

Series: Faith in Action
“The Christian and the Bible” Pt. 1, # 5
James 1:17-21
1-31-16 Sun PM

1. The emphasis on vv. 19-27 is hearing, obeying, and sharing the Word of God so as not to be deceived [v. 22]. Not only are mere professors being deceived, but true believers can be deceived in their Christian walk.

2. This is the third test of a believer in the book of James. The first was his response to trials [vv. 2-12]. The second was his response to temptation [vv. 13-18]. The third is his response to the Word [vv. 19-27]. Hunger for the Word is evidence of a genuine salvation experience and a path to spiritual growth.

TT: The believer has three responsibilities toward God’s Word—Hear it, obey it, and share it. Tonight we look at hearing the Word of God! [vv. 17-21]. Two points

A. The Believer Receives the Word [vs. 17-18, 21].

“Engrafted word” means implanted. The Word [seed] is sown in our hearts as in the parable of the Sower [Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23].

Four kinds of hearts the seed falls on—

1. Hard heart which did not receive the Word and bore no fruit.
2. Shallow heart which was emotional with no depth and bore no fruit.
3. crowded heart which lacked repentance and sin choked out the Word and was unfruitful.
4. Fruitful [fertile] heart which received the Word and produced fruit. Some 30, some 60, and some 100 fold. The final test of salvation is fruit! The same thing James says in Chapter 2.

The Scriptures are involved in every genuine conversion [v. 21b].

No one is saved by a vision, experience, or self revelation. People are saved by hearing the Word, being convicted, repentance and faith.

The Word of God cannot work in our hearts unless we receive it the right way. Jesus warned, “Take heed what you hear.” Many have been under the teaching of the Word, but never seem to grow? They are dull of hearing.

This leads to my second point- How are we to make preparation to hear or listen to the Word of God?

B. The Believer Hears the Word [vv. 19-21]. The context is the believer's relationship to the Word.

1. Be swift to hear [v. 19a].

We know that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. We as believers should be quick, prompt, and ready to hear what God says thru his word. We must be a careful listener.

We should be ready to hear and be teachable. We should have a desire to take advantage of every opportunity to hear and learn God's Word. We should be eager to attend Sunday School, preaching, other occasions where the Word is proclaimed, or personal or group Bible study.

Honor the Word as from God and not man. Don't try to twist the Word or interpret it with personal opinions and biases. Let it speak for itself.

Accept it and don't argue with it [Gal. 1:10].

2. Be slow to speak [v. 19b].

We should listen more than we speak, why? Context lends itself to clearing our minds of our thoughts and listen to the Word.

When time comes to speak we should speak the truth in love and edify our brother. Know what you are talking about!

Often we argue with God's Word audibly and silently in our hearts.

Proverbs 10:19, "He that refraineth his lips is wise."

Proverbs 17:27, "He that hath knowledge spareth his words"

One thing that I am trying to learn and develop is to ask questions when questions are asked of me. This way you can get to their real motive.

3. Slow to wrath [v. 19c].

Context lends itself to not being angry at God or his Word. When the word exposes sin we should not get angry but repent.

Proverbs 14:29, "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly."

Peter was slow to hear, swift to speak, and swift to anger when he tried to split the servants ear in the garden.

Short tempers and hasty words are the source of many church fights. Man's anger does not produce righteousness [James 1:20].

4. Prepare the heart [v. 21]. Three ways-

It is almost like James sees the human heart as a garden. If left unattended, weeds would take over. The phrase, "superfluity of naughtiness" means abundance of wickedness. We can't receive the word in an unprepared heart.

I believe there is a healthy discussion of the Scriptures, but when we are argumentative, we may be planting weeds and not the Word.

Q- How do we prepare our hearts?

1. *By confessing our sins.*

1 Peter 2:1-2, Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, (2) As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Filthiness means moral vice or "ear wax." Sin that impedes the believer's spiritual hearing. *Wickedness* refers to evil desire or intent.

2. *By meditating on God's Word.* Ask God to teach you and correct any wrong belief or behavior. Ask God to open your eyes to understanding.

3. *Have an attitude of humility.* Our pride, hardness, and sin will make us unresponsive and unreceptive to God's Word.

Con: So the believer's first responsibility is to receive the Word then hear the Word.

Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, and prepared your heart. Then you are ready to obey the Word [vv. 22-25] as we will see next week.