

Men to Men Ministry

Lesson six in the Letter of James

Hearers of the Word

Teacher: Just Larry

Phone: 916-337-2648

WEB: <https://theinsight.com/just-james/>

Email: ljmonson@hotmail.com

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChnVaqrTKIZ9p7UjdvYOw>

Lesson #6

James 1:21–24 NASB

21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

Introduction “

The roots of both Judaism and Islam come from the same ground. Both acknowledge the creation, the existence of the fall and the necessity of the written word. In simplistic summary Islam believes in seven precepts or beliefs:

1. God is the creator of all things.
2. Belief in the Oneness of God.
3. Belief in the Angels of God.
4. Belief in the Revelations (Books) of God.
5. Belief in the Prophets of God.
6. Belief in the Day of Judgment.
7. Belief in Divine decree and total sovereignty (Qadar)
8. Belief in Resurrection after Death.

The beliefs of Judaism

1. God is the Creator of all created beings;
2. He is premundane and has no peer. God is one;
3. The whole universe is created;
4. God called Moses and the other Prophets of the Biblical canon;
5. The Law of Moses alone is true;

6. To know the language of the Bible is a religious duty;
7. The Temple at Jerusalem is the palace of the world's Ruler;
8. Belief in Resurrection contemporaneous with the advent of the Messiah;
9. A final judgment;
10. Retribution.

Both recognize the writings as the revelation of God's will for man. Both may well be given the title of People of the Word.

Within the beliefs of Christianity there is a constant and powerful echo through the ages of a dependence on the Word.

We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation.

21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

What is the therefore, there for?

As we saw last week there is a likelihood of some attitude of anger in the church. Not a momentary flaring of the nostrils type of anger, but deep seated vengeful anger. An anger that is calculated and stewed upon until it lashes out. It is obvious that the writer was concerned about this rot that could well split the church. Division, no matter what the cause or reason is never to give rise to anger. This idea of anger and division is what the therefore is therefore. Even in the earliest church there were places of deep seated anger. For some it was an anger of the loss of relationship to other devout Jews. For others it was an anger of the change in their church to now accept Gentiles. Perhaps it might be anger at the ongoing and numerous specious and heretical teachings that were trying to invade the orthodoxy of the church. Whatever the reason the result was the same: Anger.

The therefore was to acknowledge the danger the church was facing. All the external had the possibility of internal.

Put it away.

James is telling the established church there were things that needed to be eliminated. The church was to strip themselves of all vice and filthiness. The language here gives us a picture of a person who has worked hard and soiled his clothes so severely that they must be stripped off and simply thrown away. They were of no use at all. Not for rags, not for "I will fix them some day storage", but take them out to the dump casting them into wind. They are worthless because they defile the wearer. So filthy, so much a reminder of the past that they were something you would call a hazmat team to take away.

The second object that needed the hazmat team was the remains of wickedness. Those things that have entwined themselves in the life and habits of the redeemed that are a constant reminder of the past.

I have listened to the testimonies of the redeemed. They are full of glory and hope. But on occasion they are more about all the terrible things they had done. It is as if the past

measure of wickedness made the grace of God bigger. There was almost a pride in how bad they were. Their words seem to place the importance of what they were saved from more than the new life that they had become. It would seem that the wickedness of the past was carried along like a red badge of courage.

What James was simply saying the past, including anger in the previous section, is no longer worth talking about. Get rid of it. Be a new creature. Come to the leveling place for all those who believe. This is true humility. Our testimony is not about the past but the place where God has placed you today.

The Word of God must be **implanted**

James was writing to Jewish Christians. They were taught at the earliest part of their lives that the Word of God was the foundation of the family. The first words of every Jewish child included Moses, Temple, and Peace.

When we take the time to consider the power of the Word of God, it becomes evident that the Word should be and is very important to the Christian! Yet James puts a qualifier on the Power of God. The words James was conveying to the Jewish Christians there is an additional qualification “The Implanted Word” can only be realized when certain conditions are met.

The first qualification for the power of the Word is that it must be implanted *émphytos*. The Word of God must be so deeply a part of the spirit that it becomes a fertile place to grow. James here is telling the Jewish Christians and to all Christians to implant the Word of God with gentleness.

This word *émphytos* has two meanings. The first meaning tells us that the Word of God has become so much a part of the hearer that it becomes a living growing part. It is that part of us that instinctively is drawn to the thoughts and admonitions of God that they become part of a believers mindset. It has become a part of every thought and consequently willful actions. It may be in a sense that this implantation becomes the spiritual conscience.

The second meaning of this word infers it is like a seed planted into the ground which grows. It echoes the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:1-8. It is sown and it is the responsibility and condition of the soil to provide a place of growth.

While there may be inferences and hints as the method of implantation, the result is the same: WE ARE CHANGED by the Word of God. This gentile implantation requires us to do something. Being changed by the Word of God requires us to act. And that action is empowered by the WORD OF GOD.

Therefore we must be sure to take the words out of the pages and implant them into our hearts! If we don't we are no different from the Jews who gave lip service to their Words written on stone. There is a difference, but that difference was not between Jew and Gentile but between the redeemed the unredeemed. A distinguishing feature of the those under the New Covenant is that the Word of God is the distinction of where the Powerful Word of God has residency. Note in Hebrews 8:6-13 which quotes from the Old Testament: **6) But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, to the extent that He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.**

7) For if that first covenant had been free of fault, no circumstances would have been sought for a second.

8) For in finding fault with the people, He says,

“Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, When I will bring about a new covenant With the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

9) Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers On the day I took them by the hand

To bring them out of the land of Egypt; For they did not continue in My covenant, And I did not care about them, says the Lord.

10) For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel After those days, declares the Lord: will put My laws into their minds, And write them on their hearts.

And I will be their God, And they shall be My people.

11) And they will not teach, each one his fellow citizen, And each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ For they will all know Me, From the least to the greatest of them.

12 For I will be merciful toward their wrongdoings, And their sins I will no longer remember.”

13 When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

So we must ask: Where is the Word of God today? Is it more that ink inscribed on paper. Or have we have we read it often enough, meditated upon it enough, that it has become implanted in our hearts as well?

I still carry my Bible to church. I know it will be emblazed in all its glory on three giant screens, I know I can have it on my tablet or phone for convenience and rapid referral. But in my Bible are hundreds of associated memories. Memories of past sermons and Bible studies. Memories of insights revealed to me when I sought and cried out for understanding. It may be old school but for me it is a representation of my life, my hopes, my down times, my up times and most of all my dreams.

The Power of the Word of God

21 “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. “

Several observations can be made about the Word of God from this passage, and the first is what the Word is able to do in our lives. **There is power in the Word of God.**

The Word of God has the power to SAVE

James states very clearly, the Word of God has the power to save our souls! As we remember there are three parts to the human nature: The Body which receives input from the world around it and it has needs, wants, desires, feels pain which it reports to the second part of our self, the soul. The body is not eternal, it passes away, it is flawed and is not eternal. Second of reporters is the spirit, it takes input from others ideas, standards, and expectations. The spirit is also the connecting point between God and the person. God’s spirit speaks to our spirit on attitudes, perceptions, passions, and emotions. The

spirit is also the repository of knowledge. From this spirit comes impressions, and logic. The spirit also reports to the soul. The soul is the decision maker. It takes input from the body and the spirit and makes a decision as to what attitude the spirit should have and the actions that the body needs to do. Therefore, the Power of the Word of God comes through our spirit.

The words James uses the word *sōzō* which means to save, rescue, deliver; to heal; by extension: to be in right relationship with God, with the implication that the condition before salvation was one of grave danger or distress (THAYER). This is a good thing. A PERFECTLY GOOD THING. The Word of God has the power brings us into new life. The Word has the strength to cause us to be born again. **”Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart. For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable that is, through the living and abiding word of God.”** The Word of God contains God’s way of salvation through the LOGOS of John 1:1 **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”**

This Powerful Word must be applied to our lives 22-25

We have put away all the bad stuff never to be seen again, we have experienced the power of the Word of God to save our very souls. Now James moves further to application. There is a requirement of additional action associated with the application of God’s Word in our lives.

We must be “doers of the Word and not hearers only”

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

Conditioned action must follow implantation. If there is no action, if there is no response, we are deceiving ourselves. God is not deceived by our lengthy recitations of scripture if we do nothing about them. The devil is not doing the deceiving, it is the dependance our own head knowledge that never results in positive actions, it is self deception. The world is not deceived, it may hold you up as a great scholar but not a great Christian.

James returns to a thought he had earlier dropped (v. 19). It is not enough to be a hearer of the word (23) only. One must hear before he can do; but to hear without doing is to become guilty of self-deception (22). Such a person is like one who sees himself in a mirror-that smudge on his face that should be washed away-but who does nothing to remedy the situation. Here James expresses one of his most characteristic ideas. Theory without practice, hearing without doing, faith without works is anathema to him. It is only as we continue in the perfect law of liberty as doers of the work (25) that we are blessed. Perfect law of liberty is an apt description of the moral law the Christian keeps as the offering of his love to his Lord (John 14:15). It is not a law that limits. It is a law that liberates. It sets us free to live as our own best interest demand. It brings the wisdom of God to bear on the moral problems of our existence. It marks out the danger spots to avoid. We do not break God's law. We break ourselves on the realities it warns us against. The

man who jumps from a tenth-floor window does not "break" the law of gravity. He just illustrates it.

CONCLUSION

The Spiritual Mirror: James compares God's Word to a spiritual mirror. When we listen, we glimpse our reflection: the good, the smudged, the "Oops, spinach in my teeth!" Slow speech lets us polish that mirror. It's not about eloquence; it's about authenticity. Our words reveal our hearts.

So, my friends my beloved, let's practice this art: Listen like you're collecting rare seashells on a quiet beach. Speak like you're crafting origami with precise, intentional folds. And when anger knocks, offer it a comfy chair and a warm drink but pay it no attention.

It is up to us to rid ourselves of "all moral filth and the evil." The Greek text speaks of "filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness."

The point of James' illustration of the mirror neglected is that the Word of God reveals our flaws for the purpose of confession and correction. Looking in the mirror of God's Word and not obeying what it says, makes us into people whose short-term memory is failing. People, who forget what they look like, refuse to look at themselves as they are. They lack the honesty necessary to confess and ask for God's help to change. "Christianity is a religion of action. As important as it is to listen (James 1:19), one must not stop there. Doing must follow listening. To be a hearer only is a form of self-deception."

It has been pointed out that the mirror only reveals the need; it does not cleanse or purify. When the mirror reveals our smudges, we take recourse to water and soap to do the cleaning part. Spiritually this translates into the revelation of sin the Word of God produces in our heart, which will lead to confession and assurance of forgiveness and cleansing by the blood of Christ.