



9/29/26

*James 1:16-25*

*You may notice that a lot of the passages in the reading plan are around 10 verses. There's a purpose for that. It gives us the chance to dive deep and understand more fully how we can apply God's word to our lives... to study it not just for information, but for transformation. Here are 5 questions I often give women I counsel to answer when they go through the passages. It's a great start. But if you want something more, let me know and I'll give you another idea.*

*5 questions for reading plan...*

- 1. What do you learn about God?*
- 2. How does God want you to respond?*
- 3. How can you apply it to your circumstances?*
- 4. What sin do you need to confess?*
- 5. What can you thank God for?*

*Blessed studying!*

*Jonna*

*How do we overcome desires that would take us away from the Lord rather than to Him? Those desires don't come from outside sources, but from our hearts. So what do I do? The truth is, I WILL act on the desires of my heart. I need the Lord to change my desires so that they take me to Him. How does this happen? James 1:16-25 will help me understand.*

*First... I need a change in perspective...*

*Vs. 16-18 ~ "Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."*

*Left to my own mind and heart, I WILL be deceived. "The heart is deceitful above all things"*

*(Jeremiah 17:9). I need the Lord to reveal the truth to me.*

*This is what's true. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from my unchanging, faithful Father in heaven. From the Garden of Eden, the serpent offered a lie that got stuck in the heart of man from that day forward. He said that God is a liar who is trying to withhold good from us... but the serpent was the liar who offered pleasure only to destroy all good in us. What he offers SOUNDS good, but he never delivers good in the end.*

*The truth, the reality, is that everything God FREELY gives us, first of all, costs Him. Even my free gift of salvation cost Him. What is the deception I need to throw out? I need to stop believing that God wants to withhold good from me.*

*The truth is that everything God gives me is good, whether I understand it in the moment or not. So... if it's from God, it's good, and I want it. "God's will is what we would want if we had all the facts" (William Thrasher). I need to trust that God has all the facts and He knows what's good. So... if it's NOT from God, it's NOT good and I don't want it. O Lord, I am easily deceived. Please help me to believe what's true. Thank You for wanting to give me good and perfect gifts. I know I don't deserve them. Thank You for Your mercy.*

*Let me never forget the good news of the gospel, the most important good and perfect gift You gave me... and that is Jesus. John 1:13 says I was "born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." It was by YOUR will that You "brought me forth". You gave me birth... by the word of truth... Your word... that's Jesus... You did this for a purpose... so that I could be "a firstfruit", an offering, of Your creatures. YOU gave me new life. So I offer myself to You... You have offered Yourself to me.*

*With a change in perspective, I need to humble my heart, or I will be angry with the Lord when He doesn't give me what I want...*

*Vs. 19-21 ~ "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."*

*I have prayed vs. 19-20 regarding my approach to my marriage many, many times. It wasn't until one of my seminary professors pointed out that this, in context, was especially speaking about our relationship with the Lord. Be quick to listen to HIM. Be slow to speak when I am letting frustration over my circumstances make me question God's goodness. Be slow to get angry with Him.*

*A lot of times we will not want to admit that we're angry with God because we know we "shouldn't be." And truly, we ultimately know He's not at fault. But when I'm angry at my circumstances, or frustrated that a person has treated me a certain way, or bothered that I'm not getting my prayer answered with a yes... I'm probably frustrated with the Lord... which is a*

*nicer way of saying "angry."*

*No matter who I admit I'm angry with, ultimately, my anger doesn't produce the righteousness of God. It doesn't accomplish God's righteousness in me. It doesn't make me love what God loves and hate what He hates. It makes me want Him to bow to my desires. Maybe He's saying no for my protection or to teach me.*

*When I get angry with God, I am prone to drift to "filthiness and rampant wickedness." Yikes! That seems pretty extreme. But that's what will happen the more I choose SELF over God. Romans 6:19 explains that "lawlessness leads to MORE lawlessness." No one ever plans to do something extreme. It's one little wrong decision built on one little wrong decision until I find myself way downstream from where I started... and then I wonder if it's too late to come back. Praise the Lord, with Him it is never too late.*

*How do I protect myself from letting anger or frustration drive me from the Lord? First, listen more than speak. Then, RECEIVE His implanted word, that word that He has written on my heart through the Holy Spirit, with meekness.*

*Meekness... humility... gentleness. God, in His gentle, humble love for me, has given me the Holy Spirit who uses the word to help me see what's true about the Lord so that I'm not deceived. It is His word, implanted in my heart because of Jesus' sacrifice and the power of the Holy Spirit at work in me that has delivered my soul from eternal separation from God... AND continues to deliver my soul from the deception that would draw me away from God.*

*I NEED God's word. Otherwise, I will spend a lot more time speaking and a lot less time listening. And... "When there are many words, wrongdoing is unavoidable, But one who restrains his lips is wise" (Proverbs 10:19 NASB).*

*I have a big mouth. I talk a lot. As much as I talk to God, I need to spend twice as much time listening to Him through His word. I think of Mary and Martha in Luke 10. Mary sat at Jesus' feet to listen. Martha was working hard DOING, but not BEING in His presence. And she got mad. Her anger did not produce the righteousness of God. She called Jesus over and asked Him a question but didn't even wait for His answer. This is what happened... "Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.'" She thought she was totally justified and Jesus would see things her way and scold Mary!*

*But Jesus answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled (disturbed, making an uproar... that sounds like anger to me) about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." What is necessary? Listening to Jesus... the word become flesh.*

*But there's more! It's not just about listening to His word. It's also about putting it into action...*

*Vs. 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."*

*Okay... I can be deceived by own selfish desires... which lead me to think that God's withholding good from me rather than knowing that all good and perfect gifts come from Him. And I can also be deceived when I think that just hearing God's word is enough. If I hear God's word, the evidence of my faith in Him is that I do what He tells me to do... not to earn His favor, but because I have His favor. I also need to be careful not to think that He JUST wants me to DO what He says regardless of my motivation.*

*What parent tells a child to unload the dishwasher and is totally satisfied if that child screams at the parent about how he shouldn't have to do it, even though he still obeys. Obedience without faith and love is not obedience. And it won't last. If a person resents having to be obedient, she won't be obedient for long. If she's obedient for the wrong reasons, it will grow pride in her, not humility.*

*God wants me to hear His words which start with the gospel and follow them because I'm following Him in relationship. If I just listen, that's like checking a box to appease Him. I'm not fooling Him. I'm also grieving Him when I do that. He doesn't just want me to follow rules. He wants a relationship with me.*

*To listen and move on is to look INTENTLY as in a mirror and walk away and forget. How is that helpful? What happens when I walk away and forget? I start making decisions based on my own desires and then say things like, "I think God would want me to be happy" or "I think what God meant when He said no was really..." Don't be deceived. This will not end well.*

*Truly, when I'm taking in God's word and really thinking about what it means, I'll WANT to obey Him. I'll understand that He actually blesses me for being obedient to Him. He doesn't say, "Why should I bless you? You're just doing what you're supposed to do." He says, "Well done, my faithful child. I want to pour out My blessings on you. You bring Me joy."*

*So... what do I need to do?*

*Vs. 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."*

*I need to look into... peer in... look intently at God's word, His law of liberty... freedom. This is so huge!!! Don't be deceived! God's law is freedom! Not slavery! The world offers freedom and delivers slavery. The Lord calls me His servant and gives me freedom. To persevere in obedience to His word, counting it all joy when I meet trials of various kinds (vs. 2), this is when I will find the most freedom. He blesses me with freedom.*

*O Lord, let me not be deceived. You have given me the good and perfect gift of the law of freedom. Obedience to You is the greatest blessing I could imagine. You don't call me to slavery. You call me to freedom. Please help me to believe the truth of Your word. I have 2 ears and 1 mouth. Help me to listen twice as much as I speak. I am challenged and convicted by that thought. I need to do a lot more listening as I pour into Your perfect law of freedom. Amen!*