The divine response (James 1:5c)
 - b. The human obligation (James 1:6–8)
 - (1) The necessary attitude (James 1:6a)
 - (2) The rejected character (James 1:6b–8)
- C. The correct attitude toward life by the tried (James 1:9–11)
 - 1. The attitude of the lowly brother (James 1:9)
 - 2. The attitude of the rich (James 1:10–11)
 - a. The reason for the attitude (James 1:10a)
 - b. The illustration from the flower (James 1:11a)
 - c. The application to the rich (James 1:11b)
- D. The result of enduring trials (James 1:12)
 - 1. The blessedness of endurance (v 12a)
 - 2. The reward of endurance (James 1:12b)

The nature of human temptation (James 1:13–16)

- A. The source of human temptation (James 1:13–14)
 - 1. The repudiation of a divine source (James 1:13)
 - a. The rejection stated (James 1:13a)
 - b. The rejection vindicated (James 1:13b)
 - 2. The reality of the human source (James 1:14)
- B. The consequences of yielding to temptation (James 1:15)
- C. The warning against being deceived (James 1:16)

The activity of God in human affairs (James 1:17–18)

- A. The Giver of all good gifts (James 1:17)
- B. The Author of the believer's regeneration (James 1:18)

The Test Marks of a Living Faith

Faith tested by its response to the Word of God (James 1:19–27)

- A. The reactions to the Word (James 1:19–20)
 - 1. The knowledge possessed (James 1:19a)
 - 2. The reaction demanded (James 1:19b)
 - 3. The reason stated (James 1:20)
- B. The reception of the Word (James 1:21)
 - 1. The stripping off of sins (James 1:21a)
 - 2. The appropriation of the Word (James 1:21b)
- C. The obedience to the Word (James 1:22–27)
 - 1. The demand for active obedience (James 1:22–25)
 - a. The statement of the requirement (James 1:22)
 - b. The illustration of the requirement (James 1:23–25)
 - (1) The negative portrayal (James 1:23–24)
 - (2) The positive portrayal (James 1:25)
 - 2. The nature of acceptable obedience (James 1:26–27)
 - a. The futility of activity without inner control (James 1:26)
 - b. Acceptable service with inner control (James 1:27) (from Hiebert - James Commentary)

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** will be **blessed** in **what** he **does**. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [o de parakupsas \(AAPMSN\) eis nomon teleion ton tes eleutherias kai parameinas. \(AAPMSN\) ouk akroates epilesmones genomenos \(AMPMSN\) alla poietes ergou. houtos makarios en te poiesei autou estai. \(3SFMI\)](#)

Amplified: But he who looks carefully into the faultless law, the [law] of liberty, and is faithful to it and perseveres in looking into it, being not a heedless listener who forgets but an active doer [who obeys], he shall be blessed in his doing (his life of obedience). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ASV: But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing.

Hiebert: But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

KJV: But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

NLT: But if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law—the law that sets you free—and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: But the man who looks into the perfect mirror of God's law, the law of liberty (or freedom), and makes a habit of so doing, is not the man who sees and forgets. He puts that law into practice and he wins true happiness. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: But he who with eagerness and concentration has pored over the perfect law, the law of liberty, and has continued in it, not having been a hearer who forgets but a doer who works, this person shall be prospered spiritually in his doing.

Young's Literal: and he who did look into the perfect law--that of liberty, and did continue there, this one--not a forgetful hearer becoming, but a doer of work--this one shall be happy in his doing.

BUT ONE WHO LOOKS INTENTLY AT THE PERFECT LAW, THE LAW OF LIBERTY, AND ABIDES BY IT: o de parakupsas (AAPMSN) eis nomon teleion ton tes eleutherias kai parameinas, (AAPMSN):

- **One who looks** - Pr 14:15; Is 8:20; 2Co 13:5; He 12:15
- **perfect law:** Jas 2:12 Ps 19:7-10 Ps 119:32,45,96-105 Ro 7:12,22,23
- **The Law of Liberty** - Jn 8:32,36; Ro 8:15; 2Co 3:17,18; Gal 5:1; 1Pe 2:16
- **Abides by it** - 1 Samuel 12:14; John 8:31; 15:9,10; Acts 2:42; 13:43; 26:22; Ro 2:7,8; 11:22; Col 1:23; 1Ti 2:15; 4:16; 1Jn 2:24
- [James 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF TRUTH	
HEARERS (Figurative) (Jas 1:23, 24)	DOERS (Literal) (Jas 1:25)
Sees self as he really is	Stoops to peer
In a mirror	Into the perfect law
Goes Away Promptly forgets	Abides by the perfect law Does not forget
Not a doer of the Word	A doer of the Word

But (1161) (de) introduces an "about face" contrast (pun intended) with the non-doing hearer of the Word of Truth.

Looks intently (3879) (**parakupto** from **pará** = beside, aside, suggesting proximity + **kúpto** = bend forward, stoop) means to stoop or bend beside or sideways in order to look into. It means to look at with head bent forward, to look into with the body bent, to stoop and look into and figuratively to look carefully into, to inspect curiously or with a focus on satisfying one's curiosity. The idea conveyed by this verb is to down and look into in order to see something exactly and so to recognize.

James says this man bends over as it were in order to make a penetrating look into the "mirror" of God's Word of truth, and when he notices a "blemish" (that which is not in accordance with the Word of truth) on his "face", he takes time to deal with the defect (eg, sin).

Yogi Berra said "You can see a lot by looking!" Have you ever had that experience when looking intently at a passage of God's Word that you may have read many times before. Suddenly the Spirit of Truth (Jn 14:17, 15:26, 16:13) illuminates some new insight in that passage which you had never seen before? In part, this experience of joyful illumination reflects our willingness to wait patiently on the Lord, "welcoming" and meditating on the text (see Primer on Biblical Meditation) rather than rushing through like the anxious white rabbit (cp "energizer bunny") in Alice and Wonderland!

There are 5 uses of **parakupto** in the NT, and the other 4 uses are recorded below with 3 used of stooping to see into the tomb of Jesus, emphasizing that this verb does not describe a casual, quick look - they were stooping and peering in to see if His body was still inside!

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.

John 20:5 and **stooping** and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in.

John 20:11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she **stooped and looked** into the tomb;

1 Peter 1:12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long **to look**.

Parakupto is used 6 times in the Septuagint (Ge 26:8; Jdg. 5:28; 1 Ki. 6:4; 1 Chr. 15:29; Pr. 7:6; Song 2:9) **Parakupto** in some uses meant "to lean over the railing". For example it in the Septuagint in the context of the return of

the ark of the covenant of the Lord...to the city of David" Scripture records that "Michal the daughter of Saul **looked out of** (parakupto) the window, and saw King David leaping and making merry; and she despised him in her heart. (1 Chr 15:29).

At (1519) (**eis**) means into, implying more than just surface knowledge.

Barclay - This is the kind of passage in James which Luther so much disliked. He disliked the idea of law altogether, for with Paul he would have said, "Christ is the end of the law" (Romans 10:4). "James," said Luther, "drives us to law and works." And yet beyond all doubt there is a sense in which James is right. There is an ethical law which the Christian must seek to put into action. That law is to be found first in the Ten Commandments and then in the teaching of Jesus. (Ed: I would add to Barclay's comment that the God Who gives us the Law, has given us of His Spirit that we might be enabled to keep the Law. We dare not regress to dependence upon the flesh to keep the Law, for we will surely fail to do so in our own power!) ([James 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

The law of the Lord is perfect - It is complete and expressive of totality (as opposed to partial or limited). It meets the highest standard (perfection).

Perfect (5046) (**teleios**) means "fully mature" or "having reached its intended goal". The law which in context stands for the Word of God in general is a perfect reflection of the character and demands of a holy God. The idea of the **perfect law** is that of consummate soundness, wholeness, completeness, finished, reaching its end, wanting nothing. It is God's final word and it is complete, embodying the full revelation of God in Christ Jesus.

Barclay - He calls it the perfect law. There are three reasons why the law is perfect. (a) It is God's law, given and revealed by him. The way of life which Jesus laid down for his followers is in accordance with the will of God. (b) It is perfect in that it cannot be bettered. The Christian law is the law of love; and the demand of love can never be satisfied. We know well, when we love some one, that even though we gave them all the world and served them for a lifetime, we still could not satisfy or deserve their love. (c) But there is still another sense in which the Christian law is perfect. The Greek word is **teleios** which nearly always describes perfection towards some given end. Now, if a man obeys the law of Christ (**Ed**: in dependence upon the indwelling Spirit of Christ!), he will fulfil the purpose for which God sent him into the world; he will be the person he ought to be and will make the contribution to

the world he ought to make. He will be perfect in the sense that he will, by obeying the law of God, realize his God-given destiny. ([James 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

David made a similar declaration in **Psalm 19** writing that...

7 The **law of the LORD is perfect**, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

11 Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

Spurgeon commenting on the descriptions of the **Word** in Psalm 19 says...

The law of the Lord is perfect by which he means not merely the law of Moses but the doctrine of God, the whole run and rule of sacred Writ. The doctrine revealed by God he declares to be **perfect**, and yet David had but a very small part of the Scriptures, and if a fragment, and that the darkest and most historical portion, be **perfect**, what must the entire volume be? How more than **perfect** is the book which contains the clearest possible display of divine love, and gives us an open vision of redeeming grace. The gospel is a complete scheme or law of gracious salvation, presenting to the needy sinner everything that his terrible necessities can possibly demand. There are no redundancies and no omissions in the Word of God, and in the plan of grace; why then do men try to paint this lily and gild this refined gold? The gospel is perfect in all its parts, and perfect as a whole: it is a crime to add to it, treason to alter it, and felony to take from it.

Converting the soul. Making the man to be returned or restored to the place from which sin had cast him. The practical effect of the Word of God is to turn the man to himself, to his God, and to holiness; and the turn or conversion is not outward alone, "the soul" is moved and renewed. The great means of the conversion of sinners is the Word of God, and the more closely we keep to it in our ministry the more likely we are to be successful. It is God's Word rather than man's comment on God's Word which is made mighty with souls. When the law drives and the gospel draws, the action is different but the end is one, for by God's Spirit the soul is made to yield, and cries, "Turn me, and I shall be turned." Try men's depraved nature with philosophy and reasoning, and it laughs your efforts to scorn, but the Word of God soon works a transformation.

The testimony of the Lord is sure. God bears his testimony against sin, and on behalf of righteousness; he testifies of our fall and of our restoration; this testimony is plain, decided, and infallible, and is to be accepted as sure. God's witness in his Word is so sure that we may draw solid comfort from it both for time and eternity, and so sure that no attacks made upon it however fierce or subtle can ever weaken its force. What a blessing that in a world of uncertainties we have something sure to rest upon! We hasten from the quicksands of human speculations to the terra firma of Divine Revelation.

Making wise the simple. Humble, candid, teachable minds receive the word, and are made wise unto salvation. Things hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed unto babes. The persuadable grow wise, but the cavillers continue fools. As a law or plan the Word of God converts, and then as a testimony it instructs; it is not enough for us to be converts, we must continue to be disciples; and if we have felt the power of truth, we must go on to prove its certainty by experience. The perfection of the gospel converts, but its sureness edifies; if we would be edified it becomes us not to stagger at the promise through unbelief, for a doubted gospel cannot make us wise, but truth of which we are assured will be our establishment.

Teleios is used 19 times in the NT - Matt. 5:48; 19:21; Rom. 12:2; 1 Co. 2:6; 13:10; 14:20; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15; Col. 1:28; 4:12; Heb. 5:14; 9:11; Jas. 1:4, 17, 25; 3:2; 1 Jn. 4:18

Law ([3551](#)) (**nomos** from **nemo** = to divide, distribute, apportion) means anything established -- a procedure or practice that has taken hold.

I agree with **Dr. MacArthur's** interpretation that the law is **perfect...**

because Scripture is inerrant, sufficient, and comprehensive (cf. Ps. 19:7, 8, 9) (and) encompasses all of God's revealed Word.

Hiebert - In calling the Word "a law," James refers to that authoritative body of truth that is the foundation of the Christian faith. It is the message contained in the apostolic preaching and now embodied in the New Testament. Christians accept this body of truth as the authoritative standard by which life is to be regulated. This title for the Word of God is in keeping with James's stress upon the importance of doing the things found in the Word. ([Commentary on James](#))

Liberty (1657) (**eleutheria** from **eleutheros** - that which is capable of movement, freedom to go wherever one likes, unfettered; see word study on verb **eleutheroo**) describes the state of being free and stands in opposition to slavery or bondage. It depicts the state of being free as opposed to being in bondage to the Law (cp Gal 2:4, Ro 7:4) or enslaved to Sin (Ro 6:16+, Ro 6:17, 18 -+). Freedom from restraint.

MacArthur - by referring to the Word as the **law of liberty**, James focused on its redemptive power in freeing believers from the bondage of sin and then freeing them to righteous obedience (John 8:34, 35, 36). It allows us to serve God not out of fear or mere sense of duty, but out of gratitude and love. One day it also will free us from this world and its corruption; from our fallenness; from our flesh; from temptation; and from the curses of sin, death, and hell. (see [James MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 85](#))

Barclay - He calls it the **law of liberty**; that is, the law in the keeping of which a man finds his true liberty (**Ed**: Again freedom enabled by the indwelling Spirit - cf Ro 8:2+, 2Cor 3:17+). All the great men have agreed that it is only in obeying the law of God that a man becomes truly free. "To obey God," said Seneca, "is liberty." "The wise man alone is free," said the Stoics, "and every foolish man is a slave." Philo said "All who are under the tyranny of anger or desire or any other passion are altogether slaves; all who live with the law are free." So long as a man has to obey his own passions and emotions and desires, he is nothing less than a slave. It is when he accepts the will of God that he becomes really free--for then he is free to be what he ought to be. His service is perfect freedom and in doing his will is our peace. ([James 1 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

Vine - liberty, is rendered "freedom" in Gal 5:1, "with freedom did Christ set us free." The combination of the noun with the verb stresses the completeness of the act, the aorist (or point) tense indicating both its momentary and comprehensive character; it was done once for all. The RV margin "for freedom" gives perhaps the preferable meaning, i.e., "not to bring us into another form of bondage did Christ liberate us from that in which we were born, but in order to make us free from bondage." The word is twice rendered "freedom" in the RV of Gal 5:13 (KJV, "liberty"). The phraseology is that of manumission from slavery, which among the Greeks was effected by a legal fiction, according to which the manumitted slave was purchased by a god; as the slave could not provide the money, the master paid it into the temple treasury in the presence of the slave, a document being drawn up containing the words "for freedom." No one could enslave him again, as he was the property of the god. Hence the word *apeleutheros*, No. 2. The word is also translated "freedom" in 1Pe 2:16, rv. In 2Co 3:17 the word denotes "freedom" of access to the presence of God. See liberty. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Eleutheria refers to personal liberty but not license. True liberty is living as we should, not as we please. **Eleutheria** was used especially in NT times of the freeing of slaves.

Eleutheria is used 11 times in the NT - Ro 8:21; 1Co 10:29; 2Co. 3:17; Gal 2:4; 5:1, 13; James 1:25; 2:12; 1Pe 2:16; 2Pe 2:19.

John Murray wrote that "The law of God is the royal law of liberty and liberty consists in being captive to the word and law of God. All other liberty is not liberty but the thralldom of servitude to sin."

Hiebert - The genitive "of liberty" is subjective, denoting that this law "gives" the experience of freedom in the lives of those who voluntarily observe it. The definite article with "liberty" "the liberty," points to the well-known Christian freedom from bondage that the believer knows through faith in Christ (John 8:31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36). As he submits himself to its transforming power, this law of liberty works in his life a disposition and ability to do God's will joyfully (Php 2:12+, Php 2:13+). It does not promote antinomianism but prompts obedience without compulsion. In Jas 2:12, the only other place in the New Testament where the designation "law of liberty" occurs, James associates it with the law of love. The believer is not free from the obligation to do God's will as revealed in His Word, but love works in him the desire to do his Father's will. Men are free when they want to do what they ought to do. This is the "splendid paradox" produced by a living faith in the gospel through the indwelling Holy Spirit. ([Ibid](#))

Abides (3887) (**parameno** from **para** = beside + **meno** = abide, remain) means to remain near, to stay at someone's side or to stay by/beside. Continue in a course of action. To remain in place. To abide in the presence of or near, whether actually with them or otherwise in full communication. Vine writes that the figurative idea is "to continue to persevere in anything."

TDNT writes that **parameno**...means a. "to remain in place," "to stand firm," "to endure," b. "to stand by someone," and c. "to stay in an occupation or state." In the NT Paul tells the Corinthians in 1Cor. 16:6 that he will stay with them, devoting the time to his work among them. In Php 1:25 he prefers continuing at work among believers to the union with Christ for which he longs. Heb. 7:23 uses the term in the negative to contrast the impermanent OT priesthood with the abiding high priesthood of Christ. Jas 1:25 has in view an abiding in the law which means readiness to do it as compared with a mere glance that results in no transformation of life. (borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#))

Parameno is found 4 times in the NT...

1 Corinthians 16:6 and perhaps **I shall stay** with you, or even spend the winter, that you may send me on my way wherever I may go.

Philippians 1:25 (+) And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and **continue with** you all for your progress and joy in the faith. (Note: Some take parameno in context to mean something like "I will continue to live".)

Hebrews 7:23 (+) And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from **continuing**,

Comment: The idea is that because the Aaronic priests died, they were hindered from **abiding by** or persevering with their their ministry.

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

Parameno is used 3 times in the **Septuagint (LXX)**...

Genesis 44:33 "Now, therefore, please let your servant **remain** (Heb = yashab = to sit, remain, dwell; Lxx = parameno) instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers.

Proverbs 12:7 The wicked are overthrown and are no more, But the house of the righteous **will stand**. (Heb = amad = take one's stand; Lxx = parameno).

Daniel 11:17 "And he will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she **will not take a stand** for him or be on his side.

NOT HAVING BECOME A FORGETFUL HEARER BUT AN EFFECTUAL DOER: ouk akroates epilesmones genomenos (AMPMSN) alla poietes ergou:

- **A forgetful hearer** - James 1:23-24
- [James 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A BLESSED CONTRAST

In His warnings to the Seven Churches, Jesus repeatedly calls for them to **hear** what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev 2:7, Rev 2:11, Rev 2:17, Rev 2:29, Rev 3:6, Rev 3:13, Rev 3:22).

THOUGHT - Of course, Jesus is referring not only to hearing but to heeding. All seven churches are called to hear. Jesus desires an obedient Body! It is easy to hear, but not easy to obey. However believers have an inherent advantage over the unregenerate world, for we have the indwelling Holy Spirit Who supernaturally enables us to obey (read Php 2:13NLT+)! Without His power, we would be at the mercy of our fallen flesh as is the rest of the fallen world! **This begs the question** -- Are you daily seeking to be filled with the Spirit, that you might be prepared for the tests of obedience that come throughout the day? Read (and [memorize](#)) Ephesians 5:18+.

Not (3756) (ou) signifies absolute negation. This individual hears and absolutely does not forget, but instead obeys what he or she hears. This characteristic sharply distinguishes him from the forgetful hearer in the preceding verses.

Having become (1096) (ginomai) means to come into existence. It is as if the seed of the Word of Truth (James 1:18) births the

effectual doing or obedience in this individual (in contrast to forgetful hearing = "in one ear and out the other"!).

Hearer (202) (**akroates** from **akroaomai** = to listen or hear) first describes one who hears referring primarily to the perception of sounds by the sense of hearing.

MacArthur writes that **akroates** was "a term used to describe students who audited a class. An auditor usually listens to the lectures, but is permitted to treat assignments and exams as optional. Many people in the church today approach spiritual truth with an auditor's mentality, receiving God's Word only passively. But James' point, shown by his illustrations in James 1:23, 24, 25, 26, 27 (see notes [Js 1:23; 24](#); 25; 26; 27) is that merely hearing God's Word results in worthless religion (see note James 1:26). In other words, mere hearing is no better than unbelief or outright rejection. In fact, it's worse! The hearer-only is enlightened but unregenerate. James is reiterating truth he undoubtedly heard firsthand from the Lord Himself. Jesus warned powerfully against the error of hearing without doing (Mt 7:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 -see **notes** Mt 7:21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27), as did the apostle Paul (Ro 2:5+). (see [The Gospel According to the Apostles: The Roll of Works](#))

One source notes that "In Classical Greek, the alternate **akroázomai**, to hear and the derivative **akróama** meant something heard, especially with pleasure, such as a piece read, recited, played, or sung. In the NT, it has the meaning of one just listening without practicing what one hears. (Zodhiates, S. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT)

Forgetful (1953) (**epilesmone**) means the state of forgetfulness. In other words this man is not a hearer characterized by forgetfulness. The seed of the Word of Truth has taken root in this man (Observe what this means in the parable of the soils - Mt 13:23, Mk 4:20, Lk 8:15).

Spurgeon - There are many who complain of their short memories when they are hearing sermons. Well, then, let them be quick about doing what the sermon bids them, and then they will not be forgetful hearers. You have heard how one good woman described the effect of the sermon she has heard. She was one who washed wool, and when her minister went round to ask her what she had learned on the previous Sabbath, she did not even recollect the text. "Oh, Janet!" said he, "I am afraid you are a forgetful hearer; I cannot see what good the sermon has done to you." So she took him to the back of her house, where she had a pump; and she worked at the handle while she held underneath the spout a sieve full of wool that was dirty and foul. The water ran through the wool, and through the sieve, and all ran away. "There," she said, "this sieve is like my memory; but, sir, though the water does not stop in the sieve, it washes the wool; and what you preach, though it does not stop in my memory, it has washed my heart and cleansed my life and conversation." Never mind about keeping the water in the sieve so long as it washes the wool. No man can be said to be a forgetful hearer who is a doer of the work that he is bidden to perform. [A Warning to Waverers](#)

John Owen remarks that...

1. The apostle doth not say, I have **heard**, that in every estate I should be content: but, I **have learned**. Whence our first doctrine, that it is not enough for Christians to **hear** their duty, but they must **learn** their duty. It is one thing to hear and another thing to learn; as it is one thing to eat and another thing to concoct (to prepare by combining raw materials). Paul was a practitioner. **Christians hear much, but it is to be feared, learn little.** (! cp Jas 1:22+) There were four sorts of grounds in the parable, (Lk 8.5) and but one good ground: an emblem (an object symbolizing and suggesting another object or an idea) of this truth, many hearers, but few learners.

There are two things which keep us from learning.

1. Slighting what we hear.

Christ is the pearl of price; when we disesteem this pearl, we shall never learn either its value, or its virtue. The gospel is a rare mystery; in one place, (Acts 20.24) it is called "**the gospel of grace**;" in another, (1Co 4.4) "**the gospel of glory**;" because in it, as in a transparent glass, the glory of God is resplendent. But he who has learned to contemn (scorn) this mystery, will hardly ever learn to obey it; he who looks upon the things of heaven as things by and bye, and perhaps the carrying on of a trade, or carrying on some politic design as of greater importance, this man is on the high road to damnation, and will hardly ever learn the things of His peace. Who will learn that which he thinks is scarce worth learning?

2. Forgetting what we hear.

If a scholar has his rules laid before him, and he forgets them as fast as he reads them, he will never learn. (Jas 1.25+) Aristotle calls the **memory** the **scribe of the soul**; and Bernard calls it the **stomach of the soul**, because it hath a retentive faculty, and turns heavenly food into blood and spirits; we have great memories in other things, we remember that which is vain. Cyrus could remember the name of every soldier in his huge army. **We remember injuries**: this is to fill a precious cabinet with dung; but as Hierom said, how soon do we

forget the sacred truths of God?

We are apt to forget three things: our faults, our friends, our instructions.

Many Christians are like sieves; put a sieve into the water, and it is full; but take it forth of the water, and all runs out: so, while they are hearing a sermon, they remember something: but like the sieve out of the water, as soon as they leave the church, all is forgotten. "Let these sayings, (says Christ) sink down into your ears;" (Lk 9.44) in the original it is, "put (or place) these sayings into your ears," as a man who would hide a jewel from being stolen, locks it up safe in his chest. Let them sink: the word must not fall only as dew that wets the leaf, but as rain which soaks to the root of the tree, and makes it fructify (fruitful). O, how often does Satan, that fowl of the air, pick up the good seed that is sown (Mt 13:19, Mk 4:15, Lk 8:12)!

USE. Let me put you upon a serious trial. Some of you have heard much, — you have lived forty, fifty, sixty years under the blessed trumpet of the gospel, — what have you learned? You may have heard a thousand sermons, and yet not learned one. Search your consciences.

1. You have heard much against sin: are you hearers; or are you scholars? How many sermons have you heard against **covetousness**, that it is the root, on which pride, idolatry, treason do grow? One calls it a metropolitan sin; it is a complex evil, it doth twist a great many sins in with it. There is hardly any sin, but covetousness is a main ingredient of it; and yet are you like the two daughters of the horse-leech, that cry, "give! give!" How much have you heard against rash **anger**, that is a short frenzy, a dry drunkenness; that it rests in the bosom of fools; and upon the least occasion do your spirits begin to take fire? How much have you heard against **swearing**: It is Christ's express mandate, "swear not at all." (Mt 5.34+) This sin of all others may be termed the unfruitful work of darkness (Ep 5:11+). It is neither sweetened with pleasure, nor enriched with profit, the usual vermilion (vivid reddish orange) with which Satan paints sin. Swearing is forbidden with a subpoena. While the swearer shoots his oaths, like flying arrows at God to pierce His glory, God shoots "a flying roll" of curses against him. And do you make your tongue a racket by which you toss oaths as tennis balls? do you sport yourselves with oaths, as the Philistines did with Samson, which will at last pull the house down around your ears? Alas! how have they learned what sin is, who have not learned to leave sin! Does the one who knows what a viper is play with it?

2. You have heard much of Christ: have you learned Christ? The Jews, as Jerom said, carried Christ in their Bibles, but not in their heart; their sound "went into all the earth; (Ro 10.18+) the prophets and apostles were as trumpets, whose sound went abroad into the world: yet many thousands who heard the noise of these trumpets, had not learned Christ, "they have not all obeyed." (Ro 10.16+) (1.) A man may know much of Christ, and yet not learn Christ: the devils knew Christ. (Mt 1.24) (2.) A man may preach Christ, and yet not learn Christ, as Judas and the pseudo-apostles. (Ph 5.15) (3.) A man may profess Christ, and yet not learn Christ: there are many professors in the world that Christ will profess against. (Mt 7.22, 23+)

Q. What it is then to learn Christ?

1. To learn Christ is to be made like Christ, to have the divine characters of his holiness engraven upon our hearts: "we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." (2Co 3.18) There is a metamorphosis made; a sinner, viewing Christ's image in the glass of the gospel, is transformed into that image. Never did any man look upon Christ with a spiritual eye, but he went away quite changed. A true saint is a divine landscape picture, where all the rare beauties of Christ are lively portrayed and drawn forth; he hath the same spirit, the same judgment, the same will, with Jesus Christ.

2. To learn Christ, is to believe in him; "my Lord, and my God," (Jn 20.28) when we do not only believe God, but in God, which is the actual application of Christ to ourselves, and as it were the spreading of the sacred medicine of his blood upon our souls. You have heard much of Christ, and yet cannot with an humble adherence say, "my Jesus;" be not offended if I tell you, the devil can say his creed as well as you.

3. To learn Christ, is to love Christ. When we have Bible-conversations, our lives like rich diamonds cast a sparkling lustre in the church of God, and are, in some sense, parallel with the life of Christ, as the transcript with the original. So much for the first notion of the word. ([Read his entire book - Art of Divine Contentment An Exposition of Philippians 4:11](#))

Effectual (of work) ([2041](#)) (**ergon**) is the general word for work and depicts that which displays itself in activity of any kind. In secular Greek, this word group (includes ergazomai, energeia, etc) denoted active zeal and occurred in relation to all kinds of work.

Doer ([4163](#)) (**poietes** from **poieo** = to do, to make, to accomplish) describes one who does something as his occupation such as a producer, a poet or an author. The other sense describes a doer or a performer, speaking of one who does what is prescribed, such

as one who keeps the law (Ro 2:13+)

Hiebert remarks that this effectual doer "is marked by persistent performance of what he has learned in being a receptive hearer of God's word. The emphasis is not on certain notable deeds he performs but on his characteristic obedience to God's known will."

Keep the context in mind, for **James** had just charged his readers to...

prove (present imperative) yourselves **doers** of the word, and not merely **hearers** (akroates = "auditors") who delude themselves. (Jas 1:22+)

The Puritan **Thomas Watson** rightly observed that "Doers of the Word are the best hearers." You gotta love the Puritans! They are so pithy!

Spurgeon - There are many who complain of their short memories when they are hearing sermons. Well, then, let them be quick about doing what the sermon bids them, and then they will not be forgetful hearers. You have heard how one good woman described the effect of the sermon she has heard. She was one who washed wool, and when her minister went round to ask her what she had learned on the previous Sabbath, she did not even recollect the text. "Oh, Janet!" said he, "I am afraid you are a forgetful hearer; I cannot see what good the sermon has done to you." So she took him to the back of her house, where she had a pump; and she worked at the handle while she held underneath the spout a sieve full of wool that was dirty and foul. The water ran through the wool, and through the sieve, and all ran away. "There," she said, "this sieve is like my memory; but, sir, though the water does not stop in the sieve, it washes the wool; and what you preach, though it does not stop in my memory, it has washed my heart and cleansed my life and conversation." Never mind about keeping the water in the sieve so long as it washes the wool. No man can be said to be a forgetful hearer who is a doer of the work that he is bidden to perform. [A Warning to Waverers](#)

THIS MAN WILL BE BLESSED IN WHAT HE DOES: houtos makarios en te poiesei autou estai. (3SFM):

- **This man** - Ps 19:11; 106:3; 119:2,3; Lk 6:47, 48, 49; 11:28; Jn 13:17; 1Co 15:58; Re 14:13; 22:14
- [James 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

This man - James now presents the blessed promised of the blessing of one's activities in our short life on this earth -- life as it was meant to be lived (in Christ).

Will be (estai) introduces the promise that should give this man blessed assurance, that he shares in the blessed state of life with God in the future. And yet there is also the sense in which he experiencing blessing even in this present life. Loving obedience to God's Word of Truth and His perfect will, is the ultimate secret of the happy (blessed) Christian life in this world and the world to come!

Blessed (3107) ([makarios \[word study\]](#)) is derived from a root **makar**, (others say from "**mak**" which means large or lengthy) which means to be happy, but not in the usual sense of happiness based on positive circumstances.

A blessed or **makarios** person describes the one who is free from daily cares and worries because his every breath and circumstance is in the hands of His Maker Who gives him such an assurance (such a "blessing"). Makarios describes the kind of happiness that comes from receiving divine favor. **Blessed** connotes the state of "prosperity" that comes when a superior bestows his favor (blessing) on one.

The Greeks used **makarios** to refer to their gods and thus "the blessed ones" were the gods. They were "blessed" because they had achieved a state of happiness and contentment in life that was beyond all cares, labors, and even death. The blessed ones were beings who lived in some other world away from the cares and problems and worries of ordinary people. To be blessed, you had to be a god. Homer used makarios to describe a state unaffected by the world of men, who were subject to poverty, weakness, and death. The Greeks also used **makarios** in reference to the dead who were "the blessed ones", men and women who, through death, had reached the other world of the gods and so were now beyond the cares and problems and worries of earthly life. To be blessed, you had to be dead, a state many of us have felt like we would just as well experience because of the nature of our manifold troubles and afflictions at the time. Finally, the Greeks used **makarios** to refer to the socioeconomic elite, the wealthy, the idea being (completely false I might add) that their riches and power put them above the normal cares and problems and worries of the lower socioeconomic strata, who constantly struggled to make it in life. In short, the Greeks felt that one had to be either a god, dead or filthy rich to be blessed (makarios)! And so we see another one of the words (like *doulos*, *charis*, etc) that the Bible elevated in status and meaning, as described below in a compilation from many different resources.

MacArthur writes that **makarios** "means to be happy, blissful. That happiness is a divine pronouncement, the assured benefit of

those who meet the conditions God requires. ([MacArthur, J: Matthew 1-7 Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Makarios is a state of existence in relationship to God in which a person is "blessed" from God's perspective even when he or she doesn't feel happy or isn't presently experiencing good fortune. This does not mean a conferral of blessing or an exhortation to live a life worthy of blessing; rather, it is an acknowledgment that the ones indicated are blessed. Negative feelings, absence of feelings, or adverse conditions cannot take away the blessedness of those who exist in such a relationship with God!

Makarios ultimately describes the state those who believe in Christ and in so possessing God, possess everything. In addition since they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they are fully satisfied no matter what their circumstances. It is interesting that Aristotle contrasted makarios with the Greek word *endeos* which means "the needy one".

Friedrich Hauck says that the Greek word **Makarios** "refers overwhelmingly to the distinctive religious joy which accrues to man from his share in the salvation of the kingdom of God."

Makarios means possessing the favor of God, experiencing "**spiritual prosperity**". It describes a state of being marked by fullness from God. And so what Jesus is saying in the "Beatitudes" is "**Spiritually prosperous** (blessed) are the poor in spirit...", etc (Mt 5:3+) And thus some of the translators like Wuest pick up this definition...

Spiritually prosperous are the destitute and helpless in the realm of the spirit, (Wuest)

Expositor's Bible Commentary - Usually makarios describes the man who is singularly favored by God and therefore in some sense "happy"...As for "happy" (TEV), it will not do for the Beatitudes, having been devalued in modern usage. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

In what he does - Literally the idea is "in his doing".

Matthew Henry - The apostle does not say, *for* his deeds, that any man is blessed, but *in* his deed. This is a way in which we shall certainly find blessedness, but not the cause of it. This blessedness does not lie in knowing, but in doing the will of God.

Does (4162) (poiesis) is more literally doing or what one is doing. Spurgeon alluded to doing when he said that believers are to be "walking Bibles"

Hiebert - The singular noun "**doing**" (**poiesis**), used only here in the New Testament, views his whole life as a consistent doing. God wants more than isolated acts of obedience; the believer's entire life must be devoted to the incessant doing of His will.

Spurgeon - The blessedness of true religion lies very much in the practical effect of it. Hearing is pleasant; but doing is the effectual proof of grace. **Thomas Chalmers** - The sum and substance of the preparation needed for a coming eternity is that you **believe** what the Bible tells you and **do** what the Bible bids you.

Mirror Test

Whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it . . . will be blessed in what they do. James 1:25

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE James 1:22-27

"Who's in the mirror?" the psychologists conducting the self-recognition test asked children. At eighteen months or younger, children don't usually associate themselves with the image in the mirror. But as kids grow, they can understand they're looking at themselves. Self-recognition is an important mark of healthy growth and maturation.

It's also important to the growth of believers in Jesus. James outlines a mirror recognition test. The mirror is "the word of truth" from God (James 1:18). When we read the Scriptures, what do we see? Do we recognize ourselves when they describe love and humility? Do we see our own actions when we read what God commands us to do? When we look into our hearts and test our actions, Scripture can help us recognize if our actions are in line with what God desires for us or if we need to seek repentance and make a change.

James cautions us not to just read Scripture and turn away "and so deceive [ourselves]" (v. 22), forgetting what we've taken in. The Bible provides us with the map to live wisely according to God's plans. As we read it, meditate on it, and digest it, we can ask Him to give us the eyes to see into our heart and the strength to make necessary changes. Katara Patton (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Reflect & Pray

What do you see when you look into the mirror of Scripture? What changes do you need to make?

Dear God, please help me use Scripture as a mirror into my life, my motives, and my actions.

To better understand who you are, [click here](#).

Today's Insights - James calls his readers to not just hear the words of the law—most likely referring to the laws given through Moses—but to put them into practice. In Matthew 7, Jesus reminds us that everyone who “hears [His] words . . . and puts them into practice” is like the man who builds on a solid foundation (vv. 24–27). In James 1:27, the writer describes how we put what we hear into action when we “look after orphans and widows.” James, like the prophets before him, is calling believers in Jesus to care for those who are vulnerable (see Isaiah 1:16–17). This is the practice of God Himself: “He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing” (Deuteronomy 10:18). James is calling us to be like God our Father in the same way that Jesus calls us to be perfect like our heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48).

REFRESHING HONESTY

He who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, . . . this one will be blessed in what he does. —
James 1:25

Of the many things I love about my mum, chief among them may be her honesty. Many times I have called to ask her opinion on a matter and she has consistently responded, “Don’t ask my opinion unless you want to hear it. I’m not going to try to figure out what you want to hear. I’ll tell you what I really think.”

In a world where words are often empty, her straightforwardness is refreshing. It is also one of the characteristics of a true friend. Real friends speak the truth to us in love—even if it isn’t what we want to hear. As the proverb says, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend” (Prov. 27:6).

This is one of the reasons Jesus is the greatest of friends. When He met the woman at the well (John 4:7-26), He refused to be pulled into a tug of war over secondary issues. Instead He drove to the deepest issues and needs of her heart. He challenged her about the character of the Father and lovingly spoke to her of her broken dreams and deep disappointments.

As we walk with our Lord, may we allow Him to speak honestly about the true condition of our hearts through the Scriptures—that we might turn to Him and find His grace to help us in our times of need. Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

SIMILAR DEVOTIONAL FROM BILL CROWDER - Of the many things I love about my mom, chief among them may be her candor. Many times I have called to ask her opinion on a matter and she has consistently responded, “Don’t ask my opinion unless you want to hear it. I’m not going to try to figure out what you want to hear. I’ll tell you what I really think.”

In a world where words are carefully parsed, her straightforwardness is refreshing. It is also one of the characteristics of a true friend. Real friends speak the truth to us in love—even if it isn’t what we want to hear. As the proverb says, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend” (Prov. 27:6).

This is one of the reasons Jesus is the greatest of friends. When He encountered the woman at the well (John 4:7-26), He refused to be pulled into a tug-of-war over secondary issues but instead drove to the deepest issues and needs of her heart. He challenged her about the character of the Father and lovingly spoke to her of her broken dreams and deep disappointments.

As we walk with our Lord, may we allow Him to speak candidly to the true condition of our hearts through the Scriptures—that we might turn to Him and find His grace to help us in our times of need.

JESUS ALWAYS TELLS US TRUTH.

A New Perspective - Twelve hours after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, a television news reporter stood near Ground Zero with a sheaf of papers in her hand. She had picked them up from the street, which was littered with debris from the fallen twin towers. One sheet was part of a corporate financial report, another was a business proposal, and a third was a retirement plan. In light of the thousands of lives lost, those papers seemed so much less important than they were just hours before.

Calamity alters our perspective. When lives are on the line, we realize that people, not possessions, are what matter most. And if we take steps to realign our priorities and to treat people well, the lesson will not have been wasted.

New perspectives on life, including those God gives us from His Word, can quickly fade unless we put knowledge into action. James wrote, “Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. . . . He who . . . is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the

work, this one will be blessed in what he does" (1:22,25).

After great tragedies, many of us are challenged to put God and people first in our lives. Let's stay in the Word and take action to maintain our new perspective. —David McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Thinking It Over

How have the events of September 11, 2001, changed your perspective on what is important in life? How has your life continued to be different?

A change in behavior begins with a change in the heart.

A B Simpson in **Christ in the Bible** has a chapter on **PRACTICAL OBEDIENCE**

"But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:22, 23, 24, 25+).

Practical obedience naturally follows the subject of practical faith. Trust and obey are the two wings which maintain the equilibrium of our flight, the two oars which keep us steadily in the channel of our course. This paragraph unfolds some of the profoundest ethical principles of the New Testament.

I. THE WILL OF GOD AS THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF RIGHT AND DUTY.

The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." Here our very conversion is referred back to the will of God as its supreme source. And God Himself is recognized as the Sovereign Being who sits enthroned in His eternal, unchangeable and infallible authority and righteousness as the Sovereign of our being and of all being. The figure here involved in the beautiful original phrase is that of the parallax by which the astronomer measures the distance of the remotest stars, The parallax is the angle formed by two points on the earth's surface from which an observation is taken of a distant star according to the angle made. From these two points we measure the distance of the star by the acuteness of the angle. But with God he says there is no parallax. Looking at Him from every standpoint He is eternally the same and His will is forever the same, and therefore, there is a fixed standard of right and wrong, and duty is not a mere accommodation to circumstances, sentiments, or human opinions, but conformity to the will of God.

II. THE WORD OF GOD AS THE STANDARD OF RIGHT AND WRONG.

For this supreme Lawgiver has given us a law, and has revealed to us His will concerning our conduct. That law is here called "the perfect law of liberty." It is a perfect law. There is no greater miracle in the Bible than its revelation of righteousness. Even the Decalogue itself, although not nearly so perfect in its primal edition at Sinai as it has become through the teachings of the Son of Man, and as reissued and reenacted by Him through the Sermon on the Mount and His wise and holy teachings, is a marvelous monument of the wisdom and righteousness of God. One of our American Justices, it is said, was converted from infidelity to Christianity by studying the Mosaic Law. Where did Moses get that law? he asked himself after carefully reading and analysing it. There is nothing in the literature of Egypt, Chaldea or Greece from which he could have derived its profound and comprehensive principles of jurisprudence. Everything is there in the most condensed and comprehensive form. Under two great tables he classifies our duty to God and to one another, and covers all ethical questions with sublime simplicity and completeness. He must have got it from heaven. And so he did. And as we read it in its larger edition in the spiritual teachings of the New Testament, it claims the subjection of our conscience, the homage of our will, the obedience of our life, and we are constrained to say of it, as Jehovah said of His ancient commandments, that it is "for our good always."

III. THE LAW OF LIBERTY.

But it is here described by a new phrase, "the law of liberty." This is the New Testament law, the law of love. As it came to us from Sinai, it was not the law of liberty, but of condemnation. But now its penalty met in the person of Christ, and its motive power supplied by His Holy Spirit and His indwelling life in our heart, it becomes to us not the authority of necessity, but the constraint of love. It is the law in our heart becoming part of our nature so that we keep it not because we have to, but because we love to. As citizens of the State we do not avoid the crime of murder because we fear that we shall be electrocuted if we murder, but because our nature lifts us above it. We do not want to murder. We are under the law of liberty. We make the law ourselves, and so long as we keep it, we are free from it, for "the law is not made for a righteous man, but for transgressors." The obedient are lifted above it,

and are free from its condemnation and its bondage.

IV. THE ENGRAFTED WORD (James. 1:21+).

A new figure is here introduced. The principle of grafting is very simple and suggestive. On a common root or stock a cultivated bud or branch is fastened, and trained to grow into its new trunk and stem until all its vegetable organism has become connected with the new fountain head. And then it begins to bear, not the fruit of the old stem, which is but a common crab or wild vine, but the cultivated fruit in all its mellowness and delicacy of flavor. It is really drawing upon the life of the old root, but crowning it with new beauty and richest fruitfulness. So upon the stem of our natural life God engrafts His Word, and so infuses and in-works that Word into our very life that it becomes the element of our being and the second nature of all our habits, controlling us without arbitrary constraint and making it our delight to do His will. Thus it becomes to us a law of liberty. We do right because we want to. We serve God because we love Him. Obedience becomes as natural as sin was before, and the heart is spontaneous and free in all its spiritual affections and actions. Obedience, therefore, is not a matter of outward authority, but inward impulse. Character is not built as you would build a house, by adding plank to plank and timber to timber from the outside, but as God builds a tree, by throwing out life from the inside, and adding each new layer from the heart out.

This is the secret of liberty and power in all the natural and spiritual world. Take the laws of the physical realm and get them incorporated into your industrial art, and what power they exercise! Take the law of electricity and put it in your house as a telephone, and it will carry your messages for hundreds of miles. Put it in your towns and cities as a telegraph system and it will traverse continents and oceans with its messages of fire. Put it in your vehicles and it will carry your trolleys and your automobiles. Put it in your factories and it will become the motive power of all business, transportation and commerce. But let it get beyond your control, disobey it, and it will strike you lifeless with the lightning's awful blaze. So the Word of God must be received, incorporated, engrafted, and assimilated into our spiritual being, and then it becomes the motive power of our being, "the man of our counsel" and the guide of our life.

V. THE MORAL CONDITIONS WHICH HINDER THE FREE OPERATION OF THE WORD OF GOD IN OUR LIVES.

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." (James 1:21+) Just as the electric current must be insulated before it can be operated, so the Word of God cannot work freely in a soul that willingly indulges in sin. Two forms of evil are here classified, one the impure, the other the malignant. Filthiness includes all forms of sensual indulgence; naughtiness all forms of bitter and malicious feeling. Either of these will cloud the spiritual vision and interrupt the life of God in the heart. Just as the compass on shipboard can be deflected from its true direction by a counter-attraction through some piece of metal thoughtlessly left on deck, so conscience, though sincere, may be warped and misdirected by the influence of unholy desire or indulgence, and the soul perverted even when flattering itself that it is acting with the deepest sincerity and doing that which it believes to be right. There must, therefore, be a spirit of surrendered self-will and holy meekness, if we would receive the engrafted word. The apostle Peter expresses the same truth in almost identical terms, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisy, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1Pe 2:1, 2+) Therefore it has come to pass that this same Word of God has been used to defend the most bitter persecutions and to justify the most unholy teachings by men whose judgment was biased by a wrong heart, and whose conscience was perverted by an unsanctified spirit.

VI. THE SELF-REVEALING POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD.

It is here compared to a mirror, and the ordinary hearer of the Word to a man beholding his natural face in the glass. But the hasty glance passes, and "straight-way [he] forgetteth what manner of man he was." The true hearer is represented by the man who takes a nearer view of himself in the sacred mirror, and becomes not a forgetful hearer of the Word, but a doer. Literally translated, this should read,

"Whoso looketh nearer into the perfect law of liberty and maketh his abode there, this man being not a forgetful hearer, but an energetic doer, shall be blessed in his doing."

The beginning of all self-improvement is self-knowledge, and the most wholesome knowledge we can have of ourselves is to know our faults. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Blessed are they that are dissatisfied, for they shall be satisfied, so this has been happily translated. It is thus that the Word of God sanctifies us by showing us first our need, and then leading us to Christ for the supply. We look into the picture of love first in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and we see how little we have of the love that suffereth long and is kind; and humbled by a sense of our failure, we take Christ for the grace of love. We bring our strifes and quarrels to the teaching of Jesus in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of Matthew, and we begin to settle our disputes according to the Word. Thus we "discern ourselves," and by true self-judgment we escape the divine judgment and rise to a higher righteousness, taking Christ as our Sanctification over against our self-condemnation. The willingness to see ourselves in our true light is the very highest proof of a true heart. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and the best

evidence that there is no hidden sin covered up in our heart is our readiness to say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

VII. THE BLESSEDNESS OF DOING.

"This man shall be blessed in his doing." Having seen our fault and also the vision of God's highest will for us, now follows the responsibility of practical obedience. James is a thorough believer in good works. He is no musty ascetic living in pensive cloisters and dreaming his life away in self-centered introspection, but a man of wholesome action carrying his religion into the light of day and the field of human life and helpful duty. It is in the doing that the blessing comes.

1. This is the remedy for doubt and the secret of faith. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:17) Don't argue with your skeptic. Say to him as Christ used to say, "Come and see." Prove Christianity by testing it. Go to God with even the little faith you have, or if you have nothing but doubt to bring, go with your doubt. Tell Him the worst. If you can only pray, "O God, if there be a God, help me," He will hear that cry. The writer once knew of an intelligent infidel being converted by what might be called an unconscious prayer. His Christian wife had just died, and in the remembrance of her beautiful life and still more beautiful death, his heart was bursting with agony, and before he realized it, he had uttered a sob of prayer to her God for comfort and help. Instantly he remembered that he did not believe in her God, but before he had time to recall his prayer by an act of reasoning, it had reached heaven through an impulse of his heart, and the answer had come back to him in a new consciousness such as he had never felt before, and from that moment he knew there was a God. He had proved Him by the practical test.

2. This is the best way to find salvation. Take it as Christ has freely offered it, and then begin to act as if you had it, and you will be blessed in your doing. The best formula for beginning a Christian life that we have ever heard is the simple resolution of Hendly Vivars the night in which he turned away from a life of ungodliness to follow Christ, "If this be true for me, I will live from this moment as a man that has been cleansed from all sin by the blood of Christ." That decision put him on salvation ground, and from that moment he was a Christian. The most happy and useful Christian the writer has ever known was a gentleman who struggled for months for a religious experience without any result, and then quietly walked into the woods one day and made this resolution, "From this moment I will serve Christ as my Master whether I am lost or saved. My business is to follow Him. The responsibility of my salvation rests with Him." Before twenty-four hours had passed, that man was rejoicing in the experience that he had stopped seeking, and was blessed in his doing.

3. This is the way to realize the experience of Christ's indwelling and the baptism of the Spirit. Simply yield yourself to God and claim the promise of the Spirit. And then begin to act as if you had Him as your Sanctifier, Keeper and Indwelling Life, and He will answer to your faith, and meet your trust just where you look for Him and recognize Him. If you recognize Him in your heart, you will find Him in your heart. If you recognize Him in some distant heaven, He will meet you there at a distance. If you count upon Him, He will answer to your expectation and meet your faith. If you venture on Him, He will be there every time. It is the doing that brings the blessing.

4. Are you seeking for healing? Christ never healed anybody on his back or his bed. "Stretch forth thy hand," was His prescription to the man with the withered hand. "Get up and walk," was His command to the paralytic. "Go, show yourselves to the priests," He said to the lepers, and "as they went they were healed." "Go thy way, thy son liveth," He told the anxious father, and as he was obeying, the message met him that the healing had come. It was in doing something they all received the blessing. And so still we must show our faith by our works, and find strength in stepping out even in our weakness, and throwing ourselves upon the strength of God for life's duties and demands.

5. Would you find joy and happiness? Again it will meet you in doing the will of God. "Well done, good and faithful servant," is the significant benediction of the Master, "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It is duty well done that brings the joy of the Lord. "What is heaven?" said one of our eccentric preachers. "I'll tell you what heaven is. It's out yonder in that little back street where a poor widow is weeping over her roofless children and sitting on her boxes and furniture on the street. Go to her with a basket of groceries, a load of coal and a good-sized bank note for her unpaid rent, and you will soon find what heaven is." And the hard-fisted hearer came next day to tell Mr. Jones that he had been in heaven the last twenty-four hours, ever since he had found that poor widow and helped her out of her distress.

The writer remembers a New Year long ago in his own experience when he dedicated a whole month, beginning with the week of prayer, to wait in his musty old study for a fuller baptism of the Spirit. He had received the Spirit, but he was straining after something more. Day after day he prayed, and left his duties largely undone. Thicker grew the murky air, and darker the visions of his troubled brain. More intense became his sensations and temptations, and more terrible the struggle with his feelings and his spiritual foes. But still he persevered, expecting surely some mighty blessing. At last one day when his brain was almost bursting with the strain, he turned to his Bible with a cry for direction and help. Before him in letters of light he read, "He is not here, He is risen. He goeth before you into Galilee. There shall ye see Him. Go ye and teach all nations," etc. In a moment the message was

plain. Not dreaming, but doing. And as he went forth from that cloister to the bedsides of the sick and the pressing duties of a sad world, lo, the light returned, the sky cleared, the Master was revealed, the Lord drew nigh, and a blessing came which has never ceased through all these years to meet him still, as he goes forth in self-forgetting love to bless others, to pray for others and to find the fellowship of the Master in doing His perfect will.

6. Finally, in the work of the Lord and the ministry of our Christian service we shall find that what we do and what we are count for more than what we say. Missionary Richards preached for many years with little effect to the savages of the Congo, until one day he began to live the Sermon on the Mount in their midst, and told them he was going to act according to all its precepts. Before the day was over they had taken him at his word, and the last stick of his furniture was gone. But before the next sun went down they had felt that they, too, must live according to the Sermon, and they brought back his furniture with compound interest. Before many months were passed hundreds of them were saved, and today the largest congregation on the Congo stands there at Banza Manteke as the monument, not of saying, but of doing the Word of God.

In the last months of the Civil War there was a soldier in Andersonville prison named Frank Smith. The day came for the exchange of prisoners. Six Northern soldiers were to be released for six Confederates, and Frank Smith heard with delight his name read. But a poor fellow with a wife and children came and pleaded so hard that Frank gave up his ticket of release, and let the other be his substitute and go home to the little family that needed him more. The months rolled round, and again there was a release of prisoners, and once more Frank Smith heard his name called and dreamed of home and liberty. But he remembered an infidel whom he had often talked to in the prison, and he said, "I cannot go till I make one more appeal to him to accept Christ." But the infidel laughed him to scorn, and told him that talk was cheap. Then Frank breathed a prayer and made a great resolution. Taking his little ticket of release from his pocket he said, "Take this, and in my place tomorrow walk out into freedom." The infidel started and looked hard at him. "What made you do this?" he said. "The love of Christ," he said, "the Christ that you will not receive." Then the proud heart broke; sobbing and kneeling beside him, he asked forgiveness for his hard heart, and gave himself to the Savior whose love could make such sacrifice possible. "It was not what you said that convinced me," he explained, "but it was what you did." Once again there came a day when a little company walked forth from that awful dungeon into liberty, and for the third time Frank Smith's name was on the roll. He went to bid goodbye to a lad who was dying of consumption. The poor fellow wept bitterly and said: "Oh, Frank, I had hoped that you could be with me to the last. I have nobody else to pray with me or point me to the Savior. How shall I ever die alone?" Again Frank closed his eyes, lifted his heart to God, and formed another big resolution. He gave his ticket of liberty for the third time to some one else, and he went back, and, throwing his arms around the dying boy, he said, "I'll not leave you till He comes to take you." And he held the hand of the sinking lad until the gates of light opened, and with blessings on his lips a ransomed soul passed in.

Then on the dark storm clouds of war burst the rainbow of peace. The gates of Andersonville prison swung open forever, and this Christian hero went forth to well earned liberty with a record of Christian heroism and blessed doing mightier than libraries of books or sermons.

So may we be blessed in our doing. (A. B. Simpson. Christ in the Bible - James)