



Parkway Fellowship

No Regrets • Goodbye to Bad Habits • James 1:21-25 • 09/22/2019

Main Point

Success in breaking a bad habit is not centered around will-power, it is centered around God's Word.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What has been a bad habit you have worked to overcome? What helped?

Why do you think bad habits are so hard to break, even when you have every intention of doing stopping that behavior?

We all know that habits are hard to break. While biting your fingernails doesn't have any impact on your walk with Christ, there are other behaviors that do. A primary emphasis in the book of James is the daily expression of one's faith in action. Evidently, James was dealing with some who tried to separate being a Christian from demonstrating one's faith in everyday life. James stressed the vital connection between hearing the Word of God and living it.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Ask a volunteer to read James 1:21-25.

**Do you ever find yourself trying to be a good person in your own willpower?
What is the difficulty in that?**

Based on verse 21, what is the key to making real life change?

Why do we often "hear" and not "do" when it comes to Scripture? What does

this say about our faith?

In what area of your life could you do a better job applying God's Word rather than just listening to it?

From this passage, what principles for breaking ungodly habits can you find?

James was concerned that believers persevere in living out God's Word. James maintained that just listening to God's Word was insufficient. When one hears the Word and does not act on the admonitions contained in it, that person really is engaging in self-deception. Simply listening to the message is not enough. For James, genuine religion and daily life could not be separated. He had little patience with those who claimed to be pious or religious but gave no evidence of inward change by their daily conduct.

During His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught the importance of being doers of the Word of God. Read Matthew 7:24-27. How important is putting the teachings of Scripture into practice, according to Jesus?

What do we risk happening when we are hearers only?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In this week's message, we learned we shouldn't just do more, we should be more. How would you explain the difference between doing and being? In what situation (or habit) do you need to "be" in Christ rather than do in your own strength?

We also learned that freedom is won over time, not over a weekend. What is one change you desire to see God make in you? How can we pray for you in that process of change that God will accomplish over time?

Pray

Thank God for His transformational work in your life over time as you earnestly seek relationship with Jesus. Ask God to open your eyes to the ways you need to put your faith into action.

Commentary

| James 1:21-25

1:21. Here James used the metaphor of removing soiled clothing (see Romans 13:12; Ephesians 4:22). We must eliminate everything in our lives that is contrary to God's Word and prevents righteous living. In order to experience personal transformation, we should receive the teachings of God's Word humbly rather than defensively or negatively. An humble attitude will provide an open door for God's wisdom to penetrate our minds and hearts.

1:22. James was concerned that believers persevere in living out God's Word (v. 22). The word "doers" refers to believers who hear the Word taught, read, or preached and put it into action in their lives. The term "hearer" describes someone who hears the words of Scripture without really listening to them. That person takes no actions as a result of attending a session in which the Bible is read and taught. People who do not act on God's Word cheat themselves of the full, meaningful, and useful life God intends for them.

1:23. One who is content to listen to God's Word and take no action is self-deceived because that individual has no clear, precise, lasting perception of self. James drew an illustration from everyday life to drive home this point (vv. 23-24).

1:24. James compared the person who listens without taking action with a man looking at his own face in a mirror but neglecting to do the needed grooming the mirror reveals.

1:25. In contrast to the person content to be a hearer of God's Word without acting on it, James presented a doer who acts (v. 25). This person looks intently into the perfect law of freedom. The law to which James referred is perfect because it gives freedom. James probably had in mind the gospel, God's message of salvation in Christ and the implications of redemption for daily living. It is this message of grace that sets people free.