

James: Putting the Word into Practice

James 1:19-27

Listen First (v. 19-20)

- James instructs us to exercise restraint in our speech
- We should prioritize listening over speaking
 - This reflects wisdom found in the OT (Pro 17:28)
 - And Jewish literature of the intertestamental period (Sirach 5:11-13, c. 200-175 BC)
- When we speak without first really listening, we are apt to respond out of ignorance or misunderstanding
 - This can lead to anger
- This anger does not lead to righteous actions or attitudes, which God wants to produce in us

Act Second (v. 21-25)

- To produce righteousness in us, we must:
 - Take off the clothes of unrighteousness
 - Actions & attitudes that make us morally filthy & are overwhelming
 - Put on the righteous life that Christ offers by accepting the truth of God's Word
- But we must do more than *just* hear the Word
 - We must put it into practice
- If we only listen to but don't practice God's truth, we become self-deceived
 - We may even become self-righteous
- But when we reflect on God's word and put it into practice
 - We experience freedom from sinfulness & selfishness
 - We are blessed

Real Religion (v. 26-27)

- James calls us away from worthless religion to a real one
 - Religion (*thraskeia*): Worship of and service to God
- Real religion expresses itself in 3 major ways:
 1. Controlling our speech
 2. Helping the helpless
 - God has always called His people to aid the helpless, like orphans & widows (Ex 22:22; Deut 14:29)
 - God is even called their champion (Ps 68:5)
 - And calls us to be the same (Isa 1:11-17)
 3. Avoiding worldly influence
- Throughout the rest of the book, James will flush out what living out this real religion looks like

So What?

- Are we listening more than speaking?
- Are we hearing *and* practicing God's word?
- Are we living out real religion?

Meditation Verse: *James 1:27*