

6. PRACTICE WHAT WE KNOW

James 1:16-18 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Contrary to carnal desires, sins, and death, here every good and perfect gift from God is NEW BORN SOULS. It is not a reference to creation but to regeneration (John 3:3-8).

A. LISTENING AND DOING

In this portion of the Word, we will learn how to imitate one of the characters of God. He is slow to anger, abounding in love, faithfulness, and power (9 times in the Bible).

James 1:19-21 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

James teaches us to hold our tongue, listen carefully, and think more intensively before we speak. For once it comes out of our mouths, there is no way we can retrieve those words back. It is like a pot of spilled water on the ground. It is gone. Our reckless angry and vengeful words would hurt people's feeling, destroy their hearts, and sometimes ruin their future. Sometimes we were the victims of somebody's careless comments.

Jesus was angry at the group of merchants who were manipulating Israelites in the temple. But He did not sin.

Eph 4:26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

God has wrath and anger. His wrath and anger is righteous one against evil world. Many people in this world get angry and get hyper so quickly that the result become tragedy. They blow things out of proportion because they cannot control their temper. Non-Christians may have an excuse for being hot-temper people. But as Christians, we have to learn to hold out tongues and control our temper. We all have tendency to take care of the problem situation with our own strength and attitude.

Let's say I have a bad attitude problem and hot temper. If I display my ugly hot temper to other people, it would not bring glory to God. So what do I do?

Whenever I face hot situations,

- 1) Ask God to take over the situation.
- 2) Go to the Word of God and ask Him to show me how I should react according to His Word and His ways.
- 3) When we receive His guidance, whether we like His way or not, we have to follow Him so that we may glorify Him.

In this world, everybody wants to put their two cents in. Like everybody has mouth, everybody has opinions. We all want everything in our ways. We are busy talking and trying to convince other person, we often don't listen what that person trying to tell us.

Off-color joke or any type of suggestive comment is not for true Christians. How can non-Christians tell the difference between us and carnal people who seek after carnal things of this world. By our actions and talks. If we hear off-color remarks or jokes, do not participate in that conversation. Ignore it. They will watch us and our reaction. We don't need to condemn them for their off-color remarks. Simply excuse yourself from that place politely for a while. That would get more respect than you get hopping mad at them. They will continuously challenge your integrity and walk with God. Hold fast in the strength of God. We can depend on Him. He is the biggest dude who can back you up when you depend on Him.

B. DOING WHAT WE KNOW IS TRUE KNOWLEDGE!

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

In v. 18, the Word is called the instrument of the Soul's birth which is born again.

In v. 21, it is the agent of the soul's salvation.

Is there anyone who got saved without hearing the Word of God in any form?

In v. 23, it is represented as a Mirror, showing us ourselves in our true light.

James 1:23-25 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Can we measure ourselves with this mirror, called the Word? We can honestly ask ourselves to compare our thoughts, behaviors, and action with the Word of God.

Let's ask ourselves a few questions regarding the mirror that show what is inside of our hearts:

- Q) Do we know that we are sinners and we cannot come to God except accepting Jesus as our Personal Savior?
- Q) Do we know that we are here on the earth for His glory, not for our own?
- Q) Do we do our best to follow God's ways whether other people are around us or alone?
- Q) Do we try to impress others that we are such spiritual people and look down on others?
- Q) When God tells us something and we don't like it, which one do we follow, God's command or our own?
- Q) Did we just lie to ourselves and to God by giving false spiritual answers to the questions we were asked?

God's mirror, the Word is a ruler. He knows our hearts.

In v. 25, it says, "But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."

What does it mean about perfect law? It is the moral and ethical teaching of Christianity, which is based on the OT moral law, as embodied in the Ten Commandments.

Ps 19:7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

But it was brought to completion (perfection) by Jesus Christ.

Matt 5:17 Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

Let's list the two most important commandments of Jesus.

Matthew 22:34-40 But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

What about this freedom? What kind of freedom is James talking about? In contrast to the sinner, who is a slave to sin, we who are born-again Christians, are free in Christ.

John 8:34-36 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Obeying God's ways gives the Christian the joyous freedom to be what he was created for.

Another freedom-Freedom from OT law, we no longer have to sacrifice animals to take away our sins time after time (Hebrews 9).

James 1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

We should not consider Christianity as a religion. It should be our lifestyle, soak into our day to day living, every breath we take, every thought we have in our brains, every decision we make in our hearts, every action we carry out should show what we believe in. We cannot praise His holy name in one moment, and with the same mouth blaspheme His name in next moment because we are upset for something. So this 'religious' means nothing more than outward acts of religion.

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Here it shows how practical the book of James is. These are only small examples of ways to make what we believe comes alive. A life of charity and kindness, free from over-much attachment to earthly things, is religion's glory.

Jesus talks about practical Christian living, not just in our head as religion in Matt 25:31-46.

C. APPLICATIONS

1) We can get angry, but let's not sin in wrath.

2) As we learn from the Word everyday, we need to do what we learn, not just add on to our spiritual library of our brains.

3) When we are upset with someone or something, in most cases, it is not the time to deal with that situation. It's better to take time and go over it with godly counsels from the Word of God or godly people around us.