

## James 1:22-27

**Intro:** • How do the usages of “word” in verses 18 and 21 provide a context for what James writes about the “word” here in verses 22 and 23?

- Do these references to “word” refer to...
  - God’s creative proclamation?
  - the Bible?
  - the gospel message?
  - the person of Jesus Christ?

**Vs. 22** • Is the Christian responsible for consistent Christian behavior?

- Does Jesus’ statement in Luke 11:28 say the same thing as James is saying in this verse?
- Does Paul’s statement in Rom. 2:13 have the same meaning as James?
- What does it mean to be a “doer of the word”?
  - to follow the rules of the Bible?
  - to conform to the expectations of Christian behavior?
  - to allow the dynamic of Christ’s life to be expressed in our behavior?
- Do those who are “merely hearers”...
  - hear the word of God?
  - listen to Christ, but fail to follow-through?
  - hear only pious platitudes of preaching?
  - hear only to gain knowledge?
  - hear only to develop an accurate belief-system?
  - hear only to give mental assent to theories and doctrines?
  - hear only what sounds good and tickles the ears?
  - hear only in order to implement proper morality in their behavior?
- By “deluding themselves” are they...
  - deceiving themselves in thinking they are really Christians?
  - self-deceived about the consistency of their Christianity?
  - misconstruing the reality of Christianity?
  - duped into a false-security?

**Vss. 23 & 24**

- What is the simile that James employs intended to illustrate?
  - “Mirror, mirror on the wall; who’s the fairest of them all”
  - Using the mirror to decorate oneself without regard to what is below the surface.
  - Using the Scriptures as a mirror to reveal what is wrong with us, and what God wants us to do?
  - A person who sees the physical reflection, but not his real self.
    - a person who fails to see the fraud he really is.
    - a person who fails to see the reality of his spiritual identity in Jesus Christ.
- Can you think of another illustrative simile that could also illustrate James’ point?

**Vs. 25** • Is there a difference between the “look” of verses 23 and 24 and the “look intently” of verse 25?

- Is the issue being contrasted in verse 23-25...
  - the manner of looking?
  - the object observed?
  - the action taken after observation?
  - the personal result of our action?

- What is “the perfect law of liberty”?
  - the Law of Moses?
  - the Christian commandments?
  - the New Testament exhortations?
  - God’s expectations for Christians?
  - the revelation of God in Christ?
  - the dynamic of the living Lord Jesus?
- What is the difference between what the person who looked in a mirror (vss. 23,24) saw, and what the person who looked at the perfect law saw?
  - physical vs. spiritual?
  - reflection vs. reality?
  - facial image vs. God’s image?
  - decoration vs. dynamic?
  - himself vs. Christ?
- How can law be the basis of liberty?
  - the perfect law doesn’t have any rules and regulations?
  - the perfect law doesn’t require obedience?
  - the perfect law is written in our hearts (cf. Jere. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:10; 10:16), and carries with it the divine dynamic of provision for behavior?
  - Christ is the perfect law and the do-er of the law in us?
- How do we “abide” by the “perfect law”?
  - do what it says?
  - settle in to conformity to its expectations?
  - make ourselves at home in the context of perfect law?
  - reside in Christ and draw from His resources (cf. Jn. 15:1-5)
- What kind of “blessing” do we get from this process?
  - more stars in our crown?
  - divine “atta-boys” for our actions?
  - functional fulfillment of being man as God intended?

- Vs. 26** • Which of these is indicative of the person who “thinks himself to be religious”?
- A lot of talk without the walk
  - “Don’t I look good in the mirror of public opinion?”
  - “I’ve got the right belief-system and doctrines.”
  - “I observe all the correct rituals and exercises”
  - “I am scrupulous in the details of my devotion.”
- Why does James keep coming back to our speech as an example of practical consistency in the Christian life? (cf. 1:19; 2:12; 3:1-12; 4:11,12; 5:9,12)
- Is all religion worthless?

- Vs. 27** • What does James positive portrayal of practical religion include?
- What broad categories do these examples represent?

- Conc.** • Which of these do you think best expresses what James is trying to say in these verses?
- “Do what the Scripture says with an obedient heart”
  - “You only really believe what you act upon”
  - “Put up or shut up”
  - “Passive pietism will not pass as Christian behavior”
  - “Your actions speak louder than words”
  - “Walk the walk: don’t just talk the talk”
  - “By their fruit you will know them”
  - “Christian consistency requires concentration on Christ”

**A.W. Tozer** - "There is an evil, which in its effect on the Christian religion, may be more destructive than Communism, Romanism, and Liberalism combined. It is the glaring disparity between theology and practice among professing Christians. So wide is this gulf between theory and practice in the church, that an inquiring stranger who chances upon both would scarcely dream that there was any relation between the two of them. An intelligent observer of our human scene who heard the Sunday morning message and later watched the Sunday afternoon conduct of those who heard it, would conclude that he had been examining two distinct and contrary religions. It appears to me that too many Christians want to enjoy the thrill of feeling right but are not willing to endure the inconvenience of being right. And so the divorce between theory and practice becomes permanent in fact. Truth sits forsaken and grieves till her professed followers come home for a brief visit, but she sees them depart again when the bills come due."