

James 1:19-27

Day 1

Receiving the Word. Read James 1:19-21

1. After addressing trials and temptations, why do you think James focused on the behaviors in 1:19? Who was being addressed?

2. What do you think it means to be “*quick to hear*”? See Proverbs 2:1-2

- How important or what benefits do you see in being “slow to speak”? See Proverbs 10:19; 15:28

Digging Deeper

What problem had the Israelites had? Jeremiah 7:24-26

What does Romans 10:17 say about hearing and salvation?

FYI: Slow to speak “That’s the other side to listening well...[it] makes room for thinking, pondering, meditating, considering – all the elements necessary for true listening (and learning).” – Charles Swindoll (43)

3. How do you think attentive hearing and careful speaking helps mitigate anger? (What do you think *anger* does to our ability to hear?)

4. Why is wrath counter-productive? 1:20 How does this contrast with God’s plan for us (1:18)?

- What happens when we give in *quickly* to anger? Proverbs 15:18; 17:14

FYI: anger Strong’s NT:3709 *orge*, desire (as a reaching forth or excitement of the mind), i.e. (by analogy,) violent passion (ire, or [justifiable] abhorrence);
“ ‘the new birth by the word (1:18) must lead to a new life directed by the Word.’ (Hiebert)” – Kay Arthur (44)
Some are “quick to anger because they still view the world as something that should do what they want – and oftentimes they even view God as someone who should behave how they want Him to behave.” – Ben Stuart (85)

5. How should we prepare our lives to receive the word? 1:21a

- Why is this fitting for a believer? Titus 2:11-14

FYI: All filthiness: “...an allusion to the garbage of the sacrifices cast into the brook Kedron, that is, the town-ditch. (Trapp)” – David Guzik

Wickedness/evil/naughtiness Strong’s NT:2549 *kakia*; badness, malignity, *malice*, *ill-will*, *desire to injure*, wickedness, depravity, evil, trouble

6. What attitude should we have about the word? 1:21b Why? (See John 6:63)

FYI: humbly accept/ receive with meekness Strong's NT:1209 *dechomai*...“the opposite of self-assertiveness – teachableness – to welcome the Word with open arms.” - R Kent Hughes (68)

“The word *dechomai* usually means more than to passively ‘accept.’ It often includes the idea of fully embracing, making the thing part of oneself...Filthiness in life plugs our hearing. Wickedness slows our response time. Pride keeps us from exposing our true selves to the light of the Word. But humility means submitting to whatever the Word has to tell us, ready to put off the thoughts and deeds of the old lifestyle in favor of the attitudes and actions of the new.” - Charles Swindoll (44)

“**The Word of God** is all over this passage. It’s referenced in verses 21,22,23, and 25...Be **humble** as you approach the Word, not coming with your defenses up, which leads to anger and ‘resistance to the Word... God has planted His Word in us, and our hearts find life in this Word...We need this word that is able to save us. The language here is potent, emphasizing how we are not saved by working but by receiving the Word, and how that Word planted in us then moves us to action. This is the heart of James. We work and put our faith into action, yes, but we do this by the Word at work in our hearts, the Word that has given us life.” - David Platt

Save Strong's NT:4982 *sozo*; to save, i.e. deliver or protect KJV - heal, preserve, (make) whole.

7. In the following, underline how or under what conditions people received the Word and any results it had.
- Acts 17:11,12 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. NIV
 - 1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of mere men, but as what it really is, the word of God, which also is at work in you who believe. NASB
 - 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ESV
 - Colossians 1:5-6 ...Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth. ESV
- What of these responses do you find interesting?

Applying the Word: Think about the situations where you often exhibit a short fuse. What perspective or what actions could help you be “slow to anger”?

When have you experienced the value in being slow to speak?

Day 2

Doing the Word. Read James 1:22-25

8. What is the next command James gave concerning *the Word*? 1:22 How do you think we deceive ourselves? (See 1 John 2:3,4)

- What did Jesus say about keeping His commands? John 15:9-11

9. What example did James give to illustrate this deception? 1:23,24

FYI: "To make *mere knowledge* of God's will the sole criterion for the religious life is dangerous and self deceptive."
- Lyman Coleman (27)

"To hear and not obey is to be deceived."
- The Nelson Study Bible (2106)

10. How is the Word described in 1:25a (See John 8:31-32)

- In contrast to a forgetful hearer, list the actions the person takes in 1:25 towards the Word.

FYI: Looks Strong's NT:3879 *parakupto*; to bend beside, i.e. lean over (so as to peer within)

"In the ancient Greek language, the word for **looks into** spoke of a penetrating examination, so that a person would even bend over to get a better look."
- David Guzik

"The language here carries the idea of looking 'with penetrating absorption.' Absorb the Word." - David Platt

11. Besides freedom, what else does following God's way bring?
1:25b (Compare Proverbs 3:18; Psalm 19:11)

Digging Deeper

What illustration did Jesus give about building our life on truth? Luke 6:47-49

FYI: "The '**perfect law**' James refers to in verse 25 is not the Old Testament law of Moses but rather the law understood through Christ—that is, the words of Christ and the truth of Christ that free us from slavery to sin and this world..."

James tells us glorious **blessing** is to be experienced in obedience to God's Word... 'How do you obey God's Word?' The answer is not that you muster up obedience to the best of your ability. No, the answer is to receive the Word humbly, the Word planted in you, and to focus on it, remember it, and hide it in your heart and on your mind. As you do this, that Word which initially gave you life as a Christian will work in and through you and move you to follow God's decrees."
- David Platt

12. Besides the “*word of truth*” (1:18) and “*the perfect law of freedom*” (1:25), underline other titles and adjectives describing the “Word” in the following.

- Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. BSB
- Proverbs 6:23 For this commandment is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way to life,
- Psalm 19:8 The precepts of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart; the commandments of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.
- John 1:1,14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth
- John 6:63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you--they are full of the Spirit and life.
- John 6:68 Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life.
- Acts 13:49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. NIV
- Acts 20:32 “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace... NIV
- Ephesians 6:17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. NIV
- Philippians 2:1 as you hold firmly to the word of life.. NIV
- Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
- Hebrews 6:5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God NIV
- 1 Peter 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

13. When Paul looked into the “mirror” of God’s Word, what did he find out about himself? Romans 3:19,20; 7:7-9,24

- How does the gospel bring freedom and empower us? Romans 8:1-4
- What kind of freedom does this give? See Romans 6:6,7,14

FYI: “Without application there can be no spiritual transformation. The Bible calls us to true freedom, which is submission to God’s perfect Word. To live this way requires going to the Word intentionally – not casually – in prayer...The one who submits to transformation by the Word and is a doer who will be blessed.”

- The Tony Evans Study Bible (1472)

Applying the Word: Can you remember a time when you were convicted about a truth from scripture that you were hesitant or afraid to follow at first? What freedom did you find when you acted on that truth?

Day 3

Unbridled Tongue. Read James 1:26

14. What is one of the most revealing ways we show our beliefs? 1:26a (Compare 1 Peter 3:10)

FYI: Pure Strong's NT:2513 *katharos*, clean (literally or figuratively): KJV - clean, clear, pure.
 "Clean or pure in a spiritual sense from the pollution and guilt of sin (Matt 5:8) sincere, upright, void of evil"
Vain Strong's NT:3152 *mataios*, empty, i.e. (literally) profitless

15. What two things does an unbridled tongue indicate? 1:26b (Cross-ref. 1:22)

FYI: "considers himself religious" The Greek word for 'religious' is used only here in the New Testament. It refers to an outward show of piety, and does not necessarily refer to Christianity." - Henry Morris
 "The New Testament never uses this ancient Greek word for "**religious**" in a positive sense (Acts 17:22, 25:19, 26:5; Colossians 2:23). James used it here of someone who is **religious**, but is not really right with God, and this is evident because he **does not bridle his tongue**." - David Guzik
 "James does not mean that those who sometimes fall into this sin have a worthless religion, for all are guilty at times. But he is saying that if anyone's tongue is habitually unbridled...'*he deceives himself*.'" - Kent Hughes (81)

16. Read though the following verses about the tongue:
- Proverbs 11:12 Whoever derides their neighbor has no sense, but the one who has understanding holds their tongue.
 - Proverbs 12:18 The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
 - Proverbs 17:28 Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.
 - Proverbs 18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.
 - Proverbs 21:23 Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity.
- What would you say about the power of a *controlled* tongue?

17. In the following verses, underline the type of talk warned against. (Mark any that you need to work on.)

- Ephesians 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. NIV
- Ephesians 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.
- 1 Timothy 5:13 Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. NIV
- 1 Peter 2:1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. NIV
- Ephesians 5:3,4 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. NIV
- Colossians 3:8,9a But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other.

18. How should a believer ("*the Lord's servant*") respond to others? 2 Timothy 2:23-25

- What goal should we have in handling opponents? 2:25b-26

19. From the following, list the words that describe what our manner of conversation should be.

- Titus 3:2
- Colossians 4:6

Applying the Word: *When and how have the kind and gentle words of others brought healing to your soul?*

Who in your life needs a kind word?

Day 4

Pure and Undefined Religion. Read James 1:27

20. What was the first example of “pure and faultless/undefiled religion”? 1:27a (See 1 John 3:17,18; See Isaiah 1:17)

FYI: Pure Strong's NT:2513 *katharos*; clean (literally or figuratively): KJV - clean, clear, pure.
 “Clean or pure in a spiritual sense from the pollution and guilt of sin (Matt 5:8) sincere, upright, void of evil”
 – The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament

“**Orphans and** widows’ were the most helpless people in Jewish society, their ‘distress’ (literally ‘pressure’) coming from their desperate need of food and clothing. James used them as a representative of all who are in need. Religious observances, no matter how perfectly observed and appropriately reverent, are empty if there is no concern for the needy.”
 – R Kent Hughes (83)

“Provide for those who can do nothing for you in return because that’s what your heavenly Father did for you.”
 – The Tony Evans Study Bible (1472)

Visit NT:1980 *episkeptomai*; to inspect, i.e. (by implication) to select; by extension, to go to see, relieve

1:27 religion Strong's NT:2356 *threskeia*; ceremonial observance
 “This word is used only in James 1:26-27, with one significant exception. In Colossians 2:18 it is translated ‘worshipping,’ but in connection not with worshipping God, but angels...The Christian faith is never called a religion in Scripture.”
 – Henry Morris (See Acts 17:22)

21. What was the second example? 1:27b

- What do you think it means to keep from being polluted/spotted by the world? How do we do this? (See Romans 12:2)

FYI: unstained/from being polluted/unspotted Strong's NT:784 *aspilos*; unblemished (physically or morally): KJV - without spot, unspotted.

“In God’s sight a **pure, unsoiled religion** expresses itself in acts of *charity* and in *chastity* – the two features of early Christian ethics which impressed the contemporary world.” (Moffatt)...Charity and purity are the two great garments of Christianity.” (Spurgeon)
 – David Guzik

“It is so easy to become self-deceived by our religiosity. But James shows us that acceptable religion is three-dimensional. First, it means keeping a tight rein on the tongue...Second, true religion means hands-on caring...Third, acceptable religion is a pure life. The three dimensions of acceptable religion involve our words, our hands, and our hearts. May we live life in all its dimensions Christianity.”
 – R. Kent Hughes (85)

“James was passionate about saying that Christianity is radically concerned with personal purity (don’t be polluted by this world) and with practical, public compassion (care for the people no one else cares about).” – David Pratt

22. Consider the kind of culture these believers were living in and the type of influences and pressure this put them under. How vital was the witness of these small, newly formed groups of Christians to both Jews and Greeks? Since these instructions were for believers (“brothers”), what does this indicate about problems within the church?

23. What criticism did Jesus make of the Pharisees? Matthew 23:23,24

- Where does this behavior originate? Matthew 23:25-28

24. Underline how we are to conduct ourselves.

- Ephesians 5 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
- Romans 13:13,14 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. NIV
- Colossians 1:10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
- Titus 2:7,8 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

25. From the following, what do you learn from the Lord's example and heart towards people?

- Matthew 9:36
- Matthew 11:28-30
- Matthew 23:37

Applying the Word: How would you evaluate your service/love to others by what you say compared to what you do? In which area do you need to grow? With whom?

Prayer: Read through James 1:19-27 slowly. Are there any verses that convicted you? Ask the Lord to show you what behaviors need to change and how.

Suggested memory verse:

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. James 1:19,20 NIV