

## Listening and Doing

### James 1:22-25

**22** *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23* *Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25* *But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.*

This passage is a warning to Christians that our lives must be lived in subjection to the truth disclosed in God's word. There must be proof of not only hearing and knowing God's word, but of doing God's word. We must be "doers...and not hearers only."

In John 13:17, Jesus tells His disciples, "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." For many of us, the reason we are not experiencing God's blessing may be because we aren't putting His words into practice. We have the Holy Spirit as our Helper, and we are responsible for allowing the truth of God's word to sink deeply into our minds, and then *doing* what we have learned, received, and heard.

We can't allow ourselves or our congregations to become like dusty old libraries, filled with volumes of truth, but just sitting there, never used. Instead, we are to have a vibrancy about us, so that when we face the problems life throws at us we can see them for what they are and respond with the truth of God's word as we live it out daily. We cannot allow ourselves to be deceived, thinking we are growing as a Christian when we are in fact shriveling because we are not doing what the word says to do. May each of us take an honest look at our lives and identify the areas in which we need to become more active, those areas in which we have not truly obeyed. These areas will be the part of our lives which the Holy Spirit is saying, *Do not be a hearer only. Be a doer—for that is where the blessing lies.*

There is also a warning to those who believe they are Christians, but have deceived themselves into thinking that just because they have read the Bible, or have memorized some verses, or have attended church regularly, they are going to heaven. Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:21-23: **21** *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22* *Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23* *Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*

You see, even religious activity is not enough to ensure salvation. Only those who do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven. What is the will of the Father? James tells us in verse 27 - *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.* And Jesus instructs us in Matthew 22:37-39 that we are to *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,”* and to *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”* That is the will of the Father.