

# James

## Chapter 1, Part 5

- I. Introduction
  - a. We are presently going through the book of James
    - i. What a practical study!
    - ii. Lord willing, today we will complete the first chapter
- II. Homiletics
  - a. **Verse 22**
    - i. Here, we see the main theme of this epistle
    - ii. It's easy for theologically driven churches to think that just hearing the Word (knowing proper Biblical doctrine) is sufficient
      - 1. Knowledge without actions is useless
        - a. So it is with the Christian faith
          - i. Yet, it seems we often think that mere knowledge of God's Word is enough to please Him
        - b. Are we happy when our children do wrong?
          - i. Yet, they often do even when they have the knowledge of what is right
            - 1. How much more displeased is our Heavenly Father when we fail to apply the doctrine that is God's Word
              - a. Remember, doctrine is "teaching"
      - 2. Hearing is indeed foundational
        - a. But, it cannot stop there
        - b. Hearing is just the beginning
    - iii. **Luke 11:28** says the one that hears and keeps God's Word is blessed
      - 1. It's easy to hear
      - 2. It's easy to read
        - a. It is much harder to do the things the Word tells us to do
    - iv. Doing the Word is the natural fruit of believing it
      - 1. In other words, a Christian will bring forth some Christian fruit because the Lord's Holy Spirit leads him to do so through the Bible
    - v. *"...not hearers only..."*
      - 1. It seems to many that attending the services of the church is sufficient
        - a. However, this is not true
          - i. The worship of God certainly is necessary to service
            - 1. However, service goes far beyond worship
              - a. It should affect our everyday lives
  - b. **Verse 23**
    - i. God's Word acts as a mirror to expose sin in our lives

1. How often are we like Fonzie on Happy Days who looked in the mirror, gave himself a “thumbs up” and said, “Hey!!!”?
  - a. He saw himself as good
2. The Word of God will show us our inconsistencies if we will study it
  - a. None of us are completely rid of sin
  - b. Some are more mature than others, but, we all need improvement as long as we live in this life

c. Verse 24

- i. This verse continues the thought found in the previous verse which deals with a man who looks in the mirror, sees some problems, but, doesn't try and fix them
  1. Soon, he forgets about the problems he saw in the mirror and is satisfied with who and what he is
  2. To forget that one's face is covered with dirt will not cleanse your face
    - a. To forget you have sin in your life will not change the fact that you are a sinner
      - i. Many Christians are losing eternal rewards because they have forgotten what the Lord tells us to do in His Holy Word
        1. This is the result of hearing God's Word but not keeping it in our heart to daily change us
- ii. The word “looks” in this verse means one that “looks carefully and cautiously”
  1. This is more than a casual glance
    - a. This seems as though it speaks of one that seriously studies the Word but fails to have any real fruit
      - i. Sadly, this is often seen in the lives of those that theologically understand God's Word but fail to practically apply it

d. Verse 25

- i. This verse speaks of a man totally opposite of the man we just studied about
  1. This fellow looks carefully at what he is and tries to correct his problems so that he walks in a way which pleases the Lord
  2. “looks” is different from the word “observes” found in **verse 24**
    - a. This word means to stoop down and look attentively
      - i. As the angels “look into” such things, so the believer ought to (1 Peter 1:12)
- ii. What is the “perfect law of liberty”?
  1. This seems to be linked to the “word of truth” spoken of in **verse 18**
    - a. A proper understanding of Christ is a “perfect law of liberty”

- i. He has freed us from the Mosaic Law so that we are now free to serve Him
    - ii. A proper trust in the finished work of Christ should drive us to a life of service to God
  - 2. Some understand liberty to say we can't be required to do things or this liberty will be violated
    - a. Is America said to be a "land of liberty?"
      - i. Yet, we have laws that limit what we can do
        - 1. Such is the case with Biblical Christianity
          - a. There are things that God's Word tells us to do and we must strive to do them
      - b. **I Pet 2:16** says that our freedom is not to be used as a "*cover-up for evil*" (ESV)
        - i. The doctrine of eternal security, for instance, is not being properly preached if it gives a license to sin
  - iii. We are to "*continue*" in the teaching of Christ
    - 1. Remember, as believers, we are "Jesus followers"
      - a. This phraseology ought to remind us that we are to model our lives after His great Example!
  - iv. We are to be a "*doer of the work*" that God has called us to do (**Acts 2:42**)
  - v. We must not be a "*forgetful hearer*" of God's Word
    - 1. The Lord wants us to hear His Word, remember it, and strive to keep it
      - a. This shouldn't be a burdensome thing to us
        - i. This ought to be something that we want to do
  - vi. Notice closely, we are blessed in what we do, not what we know
    - 1. To know to do right and not do it is worth nothing
      - a. Blessings are promised to those believers that act in accordance with what God's Word teaches
        - i. Knowledge alone is not wisdom (**vs. 5**)
        - ii. It is easy for a theologically driven church to fall into a habit of wanting to know more than to do
          - 1. We need theology - but we need to be careful of this
  - vii. So, we are to work (**Ephesians 2:10**)
    - 1. Not to be saved, but, because we are saved
      - a. To please the Lord
      - b. To earn rewards at the Judgment seat of Christ
    - 2. This "working" must be in accordance with God's Word

e. **Verse 26**

- i. "*religious*" speaks of the outward service of God
  - 1. Christianity goes far beyond outward acts
    - a. It must come from within the heart, or it will not last
      - i. The fruit of a tree comes from within

- ii. The word “*thinks*” indicates that there are some false professors among Christian people (1 John 2:19)
- iii. The tongue is a gauge of the heart
  - 1. By the way a man talks and the conversation he carries on you can learn what is inside the man
    - a. If lies, filthy communications, swearing proceed from the mouth, it appears to come from the heart
    - b. If truth, love, and love for the Lord’s Word proceed from the mouth, it appears to come from the heart
  - 2. This is not always 100% accurate
    - a. Some of the Lord’s people have bad habits
    - b. Just because somebody talks well doesn’t mean they are saved
      - i. A controlled tongue is not sure evidence of true Christianity, but one uncontrolled is good evidence of an unregenerate heart

f. Verse 27

- i. This verse teaches that a real faith will produce actions
  - 1. We need a balance in our Christian lives
    - a. Theology and practicality are essential parts of good teaching
      - i. We need to learn both about God and about how to live
  - 2. This verse specifically mentions the fatherless and the widows
    - a. However, this is not limited to this group
      - i. This is most likely symbolic of all who are in distress of any kind
        - 1. **Mat. 25:34-46**
          - a. Here, we see the importance of taking care of those whom the Lord has saved
            - i. The way we treat our brethren is the way we treat our Lord!
- ii. We are to “*keep*” ourselves unspotted from the world
  - 1. Some will say, “I am kept by the power of God alone”
    - a. So far as salvation is concerned, this is true
      - i. However, as to our actions, we are held accountable for keeping ourselves unspotted from the world system which is all around us tempting us