

"True Faith and the Word of God"

Part 6

James 1:19-27

Introduction: Today we have the opportunity to return to our study of the book of James and as we do we are stepping into James 1: 19-27 for the 5th time.

In this section James is writing to his Jewish readers about the proper reception and response to the Word of God. As I have told you before James has a concern about people being deceived and thinking they were saved when they were not.

Therefore as we work our way through this letter we see a collection of personal tests in which we can place beside our faith to be sure our faith is a TRUE saving faith and not a great deception.

Paul also expressed the same concern when he wrote to the church at Corinth.

2 Corinthians 13:5

⁵Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Now the verses that are before us in the book of James are all about the Word of God and we have looked at 2 points here:

1. The Proper Reception of God's Word.

Notice James 1:19

Here we looked at how we are to:

- a. Be swift to hear.
- b. Be slow to speak.
- c. Slow to wrath.

All 3 of these commands pertain to the Word of God. There should be a desire within all who know Christ a great desire to want to hear and absorb the Word. This is what the Holy Spirit desires and if you are saved He lives within you. Therefore you should crave the Word and when there is an opportunity to learn it you should run to get in the room where it is taught.

When James tells us to be slow to speak that means we are to have a deep reverence for the Word and realize that when we step up to teach we are stepping up to a higher level of accountability. Therefore we are slow to speak in the sense we are careful about teaching the Word.

When James tells us to be slow to wrath he is referring to when we hear the Word and it convicts us. We are not to be angry with the teacher or with what is taught, but we are to allow the Word to have its proper place in our lives. We are to receive it.

Notice James 1:20

It is the Word that makes us more like our Savior and therefore we are not to resist the Word.

Notice James 1:21

We are to put off sin which hinders and we are to receive with meekness the engrafted Word. Sin hinders our growth and James has told us that we are saved to be like Christ therefore we are to put off sin and receive the Word with an humble spirit.

2. The Proper Response to God's Word.

Notice James 1:22

Here James exhorts his listeners to apply the Word to our lives so that it becomes a part of us. He does not just say to PRACTICE the Word but he tells us to be a DOER of the Word.

The phrase at the end of the verse is a warning. For those who claim to be a child of God but do not walk in obedience to the Word of God are deceiving themselves because obedience is a mark of true salvation.

1 John 2:3-5

³ *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

⁴ *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

⁵ *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

James then gives 2 illustrations to make his point.

Notice James 1:23-24

Here is a picture of the unsaved person. They sit under the Word or they hear the Word and are convicted but they walk away and they forget what they heard and they go back to their old lifestyle.

They are like someone who looks in a mirror and get distracted and then forgets that what they saw in the mirror was out of place and they do nothing about it.

Notice James 1:25

Here we are introduced to a contrast of what we find in the previous verse. The previous verse spoke of the person who looked into a mirror and forgot what he had seen.

This person takes a different look than the previous person. The word "looketh" here means to bend down and look with a deep concern.

There are 3 marks of a true believer in this verse:

a. He wants to know the Word.

This is seen in the word "looketh".

Psalm 25:4

⁴ *Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.*

Psalm 27:11

¹¹ *Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*

Psalm 86:11

¹¹ *Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*

Psalm 119:12

¹² *Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.*

b. He continues in the Word.

The person who has a true saving faith will stay true to the Word of God no matter what the storm is that they face. They may drift from the course briefly but they will come back.

John 8:31

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

John 10:27

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

c. He is full of joy.

James tells us in this verse this man is blessed in his deed. The word "blessed" means "happy". The man or woman who has a true saving faith does not have a joy that is based on the circumstances they are in. Their joy is in Christ and the more of Him they know the deeper the joy. Let me show you examples of joy in the midst of suffering.

Acts 5:40-41

⁴⁰ And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

⁴¹ And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

2 Peter 3:14

¹⁴ But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

There is true, deep down joy in walking in obedience to God's Word.

Now as we continue into the last 2 verses of this chapter James gets even more detailed and in these verses we can clearly see his concern for the souls of people.

III. The Test

Notice James 1:26a

There are 2 words here that I need to explain to you which will help to understand this verse.

1. **Religious** - James uses the word "religious" here and it refers to someone who looks to be spiritual. It refers to outward rituals which people come to trust in.
2. **Seem** - Now I want you to understand that James is getting very personal with what he is saying here. He is saying, "If any man thinks he is religious..."

Now let me explain James point here. There would have been those who read this letter and they would have said, "We obey God's Word. We listen to God's Word." But the religious leaders would have said the same thing if they would have been confronted. They did in John 8 when Jesus confronted them.

There are many people today who go through church rituals and they see themselves as people who are pleasing God but the truth is they are not saved.

This is the very thing that James was concerned about.

Notice James 1:26

Here is the first test of a person's faith which James uses to prick the hearts of his readers.

1. Control of the tongue.

James is saying, "You think your rituals and your ceremonies are proof that you are saved? Let me give you a true test. Can you bridle your tongue?"

He even says that if a person cannot bridle their tongue then there are 2 things they need to know:

1. They are living in self deception.
2. Their religion is worthless.

Application:

One of the proofs of true saving faith is control of the tongue.

But it has so many applications:

A. When we are tempted to react.

Let me show you what this looks like in action.

2 Samuel 16:5-12

⁵ *And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came.*

⁶ *And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.*

⁷ *And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:*

⁸ *The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.*

⁹ *Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.*

¹⁰ *And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?*

¹¹ *And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him.*

¹² *It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.*

But to bridal the tongue goes beyond this.

B. When we are tempted to gossip.

Ephesians 4:29

²⁹ *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

C. When we are tempted to use words that are Divisive.

Proverbs 6:16-19

¹⁶ *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:*

¹⁷ *A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*

¹⁸ *An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,*

¹⁹ *A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

D. When we are tempted to slander.

Ephesians 4:31-32

³¹ *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

³² *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

1 Peter 2:1-2

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

² *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

Conclusion:

Are you 100% sure you are saved?

Notice James 1:17

Here we see 2 more tests of true salvation:

a. Separation from the world.

James 4:4

⁴Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Let me show you what we are to be focused upon.

Colossians 3:1-3

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

²Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

³For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

b. Compassion for the afflicted.

Notice Matthew 25:34-45

Conclusion:

This is what True saving faith looks like.

Let me ask you 3 questions:

1. How are you at controlling your tongue?