

## ***Proof of Life: Doers of Truth***

(James 1:19–27)

**ONE PROOF OF SPIRITUAL LIFE IS:** Real faith obeys. It is not just a matter of thinking or speaking “rightly,” but doing the right things. Genuine Christianity is expressed in its works.

### **SO, WHAT IS TRUE, AND WHAT SHOULD WE DO?**

Followers of Jesus Christ should receive God’s Word humbly, remember it constantly, and obey it wholeheartedly.<sup>1</sup> You have not truly listened to and obeyed God’s Word until you have acted on what you have heard.

#### **1.) Christian(s), know this! Human anger does not produce the righteousness of God (19–22) ...**

**And so, listening, accepting, and obeying God’s Word should look like this when put into practice:**

- Quick to listen. Slow to speak. Slow to anger.
- Rid yourself of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent.
- Humbly receive the implanted Word [the gospel of Jesus Christ], which saves your soul(s).
- Becoming Doers of the Truth and not hearers only (see Jn. 17:17)

#### **2.) Christian(s), you know this! Blessed is the Doer of Truth (the Word of God), not the Hypocrite whose religion is worthless (23–27)**

- Hearing is not the same as doing; to truly listen is to obey. (23–25)
- If you seem to follow Christianity but do not control your tongue, your faith, and worship are hypocritically worthless (26); The term for “religious/religion” centers on the external aspect of ritual religion, the way people perceive others based on observing the outward forms, the religious acts they perform.
- James refers to people who “consider themselves religious” but prove themselves irreligious due to their big mouths, inaction, or evil ways. They “seem” or have the outward appearance of people who worship God and follow Him. They are characterized by head religion rather than heart religion and would be called “hypocrites.”
- Two examples of faith in action: 1) caring for widows and orphans in their distress and 2) keeping yourself unstained from the world.

### **APPLICATION:**

Christians should **humbly respond** to God’s Word with obedient listening and careful speech (quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger). Obedient and humble conduct involves caring for the needy and maintaining personal purity. These persons are blessed because:<sup>2</sup>

- They look intently at, and attentively obey, God’s Word.
- They continue to do this.
- They do not forget what they have heard.
- They act on it, letting it make a difference in their life.
- They then reap the benefits of having done what God required.

### **BARRIERS TO LISTENING:**<sup>2</sup>

Certain approaches or attitudes almost ensure that we will not be listening carefully to God’s Word:

- Some can read God’s Word, but don’t, or won’t.
- Some allow so many distractions that they cannot possibly listen.
- Some are not accountable to anyone for obeying God’s Word.
- Some have become insensitive to their need for spiritual input.

### **WAYS TO LISTEN INTENTLY TO GOD’S WORD:**<sup>2</sup>

A careful look at God’s Word is more likely to help us than casual attention:

- Read the Bible aloud to yourself with expression.
- Use cards with printed verses to refer to during the day.
- Whenever a verse includes a command, think of at least three ways to put that command into action that same day.
- Ask other Christians to comment on the verse that you are trying to understand and obey. Or, ask for an explanation when someone mentions a verse or passage you do not understand.
- Memorize sections of God’s Word and meditate on them daily.

### **A PIANO PLAYER ILLUSTRATION (doers of the Word):**<sup>2</sup>

A little child sits enraptured, watching his mother play the piano. The music is thrilling. As her fingers fly over the keys, he recognizes simple melodies and then listens with amazement as she embellishes them with harmony and chords until there is only a hint of their original simplicity. The child finally crawls up on the bench beside his mother and waits for her to stop. He wants a turn. Expecting to produce what he heard Mother play, he moves his fingers over the keys in imitation. The chaos of sound is pure freedom, unbound by such things as a coherent tune, order, or music theory. For a moment, it is fun to make noise, but the noise gets dreary. “When can I play like you, Mommy?” he asks. I want to play and do it like you. “After a while,” she answers, remembering all those boring lessons and the endless drills and scales. Then she smiles as she remembers those glorious days when, having somehow internalized all those lessons, she suddenly realized she was actually, wonderfully, freely playing the piano. The freedom to play only came through learning and practicing the law of the piano.

<sup>1</sup> Platt, David. *Exalting Jesus in James*. (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), James 1:19-25.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce B. Barton, David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson, *James*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), 35–37.