

22S26 James 1:19-27 (Part 3) Doers

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are beginning our study of James with James 1:19-27. Doers!

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing short letter from James. Who was James? Historians are not sure. Many believe this is James the half-brother of Jesus or even another early Church leader. Most believe this is the same James that appears in the book of Acts and was the leader of the Jerusalem Council in Acts Chapter 15. We don't know the exact date it was written but there are indications that this was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, but we really don't know. The best guess is 50-60AD. Which would make this one of the earliest New Testament letters. James was writing to Hebrew believers scattered among the nations who are facing many trials and persecution. The main theme in this letter is patient perseverance in the midst of the trouble of life. James is encouraging his readers to actively live what they have learned in Christ. He has strong messages about various sins but includes pride, hypocrisy, favoritism, and slander.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let's read James 1:19-27 (NAS) *¹⁹You know this, my beloved brothers and sisters. Now everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; ²⁰for a man's anger does not bring about the righteousness of God. ²¹Therefore, ridding yourselves of all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not just hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵But one who has looked intently at the perfect law, the law of freedom, and has continued in it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an active doer, this person will be blessed in what he does. ²⁶If anyone thinks himself to be religious, yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*

Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from James, help us see what James wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

So okay. This section is loaded isn't it. Let's take a closer look at these verses, James 1:19-20 (NAS) *¹⁹You know this, my beloved brothers and sisters. Now everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; ²⁰for a man's anger does not bring about the righteousness of God.* James makes a profound statement which all of us

know to be true, *be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger*. We know this but how many of us practice this Godly truth. As a follower of Christ, listening is a priority. Listening to what other people say, listening to God. This listening is a courtesy to others. It's giving others value by hearing what they are trying to tell us. Now hear this, this is face to face conversations. We do not have to listen to social media. We do not have to listen to television or internet personalities. This listening is about giving you attention to the people who need you to listen. Then, be slow to speak. Another way to think about this is, hear what someone is saying. Hear them fully before formulating your response or don't interrupt them to share your opinion. Let them speak, then consider thoughtfully what to say in response, then speak. And if what they said provokes you or makes you angry. James says, pause, take a deep breath. Listen to what God is telling you before you get angry. Don't just snap to a conclusion and get offended or mad. Be slow to anger. James gives us the reason, when we get angry, we rarely, if not never, do what is right. We don't do what is right in God's eyes, that is righteousness. We say things in haste that hurt others and hurt us. We make the situation worse when we act out in anger.

Let's read on, James 1:21 (NAS) *²¹Therefore, ridding yourselves of all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.* Remember when we see the word "therefore" in the Bible we need to figure out what it is there for. Be slow to anger so we can do what is right, therefore get rid of filthiness and wickedness. Most English translations make this moral filth or immorality but the original language is just dirty or filthy things. So, get rid of the bad stuff in our lives, including wickedness. And when we get rid of the "bad stuff" in our lives, then we can receive God's word. James says, the word of God can be implanted in our lives. The word in Greek means to be rooted or ingrown. When we rid ourselves of filth and receive God's word humbly into our lives, then God's word becomes the foundation of our lives, our lives are rooted in God's word which is able to save our souls. The word translated at "which is able to" is *dunamenon* (doo'-nam-ah-ee-on) or dominion. When God's word is implant in us, when we are rooted in God's word, then God's word is in power or has dominion on us. We are better people because God's word guides us.

Then James says in James 1:22-24 (NAS). *²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not just hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.* Doers not just hearers. We are supposed to live like we know Jesus. Living meaning acting like you are a follower of Jesus. Living as Christ, requires us to do what God has commanded us. Live the way Jesus wants us to live by doing what God wants us to do. This includes serving others. You cannot live as a doers without serving others the way Jesus served. Jesus told us to Love like He loved. The example James uses always makes me laugh. If we only hear and don't do, we are like someone who looks in the mirror and then immediately forgets what they look like. This is like looking at pictures of yourself but not recognizing yourself. Silly, I know but you can see the point James is making. Doing what Jesus wants us to do is so intertwined in what it

means to be a Christian, that if you don't then you are not recognizable as a Christian. Reality you're not a Christian, you are only a Christian in name.

Then James says in James 1:25 (NAS) *²⁵But one who has looked intently at the perfect law, the law of freedom, and has continued in it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an active doer, this person will be blessed in what he does.* I love this. *one who has looked intently at the perfect law, the law of freedom, and has continued in it.* This is not law like the ten commandments law. This is the law of freedom in Christ. The truth of God written on our hearts and minds which guides us to be the people God wants us to be. And when we live as an active doers of what God has told us to do, then we are blessed. In fact, James says, we are blessed in what we do. When we are obedient to God and do what God wants us to do, then what we do is blessed.

But hear what James says next in James 1:26-27 (NAS) *²⁶If anyone thinks himself to be religious, yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.* If you think you are all religious, yet you don't control what you say, you are deceived to think you are Godly. Your religion is worthless. Ouch. Careless words hurt others and hurt you. We must be slow to speak so that the word of God can guide are words when we speak. And then James pivots a bit to what he says is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of God. *"to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world."* Visit orphans and widows is an example of selfless service to others. Do what God wants us to do, even though the people we help can not offer us anything in return. Don't miss this point. When we serve God by serving others, we should not expect anything in return. If we don't get thanked, then it's ok. If no one notices that we have sacrificed, then it's ok. God knows and He is the only one that matters. And then James added *"keep oneself unstained by the world"*. This is a hard one. Keeping our lives from being stain by the sin in the world is hard. Stain from our selfishness, our greed, our desires. James is reminding us that the desires of this world can stain us, meaning they hurt us. These stains can prevent us from a full relationship with God and full relationships with other people. When we put ourselves ahead of others, we stain, strain and hurt all our relationships, especially the one that matters. Our relationship with Jesus.

Let's review.

- 1) Fast to Hear, Slow to Talk? I don't know about you, but I need to remind my self of this simple wisdom daily. We all want to be heard, but we need to listen first and intently to others, then we can share our thought in a thoughtful, loving, Godly way. Every conversation can be constructive if we could just follow this simple wisdom
- 2) Doers, not just Hearers? This one pokes at you doesn't it. Far too many of us "Christians" are good about going to church and hearing the message. But how many of us, take that message into our week. Do we use that wisdom from God at school, at work, at home? Do we do what God wants us to do? Do we act like

God wants us to act? Do we speak like God wants us to speak? If we did, our relationships would all be better and others would see Jesus in us.

- 3) Doing? What is doing? This is doing life God's way. What did Jesus tell us to do? Visit the widow and orphan, share your food and clothing with those in need, visit the sick and those in prison. And these are just examples. Serving others in God's name, in God's way can be big like our ministry PUNLA Christian ministry where we share with thousands of people, or it can be less grand when we listen, help someone carry a heavy load or share a meal. Serving others is everything we can imagine and more that God will urge us to do. Love others the way Jesus loves them.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from James. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

Let me leave you with this, James was stressing the importance of doing. Doers are blessed in there doing by God. Serving others is a core part of being a Christian. We serve with how we listen; we serve with how we speak and we serve with how we do. But Jesus first in everything we do, say, and think. Give everything to Jesus. Trust God. We don't care what people say about us or do to us. We just do, what God wants from us and for others. Trust God knows what is best for everyone.

Thank you for joining me for our study of James. Please email me comments or feedback. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.