

#JamesBibleStudy

Week 5 James 1:19-27

Read Chapter 1

In verses 19-27, what are some of the keywords James uses to make his point? Can you summarize his main point in ten words or less?

According to verses 19 & 20, what human response(s) is considered unrighteous by God? Why is this a problem? (See Matthew 6:33 for one example)

Consider these cross references from Proverbs that relate to James' teaching in verse 19: Proverbs 10:19; 11:12; 15:1; 17:28. According to these verses, what should characterize a Christian's way of relating to others?

How might these ideas (Vv 19-20), relate to the nature of temptation and the goodness of God, as previously mentioned?

In verse 21, do a word study or check some commentary notes on the commands in this verse (translated "put away" and "receive" in the ESV). What additional insight does this give you about 1) our responsibility and 2) how God helps us to progress in sanctification?

Next to the command to receive in verse 21, James uses an adjective to describe the attitude in which believers are to follow this command. Why is this attitude important for our growth in sanctification?

How does James describe someone who merely listens to the word and does not do what it says (V 22)?

In verses 22-27, the emphasis returns again to our responsibility to live according to the implanted word we have received. Compare with Paul's emphasis on this point in Romans 2:13 and Jesus in Luke 11:28.

In verse 25, James introduces the word "law" instead of "word" that he has been using up to this point in the letter. What is the content of this law that he refers to? Is he instructing believers to follow the Mosaic law? (Compare with Psalm 19:7 and Jeremiah 31:31-34.)

In verses 26-27, we are introduced to 3 themes of obedience which James will return to later in the letter. How would you summarize these?

In verse 26, James says those who do not control their tongue have a religion that is “worthless.” This word translates a Greek word that is often used in Scripture to characterize what? (see Acts 14:15; Rom. 1:21; Eph. 4:17)

James also uses the word “religion” in verses 26-27. In much of the Christian world today, this word is avoided and/or specifically denigrated. Why do you think that is? What does this word mean in context and have we erred by avoiding its use?

Reread verses 12-27. Does anything new stand out to you about the Christian life or character of God? Please share your additional thoughts and discoveries with us!

Going Deeper:

Pick 1 of the above verses to read some commentary on. Share any findings of interest below.

The ESV study Bible has this note on verse 20: “The self-reliant anger of man, even when directed against some wrongdoing, fails to recognize that mere human reproach cannot change another person’s heart, and thus it does not produce the righteousness of God; nor indeed is such anger fully righteous itself. God is holy and righteous, requiring that his people emulate his righteous character (e.g., Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:16).” As you reflect on your own efforts to influence others, are there times when you have been motivated by anger to speak out rather than love? (Eph. 4:15) Take a moment to confess these times to the Lord and ask Him to transform you, making you a holy witness for Him.

One commentator has this to say about verse 22, “Paul uses this same verb in Col. 2:4 (its only other occurrence in the NT), where he warns the Colossian Christians about false teachers who ‘deceive’ people ‘by fine-sounding arguments.’ The idea of ‘deceive’ in these contexts is clear: to be ‘deceived’ is to be blinded to the reality of one’s true religious state. People can think that they are right with God when they really are not. And so it is for those people who ‘hear’ the word—regular church attenders, seminary students, and even seminary professors—but do not ‘do’ it. They are mistaken in thinking that they are truly right with God. For God’s word cannot be divided into parts. If one wants the benefits of its saving power, one must also embrace it as a guide for life. The person who fails to do the word, James therefore suggests (in an anticipation of his argument in 2:14–26), is a person who has not truly accepted God’s word at all.” [Moo, D.

J. (2000). The letter of James (pp. 89–90). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.] How have you seen this play out in your own life, or in the lives of those around you?

Are there any teachings of scripture that you are merely listening to and not putting into practice? Take some time to pray and ask God to search your heart and show you any areas where you are self-deceived in the practice of your faith. Then ask the Lord to help you to trust and obey His words.