



FIRST BAPTIST
— CHURCH —
FAIR OAKS RANCH

Day 9: Doers, Not Hearers Only

James 1:22–24 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 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. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. (ESV)*

DEVOTIONAL

We have spent the last eight days establishing that the fear of the Lord is the beginning and source of everything in the Christian life. Now we ask the first practical question: what does this reverence actually produce? James answers plainly. A heart that fears God does not merely listen to His Word, it strives to obey it. This is the “F” of our F.E.A.R. journey: Faithful, fidelity to the Word of God and faithful obedience to its instructions.

James sets two Greek words side by side. A “hearer” is *akroates*, the word for someone sitting in an audience, an auditor taking in a lecture with no obligation to study or learn. A “doer” is *poietaes*, a maker, a performer, someone who produces and responds to what he heard. And James warns that to be only the first is to be “deceiving yourselves.” That’s a sobering and challenging thought. It’s possible to sit under theologically accurate preaching for years, to underline our Bibles, and to remain quietly deceived the whole time — mistaking familiarity with the Word with a faith leading to obedience to it.

James uses the illustration of a man who looks in a mirror, sees that something needs attention, then walks away and instantly forgets. Not because the issue didn’t need to be addressed but he remains indifferent to the blemish. This describes the hearer who never does anything about the moral ‘blemishes’ they discern when reading or hearing scripture preached. He receives the Word’s diagnosis; a temper to control, a habit to forsake, a relationship to mend, a forgiveness to be offered, but instead simply moves on with his day assuming the message was for someone else. Warren Wiersbe put the pattern of true discipleship in reverse of what we might expect: We obey by faith, and then we

understand: this is where illumination comes from (the enlightenment of the heart). We often want to understand completely before we obey. God says: obey, and understanding will follow.

Here is where this touches our theme of holiness. Purity is never produced by information alone. You can know every verse on the subject and remain unchanged. Holiness comes when reverence for God moves from the ear to the hands, heart, and feet. When the message we heard on Sunday actually governs the choice we make on Thursday night, alone, when no one would ever know. The person who fears the Lord doesn't just admire the mirror; he lets it change what he does about the image he sees.

TAKE AWAY

Don't just admire the mirror (scripture) and walk away. Pick one thing God's Word showed you this week and actually do it today; obedience is reverence with hands, heart, and feet.

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Lord to show you one instruction from His Word you've been hearing but not doing, and for the courage and self-control to obey it today.