

Doing What We Are Hearing

James 1:22-25

Introduction: What does a genuine Christian look like? What does a healthy (blessed) Christian life look like? These are some questions that are answered by the book of James. If genuine Christians are not flourishing in growth and health, a lack of obedience to God's Word may be at the heart of the problem.

Review & Context: James has given us three pictures of a genuine Christian. Vs. 2-12 Genuine Christians have a right response to trials. Vs. 13-18 Genuine Christians have a right response to temptation. Vs. 19-27 Genuine Christians have a right response to the Word of God. As Christians respond rightly to God's Word, they will welcome it (vs. 19-21) and they will do it (vs. 22-25).

Main Truth: Hearing the Word of God is an important but incomplete response. We must hear it and we must do it.

1. Hearing is good but it is an incomplete response - vs. 22

- A. You must become proficient at doing God's Word.
- B. You must not merely become a professional listener to God's Word.

2. The picture of looking that leads to unaffected leaving - vs. 23-24

- A. He looks at himself - vs. 24a
- B. He leaves unchanged - vs. 24b
- C. He forgets what was seen - vs. 24c

3. The picture of looking that leads to blessed living - vs. 25

- A. He looks in it intently - "*looks intently*"
- B. He continues in it constantly - "*abides by it*"
- C. He works at it diligently - "*an effectual doer*"
- D. He is blessed by it - "*this man will be blessed in what he does.*"

Conclusion: What do you do with what you hear, what you know, and what you've learned from God's Word? What happens after you close your Bible? God tells all of us that doing the Word is not an optional response. It is the only right response. Any response other than obedience is self deception.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Becoming an excellent listener to the Word of God is a vital part of the Christian life, but there is a danger in being merely (only) a listener. What dangerous attitudes might grow in the life of someone who is merely an excellent listener to God's word (in other words, what are some things that this person might think about their own self and their spiritual health)?
2. Which is harder? Hearing God's Word well or obeying God's Word well? Why?
3. The more we listen to God's word unchanged by it, the less likely we are to ever be changed by it. Why is this so?
4. Why is the Word of God pictured as a mirror in this passage? How does God's word resemble a mirror?
5. Why should we not be like the man illustrated in vs. 23-24? What were some things that he did wrong?
6. Can that pattern of vs. 24 (looking, going away, and forgetting) become a habit in our life? What can we do to break the habit?
7. What are some practical things we can do to help the instruction of God's Word be incorporated into the application (living/doing) of our lives?
8. The person illustrated in vs. 25 gives us an example to follow. What are some things in life that keep us from following this pattern that leads to blessing in vs. 25? (Why do we have such a hard time doing this?)
9. What blessing is promised by Jesus to those who hear and do His Word in Luke 6:46-49.

Thoughts for prayer:

- Pray that we would not become professional hearers (auditors) of God's word.
- Pray that we would be just as active and diligent in our doing as we are in our hearing.
- Pray that God would bless our church and families as we rightly receive His Word.