

What Do Doers Do?
James 1:22-26
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Teaching Notes

When I say engage...what do you think of?

Let's recap a little from last week...

Engage: To participate, become involved in, move into position so as to come into operation, enter in conflict or combat.

The only appearance in the NKJV of engage:

Deut 2:24 'Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess *it*, and **engage** him in battle.

This was one of the first steps into the Promised Land.

The Promised Land is the place where God had promised and provided for His people to live a rich and full life.

Before the Promised Land the Jews were slaves in Egypt

...then they wandered in the desert.

...They struggled with their old desires,

...fear and unbelief...

...selfishness and sin,

...apathy and immaturity...

Finally by faith and obedience God's people entered the Promise Land under the leadership of Joshua.

This is **where** God would fulfill His **mission** through His people.

As Christians, we also were slaves to sin...

...we wander the desert, we struggle...

...but by faith and obedience we enter the Promised Land...

...under the better leadership of Jesus...And...

This is **where** God would fulfill His **mission** through His people.

There are opportunities and responsibilities in the Promised Land

- You plant your own food...but you own the land.

- You fight your battles...but with God's direction and strength.
- You live life...but you're free and part of a family.

When we are living in the promises of God...

...God uses us to fulfill His mission.

His hope is not just so we have hope but so we can give help.

His peace isn't so we can have peace but so we can give purpose

God provides for us so that we can provide for others.

God gives to us so we can share with others.

God blesses us so that we can bless others.

God shows us truth so we can share it with others.

We are not meant to be the Dead Sea but the Jordan River.

This is both the context for our word **engage**...

...and the **backdrop** for our study of **James**.

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **23** 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; **24** for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

1. Doers are not deceived.

...Hearers are deceived...in the worst way...

...self deception.

Do you know what is so bad about self deception?

...Everyone knows the truth but you.

...they see what the mirror showed you and you ignored.

A mirror is good for information...but you must take action if you want it to be good for your life.

And that is the same for the Bible...

...The Bible is not just for information...

...it is for life transformation.

We see the truth, we know the truth...

...but if we don't use the truth, it does us no good.

- Food in your teeth.
- Hair sticking up in the back.
- Make up running down your face.
- Your fly is unzipped.

You saw it, did nothing, and now you tell yourself you're fine.

BUT everyone else sees it and...

...you have deceived yourself into thinking you are fine.

...But everyone else knows you look like a fool.

This was the issue for the Pharisees.

And it is such a stumbling block!

Listening w/o acting is not fine.

...it is a foolish and frustrating way to live.

- Can you imagine giving your order to the waiter and he listens patiently but does nothing?
- Can you imagine telling your mechanic what is wrong and he walks away and does nothing?
- Can you imagine telling your doctor your symptoms and he listens and does nothing?
- Can you imagine telling your spouse what to get from the store and having them come back with none of what you asked for?

That waitress isn't going to get a tip.

The doctor isn't going to get a good referral.

The mechanic isn't going to get a good yelp review.

The spouse isn't going to have a great night.

So there is another group...these are the doers.

25 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.

2. Doers have a focused gaze.

“Looks into” means closely with intent.

The Law we are looking at is the law of liberty.

We look closely into the Law of love and freedom in Christ.

We must get up close and personal...like the mirror at camp.

We should spend time and look carefully.

Examine and consider the Word.

3. Doers hear to act.

A doer “continues in it”.

Their focus is on doing not hearing.

A student who listens to do vs. one who listens for a grade.

They don't hear and forget it, they hear and use it.

Doers are true disciples...

It takes discipline to “Continue” in something.

...Disciples are disciplined.

“The noun disciple comes from the Latin word **discipulus**, which means "student, learner.”

“The Hebrew word for disciple is talmid. This word stresses the relationship between rabbi (teacher or master) and disciple (student). A talmid of Jesus' day would give up his entire life in order to be with his teacher. The disciple didn't only seek to know what the teacher knew, as is usually the case today. It was not enough just to know what the rabbi said, but the foremost goal of any talmid was to become like the rabbi and do what the rabbi did.”

Often when I don't “continue”, I have forgotten my purpose.

...Our purpose is to be like our teacher...Jesus.

...The law that drove Jesus was **love**.

4. Doers are motivated by love.

Let's look at those earlier examples of listeners...

I think the remedy for hearing is loving.

A **waiter**... they don't just take orders— they feed people.
...they need to care enough to write it down.

The **mechanic**...they don't just hear complaints from customers they give them freedom and power to live their life.
...They need to care enough to do the work

The **doctor**...they don't just listen to patients, they heal people.
They need to realize the power and opportunity and do the work.

The **spouse**...they don't just follow the shopping list, they facilitate fellowship and build trust with their spouse...
...They need care enough to refuse distractions and do the work.

Our purpose is to learn **and** be like our teacher.
...**And our teacher loved people...**
...**He loved His Father.**
...**And so our teacher was not just a hearer but a doer.**

Jesus was moved with compassion.

Our teacher fed the hungry, brought life to the dead and freedom to the oppressed.
He healed the hurting and provided for those in need.

Understanding my purpose, I am more likely to be a doer.

5. Doers have a special blessing.

James says, “this one will be blessed in what he does.”

There are two ways to see this part of the verse...

One way to see it is God blesses those who do.

...Doers are blessed...And that is true.

But I think there is more to it here.

The Lord isn't just blessing you, but what you do.

You hear, you continue, and He blesses you in your doing.

You knock and He blesses you by opening the door.

You open ur mouth and He blesses you by giving you the words.

You seek to obey and He blesses you with strength.

You take a step of faith and He blesses you with direction.

The blessing to continue in His will His way is from Him.

A Christian who works for a blessing can be a selfish mercenary.

...A Christian who works for the Lord is a blessed missionary.

So where is a good place to start being a “doer”?

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.

First notice a few words he uses:Thinks, religious, useless.

He says, if anyone **thinks** he is **religious**.

He was just talking about those who are self deceived.

They hear the truth of God's Word but they take no action.

They don't put it into practice.

They deceive themselves.

...Being deceived is a real possibility.

“Religion” this is not a common word in the Bible.

It is specifically talking about **external** practices or ceremonies.

The other word he uses is useless.

“Useless”: devoid of force, truth, success, result, of no purpose

6. Doers control their mouth.

James seems to be saying...

...If you want to talk about external religious practices...

**...Start with how you talk to people...
...otherwise your profession is powerless.**

Lord, lord...How could that be?

The blessing, the power, the success, the force is in the doing.

We all know the big talker...

...has a lot to say but nothing to show for it.

- They talk about how big the fish was that got away.
- They talk about how much money they made but somehow lost.
- They talk about how many friends they have but aren't around.

We see them as a fake.

There is no real life, no real power, because they are not real.

II Tim 3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:... having a form of godliness but denying its power.

He describes people with a form, an outward appearance...

...But a lack of real power.

And the description is of those who don't act on God's command.

When there is a disconnect of action...

...there is a disconnect of power.

A lack of Biblical action results in a lack of spiritual power.

The words we speak should reflect the faith we profess.

...Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

A mark of Christian maturity is not...

...Biblical knowledge or number of days in church...

A true mark of Christian maturity is a self controlled mouth.

The word bridle comes from the Old English bridel meaning "rein, curb, restraint," which is precisely what the purpose of a bridle is — **to help restrain a horse's movements when necessary.**

We are supposed to bridle or control our tongue.

...We control and restrain the words we say.

Just because it comes into your mind...

...doesn't mean it should come out of your mouth.

Actions can easily drown out our words when they don't match.

The Bible tells us that it is the Holy Spirit that gives us power.

...but we can quench and grieve the Holy Spirit by our words.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 **And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

I Thessalonians 16-22 16 Rejoice always, 17pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.19 **Do not quench the Spirit**. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.

So our religion is powerless if we can't control our tongue.

But what is real religion?
What is proper external worship?
We will tackle that next Sunday.

For now...Let's focus on being doers by controlling our mouth.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we have to be living in the Promised Land of obedience for God to use us for His mission?
2. How does the Dead Sea and Jordan River speak to you about your life?
3. Have you had people not listen to you? How does it feel? What do you think about them or yourself?
4. Who do you know that is a good listener? Why do you think they are good listeners? What motivates them?
5. What is a struggle about controlling your mouth? What makes it hard or what makes it easier?