

# Are you reading the word or reflecting the word?

James 1:19-27

We've been learning how to have joy and be Jesus Strong in trials and temptations. But it is also important to understand that the key to responding to trials and resisting temptation is found in one's reaction to God's Word.

Let's look at James 1:19-27 together this morning. Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. 20Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. 21So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. 22But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at

your face in a mirror. 24You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25But if you look carefully into the perfect 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.

26If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. 27Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

**This passage starts with an admonition to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry.**

- In the midst of trials, usually we are slow to listen, quick to speak and quick to get angry. Why?
- Often looking out for ourselves and our own situation. But it is hard to listen to God when I'm speaking. When I'm angry, it is hard to hear and to listen.

James implores us to get rid of the filth and evil in our lives and to accept God's word, that has been planted in lives.

It isn't just get rid of filth and evil...must replace it with something else.

- v 21 - planted - only used here in NT, contrasts with grafted. The Word is to take root in our souls.

- I don't want God's Word just grafted...you can graft multiple types of plants to the same rootstock.
- Develop the planted concept - I want God's Word to take root deep into my soul, and my being. I want that to be the only thing growing up out of my life.
- Parable of the sower, the seed is the Word of God. It gets planted and grows and produces fruit.

Psalm 1:1-3 - Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. 2But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. 3They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do

- The bearing fruit leads us into the core of this passage....

But, there is a deception that we all fall prey to...thinking that merely listening and hearing the word is all that is necessary. Hearing the word is only the beginning.

22But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at

your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.

I love the illustration James uses...looking in a mirror and forgetting what you look like. Coffee Stained Shirt

That is what happens when we come to church and just head home without thinking further about it, and more importantly applying it!

But see we are to look intently at the word and then it should be reflected in our lives as we put it into practice.

Do you just sit, soak and sour? Are we like the movie Wall-E?

**Are you reading the Word or reflecting the Word?**

Fun house mirrors that distort the image? - What kind of reflection of God's Word are you?

What does it look like when I reflect the Word, not just read the Word?

**When we are reflecting the Word, it will affect our character and our conduct.**

26 If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. 27 Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

- Controlling my tongue (look at more closely in James 2) and my attitude
- Caring for others
- Developing my character

**When we read the Word and reflect the Word, we will respond to trials and resist temptation.**

Read and reflect to respond and resist. If we are busy about the mission of God, it is easier to forget about our temptations.

Conclusion:

Are you reading the Word? - Do you eat just once a week? What if I just looked in the mirror on Sundays? Start this week just reading the passages on the bottom of the bulletin.

Are you reflecting the Word? - Are there areas God is speaking to you, telling you that you are not being a very clear reflection of Him and His Word? Does your family,

your neighbors, your co-workers see God and His Word  
when they look at your life?

## Life Group Study Questions

James 1:19-27

Are you reading the Word or reflecting the Word?

Main Thought: God doesn't just want us to be hearers of His Word, He wants us to put it into practice in our lives.

Discussion Starter: Share a time when someone completely forgot you, i.e. they missed an appointment with you or your special day or celebration. How did that make you feel?

Discussion Questions:

1) At the beginning of the book of Joshua, knowing that Joshua would face many trials, difficulties and temptations as he became the leader of the people of Israel, God gives Joshua a challenge or charge. Read Joshua 1:1-9 and then discuss the following questions.

a) What was God commanding Joshua to be?

b) Where was Joshua to gain that strength and courage? How is that different from where we often think or act like our strength comes from?

c) In Verse 8, what were the three ways Joshua was to interact with the Word? What do you think each of those three ideas mean?

2) In both Matthew and Luke, Jesus tells a parable to help his disciples understand the importance of reflecting the Word, not simply hearing it. Read Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 6:46-49 and discuss the following questions.

a) Why do you think Jesus used the example of a house and a storm to emphasize the importance of doing, not just hearing?

b) Why is important to have a foundation or history of doing the Word before the storm hits? Why is mere knowledge not enough?

3) In John 14:15, why does Jesus equate obedience with love? Would Jesus know that you love Him, not just by your words, but by your actions?

4) Read James 4:17, what is it that you know you need to do, but haven't been doing it? Confess that to each other and pray for each other to reflect the Word, not simply read it.

Application:

- Are you reading the Word, regularly for yourself? What steps do you need to take to start doing that? You can start by reading the passages listed on the other side of this page.



- Are you reflecting the Word, actually doing what it is you are reading? In what area(s) do you need to start reflecting the Word more?