

“Knowing and Doing” | Rev Greg Grooms | July 12, 2020

Old Testament Reading [Isa 1:11-18](#)

“What to Me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of well-fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of goats.
12 “When you come to appear before Me,
Who has required of you
this trampling of My courts?
13 Bring no more vain offerings;
incense is an abomination to Me.
New moon and Sabbath and the calling of
convocations—
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.
14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts
My soul hates;
they have become a burden to Me;
I am weary of bearing them.
15 When you spread out your hands,
I will hide My eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood.
16 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before My
eyes;
cease to do evil,
17 learn to do good;
seek justice,
correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless,
plead the widow’s cause.
18 “Come now, let us reason together, says
the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.

Epistle Reading [James 1:19-27](#)

19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every
person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to
anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the
righteousness of God. 21 Therefore put away all
filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive
with meekness the implanted word, which is able to
save your souls.
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 who looks
intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks
at himself and goes away and at once forgets what
he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the
perfect law, the **law of liberty**, and perseveres, being
no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will
be blessed in his doing.
26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle
his tongue but deceives his heart, this
person’s religion is worthless. 27 Religion that is pure
and undefiled before God the Father is this: to
visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to
keep oneself unstained from the world.

Gospel Reading [Matt 26:47-54](#)

47 While He was still speaking, Judas came, one of
the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords
and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of
the people. 48 Now the betrayer had given them a
sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize
him.” 49 And he came up to Jesus at once and said,
“Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed Him. 50 Jesus
said to him, “**Friend, do what you came to do.**” Then
they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized
Him. 51 And behold, one of those who were with
Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword
and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off
his ear. 52 Then Jesus said to him, “**Put your sword
back into its place. For all who take the sword will
perish by the sword.** 53 **Do you think that I cannot
appeal to My Father, and He will at once send
Me more than twelve legions of angels?** 54 **But how
then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must
be so?”**

Introduction

The book of James is the most practical book in the Bible; it teaches us many important things about how to be good Christians. But, knowing is the easy part, doing is more difficult. Often there is a huge gap between knowing and doing. James offers us three ways of bridging that gap: (1) Being humbled by God’s Word; (2) Learning to see ourselves in God’s Word and (3) Finding freedom in God’s Word.

Background

1. **Being humbled by God’s Word.**

- [James 1:18](#) James is saying faith in Christ begins with a new relationship with God’s Word. We are introduced into faith when the Holy Spirit brings God’s Word home to our hearts. Under His guidance we begin a long process of looking at God’s Word and of looking at our lives and realizing we aren’t our own anymore; we can’t continue living the way we used to live.
- [James 1:25](#) When James speaks of the **perfect law**, he means God’s Word, the Bible. The mark of a Godly man is that he delights in God’s Word. We like that it tells us how to live, rather than living our lives “My Way” (as in [Sinatra’s](#) iconic song), picking and choosing which parts of the Bible we will follow.
- The first step in bridging the gap between knowing and doing is to humble ourselves before God’s Word. We are to take Christ as our example (e.g., [Matt 26:54](#))
- [James 1:23-25](#) James tells us to look **intently** at God’s Law (the Bible) just as intently as Peter searched for Jesus when he looked into His tomb on Easter morn.

2. **Learning to see ourselves in God’s Word.**

- We are to study God’s Word personally, to see ourselves in light of the Scriptures.
- Reading the Bible, be inspired and exposed, to understand ourselves better.

3. **Finding freedom in God’s Word.**

- When we study God’s Word personally, we will slowly begin to know true freedom.
- [James 1:25](#) The blessings of the **law of liberty** is freedom. Because laws are restrictive, how can a law provide freedom? Just as a fish is meant to be in water, we were made to live within certain restrictions. We were made for a perfect relationship with God to have no other gods than Him. We were made to obey God’s Law.
- [C. S. Lewis](#): “Obedience is the key that opens every door. Obedience is the road to freedom, humility the road to pleasure, unity the road to personality.”

Discuss

- (¶1a) When/how can we know the Holy Spirit has brought God’s Word to our hearts?
- (¶1c) Christ knew the Scriptures must be fulfilled and humbled Himself; so should we.
- (¶2a) How would you explain what is meant by studying the Bible personally?
- (¶3b) Is the law of liberty restrictive? How does it lead to true freedom?
- (¶3c) How do you explain CS Lewis’ quotation “Obedience is the road to freedom.”

Conclusion/Application

•Yes, we are to look at God’s Word intently, personally and obediently. But we’ll never bridge the gap between knowing and doing unless we see one more thing in God’s Word. Although [James 1:22](#) says “... be doers of the Word, and not hearers only,” **there’s been only one perfect person who ever did it.** In Hebrews, Jesus quotes [Ps 40:8](#), saying: I delight to do your will, oh God, Your Law is written on my heart. Jesus fulfilled the Law in two ways: by obeying it perfectly and by dying on the cross to pay the price for our own disobedience. That’s what Martin Luther finally saw in the Scriptures.

•The more [Martin Luther](#) looked into God’s Law the less free he felt, the more he realized how he fell short; and once said sometimes he hated God for it. If when we read the Scriptures, all we see is how we fall short, we will hate God, too. So we need to see something else in the Scriptures. We need to see what Martin Luther finally saw in the Scriptures: that **Jesus took the curse that our Law-breaking deserved in order to give us the blessing that His Law-keeping deserved.** And, it’s what set Him free. This isn’t about our failures, it’s about Jesus and His obedience, His sacrifice for us. Martin Luther wrote a song about it: [A Mighty Fortress Is Our God](#). Second verse: *Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God’s own choosing. You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he; Lord Sabaoth his name, from age to age the same; and he must win the battle.*

•If we want to know real freedom, look intently into God’s Word, see ourselves, and see the One who kept the Law for us.

