

Year after year, and month after month, week after week for 14 years here at MPBC we have come together and we study the Word of God. I seek to teach the word of God, preach the Word of God and help you have an appetite for the Word of God. Why? Because it's God's revelation of Himself to us and how we are to live and have the fullest life. If you think about it, the Word of God is literally the centerpiece of all we do!

And I believe James, the half-brother of Jesus knew this too. Last week Matthew talked about it. Remember verse 18. Look at the word: “Word” in verse 18.

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**James 1:18**

<sup>18</sup> Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

**James 1:21**

<sup>21</sup> Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

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It's about the “Word” folks. It's the Word of God that spoke everything into existence and it's the Word of God that spoke you into existence and it's the Word of God that is able to save your souls. And yes, the Word of God is a lamp to our feet and light to our path. Tonight we're going to see if we really believe the Word of God. Because if we do, we'll do what it says. The message tonight is “Doers Versus Hearers.”

**James 1:22-25**

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup> 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.

The Word of God is so precious! The Psalmist said, “Oh, let me not wander from your commandments” (Psalm 119). He said: “I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies as much as in all riches.” In other words, he found that the Word of God was his greatest treasure. He said, “My heart stands in awe of your word.” Psalm 1 says: “delight in the law of the Lord and in that law meditate day and night.” Do you love the Word of God?

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Indeed, the Word of God is the heart and soul of our Christian experience. In it God speaks to us. In the section we just read, James makes two major themes clear and helps us to understand what is important about being a Doer of the Word and not just a Hearer. First, he talks about a proper reception of the Word of God and secondly a proper response to the Word of God. It's like this...it's how the Word goes in us and then, how the Word comes out of us. You see, for many...it goes in, but seldom comes out, in action.

Yes, we need to put ourselves in a position to hear! Romans 10:17 says: “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” Didn't Matthew remind us last week that James said, “Be quick to hear and slow to speak.” We need to put ourselves in a position that we are **taking in** the Word. We're doing that right now, but I hope you are putting more of the Word of God in you than JUST HERE. I pray you are spending time alone with the Lord “quiet times,” “devotion times,” you pick the name. To grow, we've got to take in the Word of God...**but again, there's much more to the Christian life than just taking in the Word of God. We've got to live it out! That's verse 22.**

### James 1:22

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

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It's important to hear, YES, but it's **not enough** JUST to hear. The Word, listen now, **the word that is powerful enough to totally transform the whole person, powerful enough to change you, must be obeyed.** You not only have to take it in, you've got to put it back out again in your living. That's when you know you've been transformed!

Look at the word: "hearer" there in verse 22. This is so interesting. The word "hearer" used there is the term for the word "auditors." You know what auditors are. They come in and look at what you've been doing, but they don't do anything. It's like a class in college where people want to audit a class. They attend the class but don't do any of the work. They just WHAT? Listen... You just sit there and listen.

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I'm afraid that happens a lot around here on Sundays. Folks come and they just audit the "class" but they don't DO much of anything during the week. Yes, they listen, they hear the Word, but they don't commit to live it. They are HEARERS ONLY! What does the verse say is happening to these people? See the end of the verse...

### James 1:22

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

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Are you understanding what the half-brother of Jesus is saying? **The people who don't DO are deceived.** That word DECEIVED is another unique word. It is a word that's used in Mathematics, and it means to miscalculate. You get it wrong. You miscalculate, you are a person self-deceived. They actually believe they're okay, when in fact, they're dead wrong! Jesus said:

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### Matthew 7:21

<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

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Remember the time when Jesus was told that His mother and brothers were outside of the home where He was teaching? The people thought, "Surely He will want to see them because they are family." (Like that's something special.) But, Jesus said:

### Luke 8:21

<sup>21</sup> But he answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

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Jesus was serious about us "DOING." At one point an onlooker in the crowd (like a group-ee) shouted at Him. Do you know this account?

### Luke 11:27-28

<sup>27</sup> As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!" <sup>28</sup> But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

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He said in

### John 13:17

<sup>17</sup> If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

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Jesus cares about what we do folks! He really does. He wants us to obey Him. He said: "If you love me you will keep my commandments." Jesus said in the Great Commission:

### Matthew 28:19-20

<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in<sup>[a]</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

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Paul told the Roman church:

**Romans 2:13**

<sup>13</sup> For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

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Think about it. Where are we headed in James? We're coming to chapter 2:14-20. The heading in my Bible says: "**Faith Without Works is Dead**." That's the point James **begins making now** in chapter 1. Now in order to explain this truth of doing, James offers a great analogy...it's simply this: you've got to react to the Word properly by responding to it.

**James 1:23**

<sup>23</sup> 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.

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Now that's pretty clear, right? He says the person who just hears and doesn't do is like a guy who looks in a mirror and he sees his natural face. That literally means the face of his genesis or the face of his birth. You see yourself...your true self...the very kernel of you. But, then you go away and what?

**James 1:24**

<sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

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Now we've all experienced this in some way I'm sure...in a practical sense. For instance, I've been shaving and my phone rings and I forget what I'm doing and walk out of the house and forgot to finish shaving. I get to the office and rub my face and go...MAN! I got distracted. Don't we do that as Christians. **We get distracted and don't even look at our lives and ask**, "Honestly ask...Lord, how are we doing...me and you, Lord?"

**DOING...** That's the optimum word. How are we doing Lord?

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**Well, there's a way to tell how we're doing. The WORD OF GOD. That's where we look to be able to tell!**

**James 1:25**

<sup>25</sup> 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.

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Doers are the ones who are set free. They are the ones who obey! You see, it's what YOU AND I OBEY THAT SETS US FREE! But I get it...some think obedience is a drag, but it's not. It's freedom. Jesus obeyed His Father...never forget that.

**John 8:28-29**

<sup>28</sup> So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. <sup>29</sup> And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."

**John 5:19**

<sup>19</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father<sup>[e]</sup> doing. For whatever the Father<sup>[e]</sup> does, the Son does likewise.

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(Sermon on the Mount). I want you to see the absolute imperative importance Jesus placed on being DOERS of the Word.

**Matthew 7:21**

<sup>21</sup>“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

**Jump down to verse 24**

**Matthew 7:24-27**

<sup>24</sup>“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Listen church, those folks listening to Jesus on that hillside just outside of Capernaum knew all about shifting sand and solid rocks... Around Capernaum, there are beautiful beaches, but you don't build a house on shifting sands. You pour footers and drive down pylons, and build a strong foundation to build a home that will last. The Apostle John, who walked and talked and lived with Jesus for three years, said it this way:

**1 John 2:3-5**

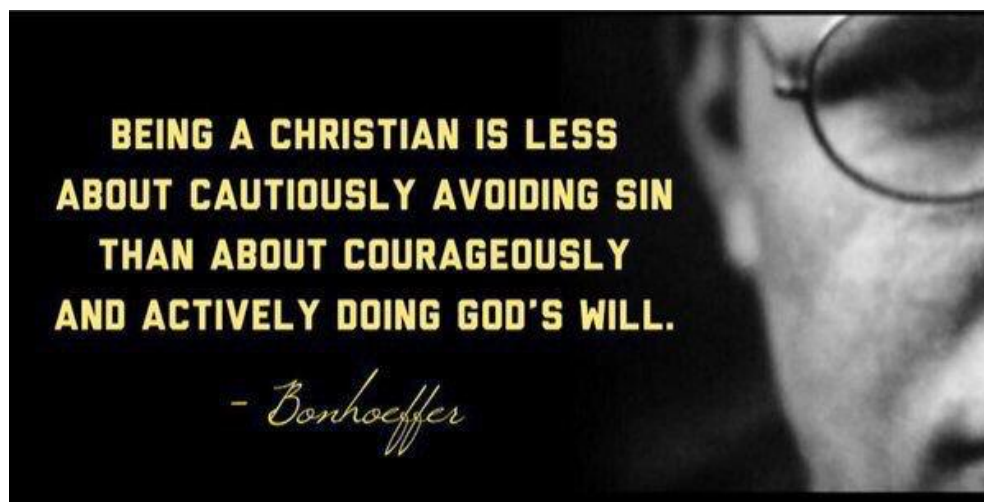
**3** And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. **4** Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, **5** but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: **6** whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

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True Belief DOES!!! True Belief has actions! Listen, if your Christianity allows you to cuss, drink, party, have relations with anybody you want to, lie, steal and cheat and still call yourself a Christian...you've deceived yourself. You have miscalculated! You are a hearer only.

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Will you look deep into your life tonight? What does it look like? Examine it. Are you a hearer or a doer? Are you living a life that longs for Jesus, beyond any other desire? Do you desire to live your life for Jesus and to obey His commands above everything else? I love what Dietrich Bonhoeffer said:



The Apostle John summed it well:

**1 John 5:3**

**3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.**

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Can you say that? Is keeping His commands a burden to you? If they are...John says you've got a problem! Oh, church family, Christianity today has become so superficial and so shallow for so many! Great Bible teacher, Arthur Pink says, "If I have never mourned over my waywardness then I have no solid ground for rejoicing." Sin should grieve us. But, for most it doesn't. The great preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon said this:

**"Want of depth, want of sincerity, want of zeal in religion, this is the want of our times. Lack of sincere dealing with one's soul, neglect of using the lance with our hearts, neglect of the search warrant, which God gives out against sin, that's the want of our day. Carelessness concerning living upon the true Christ, these are the causes of a tottering profession and a baseless hope."** Charles H. Spurgeon

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Spurgeon is right! The one who really loves Jesus obeys Him and is sincere in their devotion to Him. That means it's not a burden, but a great joy to spend time with Him in prayer and the Word. They take up their cross daily and deny themselves and are willing serve Him as Master of their lives. I'll say it again, dear Church Family, **Obedience is the key to blessing!**

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That's verse 25. How do we grow in our Christian life? How do we become the DOERS? Look at it:

**James 1:25**

**<sup>25</sup> 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.**

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"The one who looks into the perfect law?" That phrase literally means to stare at...to "intently ponder!" It's a different word than the word for "looks," back in verse 24. It literally means to get up close and look at the mirror like you are plucking an eyebrow or checking your face for wrinkles.

Listen, when you and I look intently to the Word of God...when we do so carefully, precisely, closely...it means you and I want to see the truth about ourselves. You and I really want to see THE TRUE ME. You see, for me to look in the mirror and see that I've got a bump on my face and then walk away do nothing about it...well, we've accomplished nothing!

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What is the mirror? It's the Bible. The mirror is the Scripture. It's the Word of God. And when you look into the Word of God intently, you'll see all the bumps and blackheads and dirtiness. You and I will see the sinful ugliness of anything we've not acknowledged to the Lord as sinful. We'll see that we need cleansing. What do you see? How are you living tonight?

The hearer only listens, has a brief glance in the mirror, and then walks away, and refuses to do anything about what he's seen. But on the other hand, the one who looks long and intently into the mirror of Scripture and understands what they've seen and heard, so much so that they are willing to apply the Word of God to their lives...that's when the transformation of DOING happens!

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Yes, "**doing the Word**" is the path of blessing. May the Lord help us to be DOERS of the Word!