

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 4TH, 2022 // BOOK OF JAMES

REVEALING WORDS (JAMES 1:19-21) OUR GOD CREATED US IN HIS IMAGE

We share many characteristics with Him. One of these is the ability to communicate with one another, both verbally and non-verbally, both giving and receiving communication.

- **As brothers and sisters in Christ, God gives us guidelines for how to communicate in a Jesus-honoring way.**

OUR WORDS REVEAL WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE

Jesus says in Luke 6:45 that our words will reflect either the good or the evil stored up in our hearts because we speak from the overflow of our hearts. He also says in Matthew 12:34 that our mouths "speak from the overflow of the heart."

- **To guard against wrong words, we start with the condition of our hearts.**

ARE WE FILLING OUR HEARTS WITH GOD'S WORD?

Knowing our heart's condition and recognizing it may not be in line with God's Word is a humbling work. We must admit our failure to be righteous like Jesus and that we need to conform to the teachings of the Bible in all that we do. This is a continuous process that shows we are truly being saved.

- **There's no growth without the Word!**

THE WORD REVEALS THINGS WE MUST RID

Like taking off dirty clothes, we must take off things that might cause us to have evil stored up in our hearts. What we consume, what we desire, and what we're passionate about are often dictated by the filth and evil of the world.

- **Our flesh, the world, and the devil can easily distract us so that we're digesting sinful junk, which fuels sinful behaviors.**

THE BIBLE CHANGES OUR RESPONSES

We learn to be **quick to listen**. This means we learn that it's more important to understand others than to be understood. We quit worrying about defending ourselves and our positions and begin to value others over ourselves. We desire to know others, their stories, their struggles, their fears, and their dreams. **Therefore, we are slow to speak.**

HUMAN, UNRIGHTEOUS ANGER IS LESS LIKELY

While not always the case, the more we listen and the less we talk, the less likely we will become angry over meaningless, trivial things due to misunderstandings and the less likely we'll say things that spring from angry reactions.

- **Human anger is quick-tempered and selfish, unlike God's patience with us.**

ACTION WORDS (JAMES 1:22-25)

LISTENING, THEN LIVING OUT, NOT FORGETTING

God's Word always requires a response...always! We can't listen to a lesson, learn in a Life Group, or only read God's Word without some kind of response.

- Too often, we expect to be entertained by God's Word and those who proclaim it. **We are to be transformed by God's Word as we consume it wherever it's proclaimed.**

WE PRIORITIZE WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT

There must be an intentionality to our time in God's Word. By being intentional, we put the Bible into a place of importance in our lives. We make time for it. We memorize it. We talk about it with others. We live it out by doing what it tells us to do, and we avoid what it tells us to avoid.

- **We can't leave God's Word to chance.**

WE ARE TOO SUPERFICIAL WITH THE WORD

Mirrors in James' time were polished metal which produced a distorted view that could easily be forgotten, like we are with the Word.

- Too many of us see the Word only at the weekend service, which gives us a distorted view of ourselves. Instead of "looking intently into" the Word, we think we're okay on a once-a-week exposure.

THREE STEPS TO BEING BLESSED BY THE WORD

We are to **intently look into the perfect law of freedom**, which is where true freedom is found.

- We are to **persevere in it**, which means we don't give up and drift away, but we fight to sink His Word deep into our hearts.

- We aren't **forgetful hearers but doers who work**, which means **we act on what we read.**

LET'S MAKE S.P.A.C.E. FOR GOD'S WORD

- S - Is there a **sin** to confess?
- P - Is there a **promise** to claim?
- A - Is there an **attitude** to change?
- C - Is there a **command** to obey?
- E - Is there an **example** to follow?
- All the Bible helps in the world won't mean a thing unless we actually use them.

USEFUL WORDS (JAMES 1:26-27)

WORDS ARE POWERFUL FOR GOOD OR BAD

Matthew 12:36-37 tells us we will give an account of our words, especially the careless ones, because they reveal the condition of our hearts. There are too many "religious" people who have no control over their tongue.

- The Bible warns about many sins of the tongue, such as **gossip, slander, lying, outbursts of anger, foul language, etc.**

WITHOUT THE WORD, WE EASILY FOOL OURSELVES

Because the Word is the "mirror" upon which we should gaze as a true indication of ourselves, we've got to hold ourselves to its standard, not the standards of the world or others.

- **We need not only the Spirit and the Word, but others in our lives who will hold us accountable for our words.**

WHAT DOES REAL CHRISTIANITY LOOK LIKE?

Real Christians pursue freedom from the sins of the tongue, of the flesh, and of the world, not always perfectly but faithfully.

- **Real Christianity is a daily pursuit of how to speak words that build up, deny fleshly desires by serving others, and live insulated lives, not isolated lives, so that our lights shine brightly for Jesus.**

HOW WE LIVE REALLY MATTERS

If we want to be pleasing to God, we must live sanctified lives, lives set apart to look like Jesus in all we do. Jesus cared for "the least of these," and we should, too. Jesus was in the world but not of the world, and so are we.

- **We live thankful for grace and mercy, knowing that our Father sees everything we do and knows every thought we think.**

WE ARE TO BEAR THE FRUIT OF OUR SALVATION

There have been people who say James teaches a *works salvation instead of a grace through faith salvation*. But as Martin Luther once said, **"We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone."**

- We **"work out our salvation with fear and trembling"** (Philippians 2:12) to do the works we were created to do (Ephesians 2:10).

HOW DO WE TREAT OTHERS?

- Do we find ourselves short-tempered with people, especially in this season?
- As we grow older in the Lord, do we see the fruit of the Spirit growing within us, especially patience, kindness, and self-control?
- Are we more compassionate toward "the least of these" in thoughts and actions?

WHAT ROLE DOES THE BIBLE PLAY?

- Daily time in God's Word isn't an option; it's a necessity.
- **The Bible doesn't limit our joy, but it maximizes joy as we live pleasing to the Father through obedience.**
- We read the Word, meditate on it, memorize it, apply it, and share it with others.

ROOT AND FRUIT

- Don't be fooled into thinking that our works earn our salvation.
- We can say all the right things and do all the right things and still be separated from God.
- We are saved by grace through faith, which is the root of our salvation.
- **Our works display God's grace, not earn it.**