

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“Moving From Agreement to Action”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): James/Jacob 1:22-27; James 1:22-27; James 1:18-21; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Psalm 19:8-15; Psalm 68:5; Matthew 21:28-32; Ephesians 2:10

There is a big difference between agreeing that something is true and actually living as though it is true. We all know what it is to hear something, nod along, and think, “Yes, that’s right.” But agreement is not the same thing as obedience. We can have a pantry full of ingredients, but if we never cook with them, they never become what they were given to become. In the same way, we can hear the Word, study the Word, quote the Word, and affirm the Word, but James says we must not misunderstand what receiving the implanted Word really means.

James has already told us to receive the implanted Word in meekness, the Word which has the power to save our souls, to rescue our lives. But now he presses the point further. Receiving the Word does not mean we simply store it up in our intellect or add another ingredient to the pantry. The Word of truth that brought us forth to new life now calls us to walk in that life. As James says, *“But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves”* (Jas. 1:22).

1. AGREEMENT IS NOT OBEDIENCE

James says, *“But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves”* (Jas. 1:22). The language carries the idea of becoming, of being made into a certain kind of person. This is not just, “Do a few religious things when you remember.” It is, “Become the kind of people who do the Word.” The Word of God is not merely information to be collected. It is the Word of truth that creates, forms, shapes, and brings forth the character of God in us.

And James warns that to hear without doing is to deceive ourselves. It is a kind of parallel word, something that may run alongside the Word, sound like the Word, and look close to the Word, but is not actually obedience to the Word. It is easy to hear, “Be slow to wrath,” and agree that it is right. It is much harder, in the middle of a trial, when anger rises up and malice feels instinctive, to actually set aside the filthy garments of wrath and receive the implanted Word with meekness. But wisdom is not just understanding. Wisdom is understanding that becomes visible in obedience.

2. THE WORD REVEALS WHAT WE MUST NOT FORGET

James continues, *“For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror—for once he looks at himself and goes away, he immediately forgets what sort of person he was”* (Jas. 1:23-24). The picture is simple and searching. A person sees something in the mirror, walks away, and does nothing with

what was revealed. In the ancient world, mirrors were not like the clear mirrors we have now. They were often polished metal, dim and unclear. But even with that glimpse, the point remains: the Word shows us the truth, and if we walk away unchanged, we are neglecting what God has shown us.

But then James gives the contrast: *“But the one who looks intently into the perfect Torah, the Torah that gives freedom, and continues in it—not becoming a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts—he shall be blessed in what he does”* (Jas. 1:25). “Perfect” in Greek (*telios*) points to something has been fulfilled or has accomplished its goal. To look into the “perfect” Torah is to intently look into the instruction of the Lord that is “accomplishing its purpose/reaching its goal.” This is not a quick glance. This is stooping down to get a better look. This is gazing intently into the perfect instruction of ADONAI, the instruction that restores the soul, makes the simple wise, gives joy to the heart, and gives light to the eyes. As David prayed, *“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You, ADONAI, my Rock and my Redeemer”* (Ps. 19:15). The one who truly looks into the Word is not looking merely to recite doctrine, but to know Him, to reflect Him, and to walk as He walks.

3. PURE WORSHIP MOVES INTO ACTION

James then shows us what Word-doing looks like in real life: *“If anyone thinks he is religious and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is futile”* (Jas. 1:26). That is strong language. If our worship does not reach our mouths, if it does not begin to shape the words that come out of us, then James says our religion is empty. We can be in the right place, saying the right things, singing the right songs, and still be deceived if what comes out of us does not reflect the character of the Lord.

Then James says, *“Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world”* (Jas. 1:27). Pure worship is not piety or religious thoughts and feelings divorced from real life. It is the ethical reflection of the character of God. God is Father to the fatherless and protector of widows. He is at home among the broken, the overlooked, the vulnerable, and the ones who have nothing. So if we are looking intently into His face through His Word, then we cannot simply know that He cares for the weak. We must become a people who care for them too.

CONCLUSION

Through James/Jacob, the Holy Spirit is not condemning us, but rathering, the Spirit is awakening us! All of us have places where we have heard more than we have done. All of us have had moments where we looked into the mirror of the Word, saw what needed to be surrendered, corrected, healed, or obeyed, and then walked away unchanged. But the Lord is gracious. He does not expose these things to shame us. He brings them to the surface so that the implanted Word can rescue our lives and form us into the likeness of Yeshua.

So today, the invitation is simple: do not just agree with Him. Respond to Him. Ask the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* to show you where the Word has been sitting in the pantry of your mind but has not yet been baked into your life in obedience. Maybe it is your anger. Maybe it is your tongue. Maybe it is the way you have neglected the broken and vulnerable around you. Maybe it is an area where you have said, “Yes, Lord,” but have not actually done the will of the Father. Come to Him with honesty and meekness, and say, “ADONAI, let Your Word not only be heard in me, but lived through me. Make me a doer of Your Word.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. James says we can deceive ourselves by hearing the Word without doing it. What are some ways this kind of self-deception can show up in religious life?
2. Why is wisdom more than simply understanding what is right? How does true wisdom become visible?
3. James compares a hearer-only to someone who looks in a mirror and then forgets what he looks like. What has the Word recently revealed to you that you do not want to neglect?
4. In a modern world filled with social media, arguments, outrage, and constant opinions, what does it look like to “bridle the tongue” as an act of worship?
5. James connects pure religion with caring for widows and orphans in their distress. Who are the vulnerable, overlooked, or burdened people around us today that we may be called to actively care for?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, our Rock and our Redeemer, thank You for giving us Your Word of truth, the implanted Word that has the power to rescue our lives. Forgive us for the times we have heard Your Word, agreed with Your Word, and even loved Your Word, but failed to walk it out. Cleanse us from hidden faults, keep us from willful sins, and let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable before You.

Teach us to look intently into Your perfect instruction, the Torah that gives freedom, and to continue in it. Make us doers of the Word and not hearers only. Shape our speech, our actions, our compassion, and our worship so that we reflect Your character in the world. May our lives not merely run parallel to obedience, but walk fully in it.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.