

James 1: 19-27 Listening and Doing

- 19** My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,
- 20** for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.
- 21** Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.
- 22** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.
- 23** Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror
- 24** and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.
- 25** But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.
- 26** If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.
- 27** Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.¹

¹ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/james/1.html>

Good Morning, My Sisters and Brothers in Christ. I greet you this morning in the name of Him who called me to preach and sent me here. I greet you in the name of the One who numbered the hairs on my head and made my fingerprints unique. I greet you in the name of Him that I can talk with when my smart phone had no bars, my tablet has no charge and I am too weak to use the laptop. If you know Him, if you are trying to follow Him, if you love Him, stand on your feet and praise His holy name.

*From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,
the name of the LORD is to be praised.²*

During the month of February we will be studying from the book of James. James is a letter written to the Christian Jews who had left Jerusalem and scattered all over the Mediterranean. James letter has six characteristics that make it different from other letters in the New Testament:

1. it is clearly written to Jews and uses examples familiar to them
2. it places a strong emphasis on a living Christianity which includes good deeds and a faith that works – said another way – genuine faith must and will be reflected in your lifestyle
3. it is organized very simple
4. it makes references to Jesus teaching from the Sermon on the Mount
5. it is similar to wisdom saying from Proverbs
6. it is written in very good Greek³

James was the leader of the church at Jerusalem and he wrote as a pastor to educate and encourage the people. Just as the first readers of this letter needed to be educated and encouraged we still need the same thing.

² <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+113%3A3&version=NIV>

³ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/james/>

The overall theme for the vv. 19-27 is listening and doing. Whenever I get to this passage I am reminded of my mother, some of you might know what I am talking about.

Did you hear what I said?
Are you listening to me?
You going to walk away while I am talking?

Now in my mother's house these were **not** questions to be answered for no answer however honest or respectful was going to be heard. Martha Ann was on a roll. But the point she was trying to make was if you heard me, if you listened to me, if you were giving me your attention then there would be a change in your behavior.

At ATI, the place where I was taking my physical therapy, there is a group of men who come in everyday and get their clipboards and start to work. The clipboard contains the tasks they are to complete each day. Tasks designed to help them regain function and strength. They move from machine to machine, from weights to bands, stopping sometimes to ask a trainer for help, but pretty much working on their own. As one guy said I am here everyday because I have to get stronger and better to return to work.

These examples are similar to the dilemma in front of every Christian. Every day we have to give God our full attention. Every day we have to get up and get our clipboard and start to work. Our clipboard may be a book of meditations, the Daily Word, the Upper Room, a Sunday School book, the Bible or something else. But everyday we need to get our clipboard and get started. But it is more than getting started we need to understand what each instruction says. And we might need someone to show us how to do it. And proof that we got it is in how we perform the task in front of us. How we live day to day.

When you are in rehab there is an expectation that you will also do your routines at home. They provide you with printouts of the exercises, free bands, recommend places to buy other materials to help and even

encourage you to bring in your questions and concerns. Rehab has a lot of things in common with living the life of a Christian.

- Listening to instruction
- Returning for clarity
- Practicing in class and out of class
- Learning from others who have been there longer
- Seeking those who have special training

In verse 19 James gives us clear directions as to what we should do

*...Everyone should be **quick to listen,**
slow to speak and slow to become angry,*

and for the next 6 verses he gives examples of just what he means.

As we consider these three simple instructions I invite you to pray with me and for me as I wrestle with:

**AM I A CHRISTIAN ALL THE TIME OR
DOES MY FAITH NEED TO GO TO REHAB?**

SHALL WE PRAY! Oh Lord my God when I in awesome wonder and consider all your hands has made I can't help but wonder why you have considered us. But I thank you this morning for the consideration. I ask that you speak to our hearts, our heads, and our hands make it clear to us what you would have us to do. Father, please help us to stop being hearers of your Word, help us to become doers. Father we don't want to be left on our own, we need you. Abba, I ask that you do what you have done for the past 10 years, use me to bring the message your people need to hear. Please allow the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart to be acceptable to you. In the name of your Son, Jesus, the Christ we pray. AMEN and AMEN.

**AM I A CHRISTIAN ALL THE TIME OR
DOES MY FAITH NEED TO GO TO REHAB?**

Many of us at one time or another has needed or wanted to do something we had not done before or did not do very well the last time we tried. In answer to this dilemma came *HOW TO FOR DUMMIES* a

series of books usually with black and yellow covers that taught us to do everything from buying a puppy to using the Internet to traveling in Europe. But the current generation does not even have to locate a book they can simply type HOW TO and there is a website called "how to do anything".⁴ So out of curiosity I typed **HOW TO ACT LIKE A CHRISTIAN** and the very first answer was "follow the teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the Holy Bible".

For over 2000 years the best instructions are still in our Bible and James the step brother of Jesus writes them down as simply as he knows how. It is easy to act like a Christian when there is no conflict, when everything is going as we want it to go, and those around us are content, and if not content quiet. But living like a Christian when there is confusion, conflict, and clashes is where we find the challenge.

The Jews were scattered all over because there had been conflict over the decision of some of them to believe that Jesus was the Christ, the long awaited Messiah. They had abandoned the religion of their fathers and begin to follow the teaching of Jesus. They had even labeled their new lifestyle as "The Way".

In v. 19 James provides an overview of what will be contained in the rest of the letter.

Let every man be swift to hear - This is treated of from [James 1:21](#) ,, , , , , , .
Slow to speak - Which is treated of in the third chapter.
Slow to wrath - Neither murmuring at God, nor angry at his neighbour.
This is treated of in the third, and throughout the fourth and fifth chapters.⁵

So James writes to tell them they are to be **quick to listen**.
When you listen you are not figuring out what you plan to say next.
When you listen you are not talking at the same time as the other person.
When you listen you sometimes learn something you did not know.
When you listen you may find out you are not the smartest
person in the room.

⁴ <http://www.wikihow.com/Main-Page>

⁵ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/my-bible/#/left:passage/niv/james/1:19-27/&right:reference/commentaries/wesleys-explanatory-notes/james/james-1.html>

Next James tells them to be **slow to speak**. When you have listened and listened carefully you may find out there is no need to say anything. Not all conflict, confusion and clashes need a comment. When you listen and listen carefully you may learn that the person speaking just wants to vent and does not need anything from you but to listen. And when you speak you can be clear that you heard what was being said.

Two ears are given to us, the rabbis observe, but only one tongue: the ears are open and exposed, whereas the tongue is walled in behind the teeth.⁶

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

Next James says to be **slow to become angry**

7:9 Do not let yourself be quickly provoked, for anger resides in the lap of fools.⁷

4:26 Be **angry** and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on the cause of your anger.
4:27 Do not give the devil an opportunity.⁸

AM I A CHRISTIAN ALL THE TIME OR DOES MY FAITH NEED TO GO TO REHAB?

So this week I invite you to look in the mirror and see what you see. Don't try to get all of the teachings of James in one week. Instead find the one thing where you need rehab and start to work. I will be working on my anger, will you pray for and with me.

God, we have heard the Word today. Please allow it to fall on good ground and take root in my heart, my head and my hands. Help me to love you more dearly, see you more clearly and follow you more nearly today and everyday. AMEN and AMEN

⁶ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/my-bible/#/left:passage/niv/james/1:19-27/&right:reference/commentaries/jamieson-fausset-brown/james/james-1.html>

⁷ <https://net.bible.org/#!bible/Ecclesiastes+7:9>

⁸ <https://net.bible.org/#!bible/Ephesians+4>