

Exegetical Notes, James 1:19-27
“Be Ye Doers of the Word”
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Verses 19-20

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

- Often the opposite of what we do, James tells us that we should be more eager to listen than to speak our minds. In doing this, we should also be slow to anger.
- An angry attitude and harboring anger is not the environment that will allow us to live as God would have us live. While there is nothing wrong with anger, if we do not deal with our anger it can lead to sin.

Verse 21

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

- In order to do what James tells us to, we need to “get rid” of things that hinder us, such as moral filth and evil. The Greek word literally means to strip off as one would shed dirty clothes.
- Along with getting rid of the filth, we need to replace it with the Gospel. We need to realize the Gospel fully and do what it tells us to do, for the Gospel alone can save us.

Verses 22-25

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that

gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it- he will be blessed in what he does.

- James tells us that if we simply listen, but do not do, we are kidding ourselves.
- Even if we intently study, we will soon forget things if we don't put them into practice. We won't even remember things that we hear everyday, unless we take action.
- We must instead, intently study, and then take action, do what the word calls us to do. If we do this, we will be blessed, because we are following the commands of God.

Verses 26-27

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

- James tells us that if anyone practices religion externally, doing public acts of religion, but does not even make an attempt to control his tongue, has no religion at all.
- The kind of religion that God desires will produce fruit. Because of our love for God we will show concern for others. Along with this, we will not indulge in the corruption that the world allows and accepts.