

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

James 1:22–25 — Doers of the Word

Brief Summary

James teaches that following Jesus requires more than hearing God's Word—it requires putting it into practice. He warns that hearing without doing can become a form of self-deception, comparing the hearer to someone who looks intently into a mirror and then immediately forgets what they saw. The gospel is not merely something to believe; it is something to live. As we persevere in obedience, God's Word moves from something we hear to something that shapes the way we live.

1. BE DOERS, NOT HEARERS ONLY

James begins with a direct command: “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.” We can listen to sermons, study Scripture, and agree with biblical truth while still failing to let that truth change how we live. James calls this spiritual deception. We are a people in process, but being in process is not an excuse to never grow.

The warning is not simply about failing to obey. The deeper danger is believing that hearing God's Word is enough.

“We’re a people in process, but that’s not an excuse to never grow.”

For a follower of Jesus, hearing his words should naturally lead us toward obedience. God's Word is meant to change what we do, not simply add to what we know.

Takeaways

- Hearing God's Word without responding to it can create a false sense of spiritual maturity.
- Growth requires movement from knowing what God says to actually doing what He says.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think it is possible to hear God's Word regularly without actually being changed by it?
2. What does spiritual growth look like when we remember that we are “people in process”?
3. What is one area where God may be asking you to move from hearing to doing?

2. LET THE WORD SHOW YOU WHO YOU ARE

James compares the person who hears but does not act to someone who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror, walks away, and immediately forgets what he saw. The picture is intentionally absurd. A mirror reveals what is really there. James says God's Word does something similar.

The word “looks” gives the impression of examining something closely—like bending down to study something small and fascinating. God's Word deserves that kind of attention because it reveals what needs to change in us.

Takeaways

- God's Word functions like a mirror, revealing what is actually true about us.
- James calls us to look closely and examine God's Word rather than giving it only a passing glance.
- The purpose of seeing ourselves clearly is not shame, but transformation through obedience.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think James is emphasizing through the picture of someone looking in a mirror and then forgetting what they saw?
2. How has God's Word acted like a mirror in your own life?
3. What would it look like to examine God's Word more closely and intentionally this week?

3. PERSEVERE IN THE LAW OF LIBERTY

James describes God's Word as “the perfect law, the law of liberty,” and says the person who perseveres as a doer “will be blessed in his doing.” The “law of liberty” points back to the gospel message—the fulfillment of the Old Testament law, prophecies, and promises in Jesus.

The gospel is not merely a message to believe intellectually. It is the message that shapes the way we live. For James, maturity is impossible without doing, and perseverance matters as we repeatedly put God's Word into practice.

“The gospel isn’t just something to believe; it is something to live.”

Takeaways

- The “law of liberty” points to the gospel message fulfilled in Jesus.
- Christian freedom is not freedom from obedience; it is freedom to live according to God's truth.
- Perseverance matters—maturity develops as we repeatedly put God's Word into practice.

Discussion Questions

2. How can obedience to God lead to greater freedom?
3. Where do you currently see a gap between what you believe and how you live?
4. What is one concrete act of obedience you can practice this week?

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

James is calling us beyond simply hearing, knowing, or agreeing with God's Word. He wants us to become people who look closely at God's truth, allow it to reveal what needs to change, and then persevere in putting it into practice. The gospel is not just something we believe; it is something we live.

Putting It Into Practice

- What is one thing God has shown you recently that you need to act on rather than simply know?
- Where is there currently a gap between what you hear from God's Word and how you live?
- What specific step of obedience can you take this week?
- Who could help you persevere in following through?

Final Group Question

If someone watched your life this week without hearing what you believe, what would your actions tell them about what you have heard from God's Word?

Prayer Focus

- Ask God to expose any places where you are hearing His Word without acting on it.
- Ask God to help you look honestly into the “mirror” of His Word.
- Ask God for perseverance to obey, even when obedience is difficult.
- Ask God to help you live the gospel rather than merely believe it.