

James 1:19–27 (ESV) *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.*

Would you say that you have a living, vibrant relationship with God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)? If yes, then you will have a living, vibrant relationship with His Word, the Scriptures.

Together we are under the word. (Not just over it as we read, but under it as we do what we read)

Vs 19-20 *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.*

Beloved - if you are a brother or sister in Christ you have a new identity.

and out of your identity comes your activity.

Before he tells you what to do, he tells you who you are. The result is that when we obey God, we're not working for the love of God, we're working from the love of God.

Anger is dangerous especially when expressed in speech.

Angry speech is a temptation to seek vengeance. Someone needs to pay for my pain.

Vengeful anger is reserved for God alone, so when we use anger to punish others, we in fact are acting as God.

Romans 12:19 (ESV) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

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

James added the idea of a residue (rampant), something left over from one's life prior to conversion.

Implanted Word that leads to life - as opposed to the pregnancy of sin that leads to death.

Vs 22 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

Let's be over the word but also let's be under the word

James 1:22 (MSG) *Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear!*

Too many Christians mark their Bibles, but their Bibles never mark them.

Vs 23-24 *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.*

Vs 25 *But the one who looks [parakypso] 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 first thing is you must look intently into the perfect law. This word is the same Greek word that describes Peter looking intently into the tomb on Easter Sunday morning.

"The Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid," Martin Luther.

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV) *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

Galatians 5:1 (ESV) *For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*

Jesus fulfilled the Word of God, he fulfilled the law of God, by going to the cross and taking the penalty we deserve for our law-breaking. There are two ways to fill the law. You either keep it, or you pay the penalty for breaking it. Either way, the law is satisfied. Jesus Christ came and lived a perfect life and fulfilled the law once. Then, he went to the cross and died and paid the penalty and fulfilled the law again. He took the curse our **law-breaking** deserves so that we could get the blessing his **law-keeping** deserves

Galatians 5:13-14 (ESV) *For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

Vs 26 *If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless*

Worthless - futile, empty, vain, useless, hollow, a Two-bit religion

The greatest contributing factor of gospel amnesia and self-deception is lack of gospel community.

Vs 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.*

Doing the Word after receiving the word must lead to obedient action. James tells us what that looks like - and its two-fold

1. Care for the poor (others)

Psalms 68:5 (ESV) *Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.*

Your Heavenly Father adopted you, a spiritual orphan, into His forever family. Jesus has paid the price for the church, his bride - to be engaged to her. He is preparing a dwelling place in Heaven for those that have trusted Him as Lord & Savior - He is coming back one day to take His bride home - Jesus is a better who offers a forever glorified life.

We are to be like Him - Father to the fatherless and protector of widows. Help the helpless and vulnerable.

Are you strong? What are you using your strength for?

Romans 15:1-3 (ESV) *We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."*

2. Keep yourself pure. (you)

Isaiah 1:15-17 (ESV) *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.*

(Fish out of water)

1. Pray
2. Be willing to be stretched
3. Get in a group
4. Help other groups

It is hard for us to be doers of undefiled religion because we think as individuals more than community. It is daunting, overwhelming to think about taking care of widows and orphans and the poor by yourself - **but** with a group of people where there are an array of gifts and talents, it is much more doable.

Be on mission with Jesus and like Jesus.

Together we are under the word.