

Lessons From James

Hearers & Doers Of The Word

(Ja 1:19-27)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of "Lessons From James."
 - a. An exegetical look at the book.
 - b. Remember the context & content.
 - i. Context: Written to Jewish Christians outside of the Palestine area.
 - ii. Content: Written with the purpose to give the tools needed to grow from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity.
 - c. Last week we looked at how there would be various trials and they need to be overcome which is done with a joyful attitude.
 - d. This week we will look at what James says about being hearers & doers of the Word not just hearers.
3. Let us now examine the text.

I. Becoming A Hearer

A. Quick to hear

1. The idea here is not just hearing the audio but absorbing it ie paying attention to it.
 - i. "(a Semitic idiom, literally 'to hear with hearing') to listen intently and with presumed continuity—'to listen carefully, to listen and listen.'" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (283). New York: United Bible societies.)
 - a. **Ac 28:26** "saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive"¹
2. Same it idea as the two words for knowledge in **II Pt 1:5, 8**.
 - i. Gnosis and Epignosis.
 - a. Gnosis the gathering of information.
 - b. Epignosis the understanding of the information.
3. It's one thing to hear what someone says and a different thing to listen to them.
 - i. We are not to be like those who fall into the trap of the old saying, "in one ear out the other."

B. Slow to speak

1. This idea is in complete contrast to that of being swift to hear.
 - i. "form of an otherwise obsol. verb; to talk:, i.e. utter words:—preach, say, speak (after), talk, tell, utter." (Strong, J., S.T.D., LL.D. (2009). Vol. 1: A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible (44). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.)

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

Lessons From James

2. In other words we are to think about what we are going to say.
 - i. We are to process what we hear logically and lovingly then answer with this information in mind and in this say way we registered it, lovingly & logically.
- C. Slow to anger
 1. The idea here is paralleled with the previous statement.
 - i. "the natural disposition, temper, character; movement or agitation of soul, impulse, desire, any violent emotion, but esp. (and chiefly in Attic) anger." (Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti (452). New York: Harper & Brothers.)
 - ii. "fr. ὀργάω to teem, denoting an internal motion, esp. that of plants and fruits swelling with juice" (Ibid)
 2. Thus what we see is we are to be slow to swell up with emotional anger based on what we hear.
 - i. Why...because it doesn't produce righteousness (20).
- D. Many great sayings have come from this
 1. "Talk little and work much" (from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)
 - i. A rabbinical adage.
 2. "The righteous speak little, and do much; the wicked speak much, and do nothing." (Ibid)
 - i. Bava Metzia
 3. "Be swift to hear, and with deep consideration give answer." (Ibid)
 - i. The son of Sirach 5:11
 4. "Men have two ears, and but one tongue, that they should hear more than they speak." (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)
 - i. See Benson. So Valerius Maximus, vii. 2
 5. "The ears are always open, ever ready to receive instruction; but the tongue is surrounded with a double row of teeth, to hedge it in, and to keep it within proper bounds." (Ibid)
 - i. See Benson. So Valerius Maximus, vii. 2
- E. These three things help one hear the...
 1. Word of God (21)
 - i. If one is quick to listen to God's Word, one will see the truth concerning it.
 - a. **Ro 10:17** "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - ii. If one is slow to speak out, but rather one logically and lovingly considers the Word of God they will see truth.
 - a. **Is 1:18** "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool." (ESV)

Lessons From James

- iii. If one is slow to become angry at the Word of God one will see it is teaching truth.
 - a. **He 11:1** "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

[Just hearing the Word is not enough however we need to be doers of it.]

II. Becoming A Doer

- A. There are more expectations from people than just hearing God through His Word
 1. Adam and Eve heard what they were not to do, but they did it anyway and eventually got removed from the Garden of Eden.
 - i. **Gn 3**
 2. Moses heard God about speaking to the rock but he struck it instead and it kept him from the promise land.
 - i. **Nu 20:11**
 3. The disciples heard what Jesus said, pray, but didn't do it in the garden, they slept.
 - i. **Lk 22:40-46**
- B. God expects them to follow His Word
 1. God's Word was given they we should follow it.
 - i. **Jn 14:15** "If you love Me, keep My commandments."
 - ii. **Jn 14:21** "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."
 - iii. **Ps 103:18-19** "To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them. 19 The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all."
- C. This reality does away with some false concepts
 1. First on once saved always saved.
 - i. If there is law and expectation after one becomes a Christian then there is the ability to break law and not fulfill expectations and thus fall short or fall from grace.
 - a. **Ga 5:4** "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."
 2. Second that we cannot sin once we become Christians.
 - i. Some have this idea that if we sin we don't or can't love God.
 - a. **Jn 14:15** "If you love Me, keep My commandments."
 - ii. But this is simply not true.
 - a. **Rv 2:19-20** "I know your works, **your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.** 20 **But I have this against you,** that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols."

Lessons From James

- iii. Loving God is striving to keep His commandments even though we will still sin.
 - a. **I Jn 1:7-10** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."
- 3. Thus any doctrine that contradicts being doers of the Word of God is a false doctrine.
 - i. **Ti 2:1** "But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine"

III. Becoming A Pure & undefiled Religion

- A. This seems like an obvious point without much explanation
 - 1. However, though it is obvious, is it understood or listened to?
- B. Visit the widows
 - 1. How many of us really visit widows on a regular bases?
 - i. We have a number of them here in our congregation.
 - ii. It's something I think most struggle with "finding enough time to do so."
- C. Visit the orphans
 - 1. How many of us really visit the orphans?
 - i. We support many of them but that is not the same as visiting them?
 - ii. Once again time is hard to come by isn't it.
- D. When are we to visit the widows and orphans
 - 1. When they are in affliction.
 - i. Many teach and preach this as simply visiting them but that is not what is said here.
 - ii. It says visit them in their affliction or their distress.
 - a. The idea here is not to just simply visit them but to do so to encourage them and uplift them. Visiting is a good thing but visiting to encourage is all the more.
 - 2. Thus we must make time to encourage widows and orphans.
- D. Stay unstained from the world
 - 1. Zerr said concerning this, "Unspotted from the world' means to be free from the vices commonly practiced by mankind." (from Coffman's Bible Commentary, Copyright © 1971-1993 by ACU Press, Abilene Christian University. All rights reserved.)
 - 2. As is often the case with what James writes in chapter one he elaborates in the rest of the book.
 - i. **Ja 4:4** "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Lessons From James

E. Religion

1. Webster's defines religion as such, "a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices" (Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.)
2. Vines describes it as "signifies "religion" in its external aspect (akin to threskos, see below), "religious worship," especially the ceremonial service of "religion"... in Jas. 1:26, 27 the writer purposely uses the word to set in contrast that which is unreal and deceptive, and the "pure religion" which consists in visiting "the fatherless and widows in their affliction," and in keeping oneself "unspotted from the world." He is "not herein affirming ... these offices to be the sum total, nor yet the great essentials, of true religion, but declares them to be the body, the threskeia, of which godliness, or the love of God, is the informing soul" (Trench)." (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W. (1996). Vol. 2: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (520). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
 - i. Thus the Greek word religion simply means ceremonial service.
4. Pure and undefiled religion is thusly...
 - i. Adam Clark had this to say, "In the 28 th chapter of the 4 th book of his divine Instructions, LACTANTIUS, who flourished about 300 A.D., treats of hope, true religion, and superstition; of the two latter he gives Cicero's definition from his book De Natura Deorum, lib. 2 c. 28, which with his own definition will lead us to a correct view, not only of the etymology, but of the thing itself. "Superstition," according to that philosopher, "had its name from the custom of those who offered daily prayers and sacrifices, that their children might SURVIVE THEM; ut sui sibi liberi superstites essent. Hence, they were called superstitiosi, superstitious. On the other hand, religion, religio, had its name from those who, not satisfied with what was commonly spoken concerning the nature and worship of the gods, searched into the whole matter, and perused the writings of past times; hence, they were called religiosi, from re, again, and lego, I read." This definition Lactantius ridicules, and shows that religion has its name from re, intensive, and ligo, I bind, because of that bond of piety by which it binds us to God; and this he shows was the notion conceived of it by Lucretius, who laboured to dissolve this bond, and make men atheists." (from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)
 - a. Thus the biblical or pure religion is holy bond with God.

F. So to become a pure & undefiled religions person you must...

1. Have a holy bond with God by being a worker for God.
 - i. **Ep 2:10**

Lessons From James

CONCLUSION

1. C. S. Lewis once said, "Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither." (<http://goo.gl/bb5H9>)
 - a. Let us aim at heaven and with earth thrown in lets us use it to prepare for heaven by being great listeners and practicing pure and undefiled religion ie holy bond.
2. Question
 - a. Are we practicing listening and pure & undefiled religion?
3. Invitation
 - a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**