

Don't Forget the Word, But Obey It

by James Jennings

This sermon from James 1:19-25 emphasizes the importance of receiving the Word of God with humility and acting upon it. The speaker highlights the danger of forgetting what God has shown us and not following through with obedience, stressing the need to be doers of the Word and not just hearers. The message challenges listeners to examine which category they fall into among those who receive the Word but do not act upon it.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:1, Psalms 119:16, Philippians 2:13, Hebrews 12:14, James 1:22, Matthew 10:22, Romans 13:11, 1 Peter 1:9, Luke 11:28, Proverbs 7:1, Psalms 119:61

Topics: "Humility in Receiving God's Word", "Obedience to God's Commands"

Description

This sermon from James 1:19-25 emphasizes the importance of receiving the Word of God with humility and acting upon it. The speaker highlights the danger of forgetting what God has shown us and not following through with obedience, stressing the need to be doers of the Word and not just hearers. The message challenges listeners to examine which category they fall into among those who receive the Word but do not act upon it.

Transcript

James 1, v. 19. Go ahead and read v. 19-25. I'll give a couple of comments as we read and point out some connecting words and try to give you a sense of his flow here.

James 1, v. 19. Know this. There's something he wants us to know.

My beloved brothers, professing Christians, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. Why slow to anger? Why slow to sin? Verse 20, for because the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Verse 21, Therefore, or on account of what I just said, in view of the anger of man not producing the righteousness of God, put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness.

So put away and receive with meekness the implanted Word. Why? Which is able to save your souls. Verse 22, it gives a caution.

But be doers of the Word that you're receiving, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he's like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets.

Forgets what he was like. But, the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. So we're going to look specifically at the command in verse 21.

He commands us to put away all filthiness, but I mainly want to look at the second part. He commands us to receive with meekness the implanted Word which is able to save your souls. That's what I want to focus on.

We're going to look, after a brief introduction, we're going to look at four types of people that are implied in this section of Scripture. Actually, I think it's five. I added another.

Four or five. We'll find out when I get there. I forget.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank You that You've even given us words of truth in the midst of a world of lies that we have something to go to where we know it's entirely true and it sanctifies us. Your Word is truth.

Lord, here we hear it saves us as we'll look at. So, Lord, thank You for allowing us to be here to receive the Word. And Lord, I pray You would give us a heart of meekness, humility.

Lord, that we would receive it as it really is, the Word of God. And Lord, I pray You'd help me to teach it accurately, interpret it correctly, that I might be representing You in every way in truth. And Lord, we pray the same for those who are starting in this rotation back there of teaching the kids during 10 a.m. Lord, we pray You'd be with the words of their lips that they would rightly handle Your truth.

And Lord, we pray You'd save our kids. Please, Lord, open their blind eyes. Whether young or old here, Lord, Lord, we ask that You would bring salvation to this place and help this morning.

In Jesus' name, Amen. So as I mentioned, James gives us two commands. Verse 21, Put away all filthiness and receive with meekness the implanted Word.

He gives these two commands on account of what he said in verse 20. We see this in the word, verse 21, Therefore, on account of what I just said, that the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God, because that's true, put away anger. Put away sin.

Because a life of that is not to be true of the true Christian. Now, he mentions here sinful anger. He hits on anger specifically in verse 20.

For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. But we shouldn't take away from that that anger is the only thing on his mind. Because in verse 21, does he say put away all anger? No, he says all filthiness, all rampant wickedness.

Or some versions, put away all remaining sin. Put away all remaining sin. So, he mentions anger.

We're not going to get into ideas of why he specifically mentions that here, but the general idea is put away all sin. Because it does not produce the righteousness of God. So, let's think of this.

What does produce the righteousness of God in verse 20 mean? It cannot here refer to imputed righteousness. Why? Or what is imputed righteousness? If you don't know, that's Jesus' perfect record of obedience. That's the basis for our justification in God's courtroom.

The believer has Christ's righteousness. Therefore, I am declared legally righteous before God's courtroom. I'm led into heaven based upon being perfect in the eyes of God, based upon the perfection of Jesus Christ.

To be justified. Declared just as if you've never sinned. Just as if you lived perfectly.

As Charles Leiter rightly points out in his book, to be declared just as righteous as Jesus Christ. Because you have that very righteousness of Christ that we've received by faith. Not something we've produced in our life.

It wouldn't make sense in verse 20 if James was referring to imputed righteousness. You could read the verse like this. If you're sinfully angry, you won't produce, you won't achieve an imputed righteousness.

It doesn't make sense. Because it's not something we achieve. It's not something we produce.

It's something given to us. So no, when he says here in verse 20, the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God, that righteousness of God is not talking about the imputed righteousness given to us by faith that Christ has achieved. Rather, you think about this whole letter.

David went through it years ago. Constantly, James is talking about works that prove someone has genuine faith. You have your Bible open.

Look at chapter 2. Verse 14, what good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith, but does not have works? You could read it like this. What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith, but his life does not produce the righteousness of God? Can that faith which does not produce the righteousness of God save him? Verse 15, no, he does something practical. If a brother or sister is poorly clothed, lacking in daily food, and one of you says, go in peace, be warmed and filled, without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

So in the context of the letter, James is thinking about a practical righteousness that the Christian lives out that proves they have a genuineness of their faith. Chapter 1, verse 3, you know the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. That's one thing that happens when we're being tested.

What does it produce? What does the trial in your life produce? Does it produce you going in a direction of being steadfast and obedient? Or of being sinful and given to your sin? Angry at God. Philippians 1 mentions something similar. Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.

So the point is this, there is a life that gives evidence one is born of God. Verse 20, there's something that's produced in the life of the born-again Christian. And it's not a life of rampant wickedness and sin.

It's a life of putting away those things and receiving the implanted Word which is able to save your soul. So let's now look for a moment at verse 18. This all the more confirms this.

He talks about salvation here. Verse 18, of His own will, He brought us forth by the Word of Truth. Why did He bring us forth? Why did He give us life? That we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

So the Lord saves someone, and He's going to make them a certain kind of creature. He's going to make them bear fruits. They're going to look a certain way.

2 Corinthians 5.17, what does it say we become? New creations. New creatures. What does it say happens to the old? The old passes away.

There's something new. Born again. You're regenerated.

So is a life of anger? Is a life of sin? What it says He saved us for in verse 18? No, but we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. And His creatures fight against sin. His creatures radically fight against sin.

The violent inherit the Kingdom of God. They take it by force. They're cutting limbs off.

They're being radical against that which offends the Lord Who they love Who died for them. Verse 18 uses a similar phrase referring to the Word of Truth. In Ephesians, it says you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel.

So when you think of the Word of Truth, you're hearing the Gospel, the good news of Christ. You're hearing the truth of the Scriptures. So, for those here two weeks ago, just a quick reminder, we looked at Psalm 32.

And what happens when the believer keeps silent about sin and goes astray? What does their father do to them? What animal did David say we're like? A horse or a mule? Horses sound a lot more elegant. I like to say mule. I think that paints a better picture.

Maybe back then it was more interchangeably used. He puts a bit and a bridle in our mouth. And He applies pain and pressure and brings us back to His fold.

Every true child of God experiences that discipline and the heavy hand of God upon them. As David said, His strength is dried up by the heat of the sun. Our God will work in us.

It says in the New Covenant, He will cleanse us of all of our idols. We even pray that sometimes in elders' meetings in the past. I remember we'd pray that, Lord, You said You would cleanse Your people of all of their idols.

Do that which You said You would do. We should be praying that in our own lives. The Lord wants, verse 27 says, religion that is pure and undefiled before God.

And He goes on to say, to visit the orphans, widows in their affliction, so there is absolutely compassion, but then He says this, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. To not be friends with the world, which makes us enemies with God, He goes on to say later. So, I want to consider, that was kind of an introduction, I want to consider an introduction to explain some of the logic and the terms there.

Righteousness of God is not imputed righteousness of Christ. It's referring to the keeping of God's standard that God is working out in every born-again Christian where there is a holiness without which you will not see the Lord. Hebrews 12, 14 says.

And the Lord is bringing this about in our lives. Now, verse 21, in view of a sinful life not producing the evidence one is of the Lord, we should put away all filthiness and we should receive with meekness the implanted Word. Let's think for a moment about that first command.

I don't want to dwell on it, but let's think about it. Put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness. Don't you like how he even words it? Rampant wickedness? I mean, is that going on in Christians' lives? Rampant?

Some versions render it differently.

Remaining sin. You kind of think about it. It's like the Israelites in the Old Testament.

They took over the land, and yet there were some enemies still left and they had to take them out. Same thing with the new creation in Christ. We're new, and we've got possession over this land, but there are still remaining enemies in the heart, in the flesh, that we've got to put to death.

But the Bible often speaks this way. It first tells us to put away, and then it tells us to put on. And I think James is doing the same thing here.

It doesn't say put on the Word, but it says receive with meekness. So James is saying put away, but he does not stop there. He doesn't just say put away.

He doesn't leave you thinking about I've got to stop sinning. I need to put away sin. He directs you and says go receive with meekness.

The Word. Put away. Thought about Asa 1 Kings 15.

You say how do I put away sin? Well, if it's physical, Asa says he put away the male cult prostitutes out of the land and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. Something physical is pretty easy sometimes. Just get rid of it physically.

Cut it off. If it's internal, you cut off that way of thinking. You put away that mind.

You renew your mind. You think of truth. You change your mind.

As Tim dealt with last week, repentance. You change your mind about how you view that sin. So, the Bible does not just tell us to put away.

It tells us to put on, in this case, here we've got our command, receive with meekness the implanted Word. That shouldn't shock us. What might shock you is this next phrase, which is able to save your souls.

That's something that could make someone uncomfortable. Well, look at that. But this second command, let's first think about what implanted Word means.

And in the end, a simple way I think is faithful is it is simply just going to mean the Scriptures. It's going to mean receive the Bible through reading it and through hearing it preached. That's what we're going to arrive at, but there is something here that could encourage us.

Verse 18 speaks about our conversion. He brought us forth by the Word of Truth. Well, when you're born again and God has this covenant with you, what did the Old Testament speak of that the writer of Hebrews quotes? He speaks of something in this covenant.

Hebrews 8. And this sounds similar to the implanted Word. Something that's put in you and already there. He says in Hebrews 8.10, I will put My laws into their minds and write them on their hearts.

So that conversion's something's being implanted and put within us. I wish that meant we had the whole Bible memorized that conversion. I wish He just took this and implanted it in you.

That's not the case. Not at all. So we know, just appealing to our own experience, there's no way the implanted Word and it written on our hearts means we've got the whole thing memorized and we don't need to read it.

There's tons of exhortations, this one being one of them, that command us to be receiving the Word. This clearly doesn't mean we don't need to meditate about it. But you know what? It does teach us there's something real at conversion when we're brought forth.

There's something real God does in the heart where there is a hunger for the Word. Where we're actually receiving that which we've already received. As hard as that can be to understand.

And I would say that's part of why this is food. You've already got this innate desire in you for the Word, and that's why it is the delight of the righteous man to meditate on His law day and night. Or Job, what did he say? Your Word is more important to me or precious to me than my portion of food.

So the Christian, they eat, they devour the Word. 1 John, he even says, I write to you young men because you are strong and the Word of God abides in you. And we can read that and think, well, he just means they've really read and studied the Bible.

Well, I think that's true. But at the same time, he's acknowledging that the Lord has written His truth on them and that's evident in their lives. They're living as those who have God's law upon their heart.

Even if they don't have a copy of the Bible and they're saved over there in Iran, you're going to see something of them obeying the truth because God has written that on the heart. They're obedient, Romans 6, 17 says, from the standard of teaching to which you have been received. They're obedient from the heart.

So, my summary of that word implanted word is to simply say it refers like the Word of Truth. It's referring to the Gospel. It's referring to the truth.

It's referring to our Bibles, our God-breathed Scriptures that have been given to us. We should be receiving the Word as you guys are here right now if you're listening. You're seeking to receive the Word.

Now, let's think of that word receive. Verse 21, receive with... then he has an attitude, meekness, the implanted word. We just looked at implanted word, and then we see what it does, which is able to save your souls.

Let's think about receive for a moment. Receive. The lexicon, it gives these different words that can put a picture to this.

It means to take with the hand. Your husband at the altar receives the wife. Take her in the hand.

He's receiving. Take hold of. It means to receive, to grant access to a visitor.

Not to refuse the Word of God from entering. And you could say, who would want to refuse the Word of God from entering? What does Hebrews 4 say about the Word of God? What's it like? Sharper than any double-edged sword? I don't know about you, some people don't like a double-edged sword to get stabbed right into their heart. They don't want to receive it.

They see you coming with that Bible and they see it as what it is. That guy's got a sword in his hand. He's coming with truth that could penetrate my heart and I don't want that to happen.

They don't receive it. You're not getting in my house. We don't want to have our consciences awakened by the Word.

To receive, it's to offer the person the ability to speak and teach and instruct you. To receive is to give ear to. It's to embrace.

It's to make one's own. These are all in the lexicon. It's to prove.

It's not to reject. So He commands us to open the door to the double-edged sword of the Word of God that searches the intentions of man's heart, your heart, my heart. And He says don't refuse entry.

And then once he's entered the room, you need to listen to Him with meekness. That's what He says. Well, look at that.

Before we think about meekness, don't refuse to be an intimate friend with the Word of God. David says in Proverbs 7, not David, Solomon, say to wisdom, you are my sister. Call insight your intimate friend.

Call the Bible your intimate friend. You know, an intimate friend, you're texting without them maybe every day. You're consciously in communication with them.

We should be like that with the Word. Why? This intimate friend keeps you from the forbidden woman. And the forbidden woman uses words too.

From the adulteress with her smooth words. So you call insight, you call the Bible your intimate friend, and as you walk with that friendship, you have the true words of God that keep you from the smooth words of the lustful things on the Internet in your mind that could come in, and you abstain from sexual immorality and you walk in purity all the way to the end because you hold on. The Word is your intimate friend.

You're not leaving the truth. And as we'll see, you're doing it. We must not forget that.

We're going to look at that. So, receive the Word. Now, we're going to look at meekness in a minute and describe that, but I want to get there by showing you five people that are implied in verses 21-25.

There's five people here described. Maybe you could pull out some more. Every one of us falls into one of these categories of one of these people.

And you should ask yourself, which one am I not last week, not last night, but even this morning? So let's think of those five. Implied they're first. You don't see it in the text, but it's implied there, the first person is the one who they don't even obey the command at all and they don't even receive the Word.

We kind of already talked about him. He doesn't want to become friends with the Word of God. He doesn't want that Word to come into his house.

Or his hotel chain. You've got that Gideon Bible in all of those dressers. Nope, we're banning that, getting that out.

Or like our country, they want the Word of God out. Out. Out.

No more truth. No more God. That's the first type of person they don't even want to hear.

I don't want to pick on any young people, but look, I've seen it in our own meetings. There are young people who they don't care. They'll even sneak that earbud in the ear and listen to music rather than hear what's being said.

That's person number one. They don't even want to receive because they don't want the conscience to be awakened to who God is. They don't want to confront the road of needing to choose between Baal and Christ, between sin.

But this is a heaven or hell issue. So that's person one. Second person.

Second person is we have someone who reads the Bible, but he doesn't understand it. He does not understand it. And again, I don't necessarily see this person here, but we know that person exists.

There's a person who receives the Word or doesn't receive the Word, then there's a person who doesn't understand it. And you could ultimately say that person is the person who's not experienced v. 18. They've not been brought forth by the Word of Truth.

They're still spiritually dead. And one of those men we find in our Bible is Nicodemus. John 3, Jesus said, are you not a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these sayings about being born again? And you have Ezekiel 36 that clearly teaches the new birth? You don't understand? So that's person two.

Third person. The person who reads, but does not understand because they approach the Sermons without humility. So look, v. 21, the command is to receive with meekness.

Don't just receive the Word, but go into times of receiving the Word in the morning when you're reading, throughout the day when you have time to get truth, when you're hearing sermons, is your attitude one of meekness? Not, man, I already know everything he's saying anyways. None of that's going to apply to my life. Or, you know, he's wrong on virtually everything and I don't need to listen to that.

That's not meekness. You don't want to approach this command that way. Are you teachable? Am I teachable? I mean, what's even brought me to this passage is how it applies in my own life.

I didn't study this this week thinking about how can all this apply for everyone here. As I started to dive into this, I'm thinking, wow, I have things here that I need to take serious in my own life. Do you have humility to realize you may be dead wrong? That you have blind spots? Do you come to the Scriptures? Do you come to the truth of God with humility? Or, some, they even doubt God's Word.

They're constantly questioning it. They're completely critical. They don't have humility and view God's Word as it is.

They're totally critical of the Scriptures. The Word of God. You know, what's that? We should think about it, approach it as those at Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 We thank God constantly for this, that when you receive the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it. How? Not as the Word of men, but as what it really is. The Word of God.

Which is at work in you, believers. You see, the Word is at work in us. God's using it for the saving of our souls.

So we better take it for what it is. It's the Word of God. Someone like myself could say something today that is incorrect, and we need to be Berean.

But it is to say you don't want to have a mindset where you're lacking humility. You want to receive the Word with meekness. Is that how you receive biblical preaching? The Pharisees doubted Christ and His teachings.

They were the religious people. They had no humility to hear Him. To see that the prophecies in the Old Testament were becoming true in Him.

John 8.37 I know that you are offspring of Abraham, yet you seek to kill Me because My Word finds no place in you. Does the Word find place in you? If it's been implanted at conversion, it will. You might kick like that mule who was David, but God will put a bit in bridle.

It might take years and He's going to get you there to bow. John 8.34 He goes on in John 8. Why do you not understand what I say? It's because you cannot bear to hear My Word. They want to keep the double-edged sword out of the house.

I can't bear what's going to be said. I can't bear it. I don't want to face it.

Brethren, we're not going to be able to hide on judgment day. We better face the truth now while we're living. So, this person, this third person, they hear sermons, they read the Bible, they even might memorize it, but they do not have a low view of self.

And they miss seeing things as they are. They're blind. They might not want to be convicted, so they excuse it away.

They don't receive the Word of God with humility. That's the third person. We don't want to obey this command like that person.

Fourthly, and maybe one other thought, that's kind of the person where something offends you and so you zone out. And then you miss truth. And it never hits home because you're just sitting there offended at what the person said in the counseling session or what the person said from the pulpit.

Fourth person. A fourth way to obey or some not obey this command. And this person is the one that really convicted me.

We have a person who does read with humility. They do see true insight. They're convicted by things.

Verse 21, "...put away all filthiness, rampant wickedness, and sleep with meekness in planted word, which is able to save your souls." Okay, that's the command. We're obeying that. Verse 22, but, wait a minute, you're obeying that.

You say you're obeying that. Are you, huh? But, be doers of the Word. Not hearers only deceiving yourselves.

Why? For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in the mirror. He looks at himself. He sees what he's like.

He gets convicted in the message. He gets dealt with in the morning in the Word. He's looking there with humility.

God drives something home in his soul. He looks at himself, and he goes away, and look what it says, at once forgets what he was like. Verse 25, "...but the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer, who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing." So the fourth person is the category I think we can often most fall into as Christians.

You approach the Word with humility. You want God to deal with you, to speak to your soul. And you're hearing something and it's cutting to the heart.

You've opened the door to the double-edged sword. And you're agreeing with it. But you leave that Bible reading time.

You leave that sitting and hearing the sermons. And by that evening, you've forgotten what you saw. You don't act on it.

You don't obey it. And you could say, oh, that doesn't happen to me. He says you can deceive yourself.

The deceived man does not know he's deceived. That's why it's called deception. He doesn't recognize it.

But be doers of the Word and not hearers only deceiving yourselves. Well, I hear the Word. I even receive it with meekness.

God's convicted me about things. That's not His point. Are you acting on what God is dealing with you about? And to illustrate this, I don't want to make light of Alzheimer's.

Dementia. But I thought of this. I'm at my grandmother's house the other day.

And she has later stage of dementia. And the house she's lived in for 40 years, she asked me how to get to her bedroom. Forty years! She doesn't know where she stays in her house.

And you tell her, grandmother, you go that way up the stairs, take a left. And you know what happens? She might not even make it there and at once, she forgets. Now think of this.

I've got to bear with my grandmother in love in the midst of all of this forgetfulness, right? Think about God. Some of us are like that in the spiritual realm. We've got a spiritual form of dementia.

The Lord is telling us something as clear as day. And then once we forget, and then we're going back to Him, what did You say I should do, Father? Go there. And then you forget.

What did You say I should do, Father? And look, our God does not strike us dead. Look at the Lord's patience. It might be years of forgetting, of not acting in the Lord's patience.

That's incredible, His patience. We totally do not get what we deserve. We are not rewarded according to what our sin deserves.

And ultimately, Christ got what our sin deserves. He deserves the infinite wrath of God poured out on Him on the cross of Calvary. Think of the Lord.

We can grieve Him. Our God is not impersonal. Ephesians 4.30, Do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you've been sealed for the day of redemption.

We grieve the Lord. We're looking intently. We're filling pressure from the Lord.

And we go away and we forget. I mean, God really met with us and spoke a clear word to us, and then we just forget it. And we don't act on it.

We fail to act. Verse 25, But the one who looks and perseveres, he leads the meeting remembering what God told him. And he's not a hearer who forgets.

Christian, how many times have you and I forgotten something that the Lord drove home and we never acted on it? May it not be so. You want blessing in your life? He says the person who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. And that word blessed means happy.

You want the greatest joy as the Christian? When God deals with you, you go and act. And you'll live a life of joy. I thought maybe another way to illustrate this.

Maybe some of you this will not apply, but I was thinking about some of us in our teenage years. The mirror, if you look here, a man, he illustrates it, who looks intently at his natural face in the mirror. If he looks at himself, he goes away, and what happens? He forgets what he's like.

I don't know about you, but before I was a Christian, when I was younger, when I would look at that mirror and I saw something that made me insecure, when I went to school, did I forget what I saw in the mirror? No. I remembered it all day long. I remembered that pimple.

I remembered that thing that made me insecure. And I did not forget about it. We should be like that when we come to the Word.

We should feel that insecurity. I should not be living life like this. I saw something in the Word.

And it unsettled me that that was there as I looked at the Word. And I've got to leave school. I've got to deal with that thing.

So, talking about what happens to you as you receive the Word. Does it hit home? And then you forget and don't act. The third illustration or an example, I was thinking a couple of weeks ago, I did this sermon on skilled in communication.

Are you skilled in communication or always interrupting people? Tim admitted in his own sermon that it brought things to his mind. As I studied that, it brought 20 things to my own mind. Did it bring something to your mind? Did you act on it? Did you act on it? That's my question.

That's James' question. Did you act on it? Did you follow through with it? Did you respond to the thing that God dealt to you? Or have you silenced that? Are you forgetful? Do you have a spiritual dementia where you keep forgetting? Think about it, brethren. The times we've heard the Word of God without meekness.

Just think without meekness. Think of the times you've heard and you didn't have the humility so you didn't receive anything. You could feel like, man, that was foolish.

I remember going up to Missouri once. Someone was going to do a series. And I had some thought about them that bothered me and I knew I wasn't going to get anything from the series.

Because I looked down on them. By God's grace, He put the bit and bridle in my mouth and disciplined me and I got my conscience clear with them. We hugged when I got there.

And I profited immensely from the series. But think of the times we've not even done that. Think of the times we've not even had the humility.

Okay, but then think of the times you've even come to the Word with humility and God's dealt with you, but you did not act. That's what he's talking about. You didn't act.

You didn't do. You didn't follow through. You knew the right thing to do and you failed to do it for Him that is sin.

Yes, do I really think James 4 really talks about acknowledging the Lord as the Sovereign Lord in everything we do? Yes. And if you do that, and the Sovereign Lord has given you a command, won't you obey it? Or do you kind of reason it away? Well, you know, I think I lost that ticket. Let's slide that one under the table.

God's going to bring that one up until you deal with it. Until I deal with it. He's not going to let us escape.

Fifth person. This is the one who receives the Word with humility and acts upon it. And they persevere.

They persevere in reading the Bible and doing what they read. They leave from hearing the sermon or reading the Word and they obey that which the Lord has shown them. No, they might not obey it perfectly, but that's their desire.

They're wanting to do what God has shown them to do. That's a priority for them. Or if they leave and they think that the Lord has dealt with them and they're uncertain, there's no clear text on the issue, they get counsel.

Some of you have been doing that even in light of the recent things that have happened. We rightly have a church where people are saying, is there something I've been keeping silent about that I need to confess? And some might be too sensitive. And they're asking people.

They're getting counsel. What do you think? Is this really something that I should deal with? That's good. In the abundance of counsel, is there safety? So that's the fifth person.

They act. What time do we got? Okay, we've got ten minutes. Okay, we have a command here.

Put away all sin. Receive with humility the Word of God. How important is that? I mean, come on, how important is this really? Which is able to save your souls.

Huh. This is a heaven or hell issue? I mean, that's what it says. It implies if you don't obey it, you ain't going to make it.

Is reading and obeying important? Yeah, it involves the saving of your soul. Saving? What does he mean? Clearly, James is not speaking of reading the Bible being that which saves you and earns you favor with God. And he doesn't mean here reading the Word meaning able to save like initial salvation.

He already dealt with that in v. 18. He brought us forth by the Word of Truth. But as has already kind of been mentioned, he means saving as in one of the means to get you to the end, to final salvation is with humility you receive the implanted Word which is able to save your souls.

Jesus says in Matthew 10.22, how does He speak of salvation? Those who endure to the end will be saved. Romans 13.11, besides this, you know the time, the hour has come for you to wake from sleep, for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The Bible talks about a time of first believing and that you continue to believe and endure to the end.

And one of the means by which you'll savingly make it to the end is that you continue in receiving with meekness the implanted Word which is able to save your souls. Why would Psalm 1.1 describe the righteous man as he who meditates on the Word day and night? And he is like a tree that is planted by streams of water. And in the summer, he doesn't decay.

He does not bear fruit. He's plugged in to the truth of God. 1 Peter 1.9, similar language.

Obtaining the outcome of your faith. Our faith has an outcome. The salvation of your souls.

Those with true faith have this outcome. Their soul one day is eternally saved. Does that mean we're not kept now by the power of God? No, we are being kept by the power of God.

Does that mean a Christian can't have assurance? No, we have assurance in Christ. But if you start drifting where you don't want to receive the Word, what's that say? If you're God's, He'll put a bit or bridle in the mouth of you, a mule, and He will discipline you with His hand heavy upon you and bring you back to Him. Hebrews 12, again, if you don't get disciplined, you're an illegitimate child, you don't belong to the Father.

I'm out in the public constantly and we have our kids, and I'm able to discipline my kids and train them. When I see another parent with kids, I can't go over there and give that kid a spanking. They're not my kid.

They're not my child. It's a loving thing that our Father has us as His and deals with us. Puts the rod upon our back.

So He says here, here we have our command, put away and receive with meekness the implanted Word. Why? Because it's able to save your souls. And then as I mentioned, we have this caution.

Verse 22, But, He's saying I've said everything I've said, but I don't want you to get the wrong idea. I don't want you to get the idea that you've just got to receive the Word with humility and you're good to go. Be a doer of it.

Act upon it. And don't be a hearer only who deceives himself. He deceives himself.

This is a warning. This is a caution. Am I living out the Word of God? Am I living out the things that God has dealt with my own heart about? Well, we've got a couple more minutes.

So, I guess in conclusion, the real question I would take away from this is not how is your Bible intake. Does that question matter? You better believe it. It matters.

It matters. How does a young man keep his way pure? He regards it according to the Word. Proverbs 7, Call inside your intimate friend to keep you from the forbidden woman.

Let the Word of Christ dwell. You want to talk about letting the Word of God in? Which it's already implanted in you, Christian? Dwell. Dwelling in you.

It's part of your life. You're processing Scripture as you make your decisions, as you fight against sin. You're constantly pulling upon the truth that is revealed in God's Word about the Gospel, who Christ is.

You're thinking about the deceitfulness of sin. Exhort one another every day. Where do we exhort one another? From the Word, so that you might not be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

So I'm being exhorted from the Word, receiving that exhortation with humility in order that the heart stays soft and doesn't become hardened. So I think the main question for you and I is when receiving the Word through preaching or reading, and having humility to see clearly, I think the main question is this, what did the Lord show you and have you forgotten about it? Or did you act? Verse 24, at once forgets what he was like. He looked intently at the mirror.

I mean, he saw something. And then he left at once. But what's that? That's probably the devil that convicted me of that.

That's why I so easily forgot it. Now, that could be true. Or that could be an excuse.

We've got to wrestle. Verse 25, again, who forgets. Don't be a hearer who forgets, but the doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

Blessed. You're going to be happy. You're going to hear.

What greater blessing than getting to the end and hearing from our Master, well done, good and faithful slave. Done. We did something.

Not we heard something. That's even what some of them say. Well, Lord, we ate in Your streets.

We ate at those tables. We heard. He makes it about doing.

Jesus, He confronted someone who had a wrong view on what matters. Luke 11, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, blessed is the womb that bore You, blessed Mary, and the breast at which You nursed. That's what the Catholics do.

And Jesus said, blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and keep it. Not blessed are they who have a position who are the mother of Jesus Christ. Rather, blessed are those who hear the Word of God and they keep it.

They obey it. They follow through on it. And brethren, when we are doer of the Word of God, it displays to the world a pure and undefiled religion.

It displays to the world true religion being unstained and unspotted from the world. It shows others that yes, I want to serve this same Christ who these people are going and enjoy. They've sold everything

they've had in order to buy the field which has the treasure where Christ is.

They want to serve the Master. You think about the Word. Paul even in Titus, he talks about women.

And he mentions very simple things like keeping home and loving their husband and children. And you can say how big of a deal is that? And then he says, so that the Word of God may not be reviled. When we don't obey God's Word, it gives opportunity for people to revile it.

That's not true. It's not true. So which of the five are you? Are you number one, you don't even receive the Word? Number two, you receive it, but you don't understand it.

You're religious, but lost. Number three, you receive it, but no humility. You're hypercritical.

You think you know everything. And you miss the direct application for your life because of your pride. Or number four, do you read with humility? You see clearly.

God drives it home to your heart. And you forget. And you don't act.

Or number five, you receive the Word with humility. You act upon it. You persevere.

You follow through. You're a doer, not a hearer only. And he says, deceiving yourself.

Obviously, that implies if you live a life of hearing the Word and never acting, you're deceived and not a true Christian. That's what he says, not me. Was there a time in the past in which you intently looked at yourself in light of the reflection of God's Word and you saw what you were like and something troubled you? Did you continue and put that off? Or did you forget? Did you forget? You ask yourself that.

I'm asking myself that. Search me, O God, and try my heart and see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. I want to go in the way everlasting.

I want to be the man who will be blessed in his doing. Blessed in his doing. Not doing works to be saved, but because he is saved by the grace of Christ and is being created in Christ Jesus with works prepared beforehand that he should walk in them.

Proverbs 3, my son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments. Proverbs 4-5, get wisdom, get insight. Do not forget.

And do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Psalms 119, I will never forget your precepts, for by them you've given me life. Psalms 119.61, though the cords of wickedness ensnare me, I do not forget your law.

Psalms 119.16, I will delight in your statutes, I will not forget your Word. Brethren, in the physical world, when you get dementia, you don't turn that thing around. You just keep forgetting and it gets darker.

But the good news is if this has happened to you spiritually, things can get better. You can stop forgetting and obey. Let's pray.

Father, Lord, I thank You for giving us a double-edged sword. Something sharper. Sharper than it.

Lord, we've got something more deadly. Cuts from every side. Lord, thank You for not leaving us in the dark.

Thank You for the bit and bridle that we heard about weeks ago. Lord, save us from forgetfulness. Lord, save us from conviction that does not lead to action.

Lord, save us from being hearers and not doers. And Lord, You said in Philippians 2 that You work in us the desire to do for Your good pleasure. So Lord, help us with fear and trembling, with weakness and realizing our insufficiency.

Help us realize our need for You. Lord, we need You. Lord, we need You.

Lord, this passage is a call for Your help. We need Your help. So Lord, I pray that my own life and my brethren's, Lord, that we'd be blessed in our doing, not cursed in our forgetting.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Ht9MwN0GrYI.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-jennings/dont-forget-the-word-but-obey-it/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net