

Living Faith in the World: Book of James

Lesson 4

Doers of the Word

Scriptures 1

Ephesians 4:25-32 "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. **V26** In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, **V27** and do not give the devil a foothold. **V28** Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. **v29** Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. **V30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **V31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **V32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other."

Q: How do we grieve the Holy Spirit? _____

Exodus 34:6-7 " And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, V7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

Q: Name all the ways God defines his character from this passage above. _____

1 Corinthians 13:4 "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud." Agape love is a totally unselfish love that comes from God alone –choosing to continue selflessly loving someone even when he or she makes it difficult.

John 9:31 "We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will."

Q: Why is it difficult to be slow to anger, slow to speak, and quick to listen? _____

Q: Describe people you know who are very patient and choose their words carefully.

What kind of impact do they have on the world around them? _____

Lesson 4 Doers of the Word

James 1:19-21 "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, v20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. V21 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."

1) God's people should be self-controlled, patient, and careful with their words.

Q: How do our words affect us, others, and life situations?

James gives us practical advice about the way we should live as followers of Jesus. Not a check list of dos and don'ts but a description of what a person filled with the Holy Spirit and bearing the Fruit of the Spirit is like. *These things are all very hard to do in our human strength*, but as the Holy Spirit grows His fruit in us, they become more natural.

Words and actions of our culture: 1) quick to anger 2) quick to speak 3) slow to listen 4) social media escalates 5) encourages quick outrage 6) we are riled up by sound bites and headlines 7) reacting with self-righteous anger before knowing true facts or understanding whole situation
Why does Media outlets, TV programing, posted/ written articles, social media encourage this?

Outrage is addictive and contagious, and it feeds on itself. Self-righteous anger can feel "good" because it makes us feel morally superior. *It escalates things; it does not solve them.* Give an example: _____

Even righteous anger at injustice shouldn't be handled in a reactive, "quick to anger" way. It is not a healthy or productive way to handle the injustice. James tells us to instead to be "_____". **(1:19)** Paul says "Be angry and do not _____" **(Eph 4:26)** Why is this important? "because human anger does _____ produce the righteousness that _____ desires." **v20** Anger itself is not sinful, but the explosive, reactive, impatient anger is.

Those of us who know Jesus and seek to live and love as He did are different from the world. God describes Himself as being _____ **(Exodus 34:6-7)**. He is perfectly _____ **(1Corinthians 13:4)**. Also empathetic. He is the God who _____ and _____ **(Genesis 16:11-13)**. He is quick to hear us when we _____ **(John 9:31)**.

Fruits of the Spirit that help us be slow to anger are: patience, gentleness and self-control. As we abide in Christ we develop the ability to be quick to listen and slow to speak which requires love, empathy, gentleness and self-control. *These are not natural to our sin nature*, but we grow in these as we grow closer in fellowship with Jesus. James didn't tell us this to make us feel obligated or burdened, that we must do this to be a better person. ***But it's what _____ is like.***
Name words that build up: _____

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Lesson 4 Doers of the Word

Scriptures 2

Galatians 5:22-24 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **v23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **V24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." These are nine character traits that the Holy Spirit produce in a believer's life. Jesus is the supreme example of every spiritual quality, having embodied the fruit of the Spirit perfectly because each one is linked to who He is. **What exactly is the Fruit of the Spirit?** _____

All these things come from God and are not natural to us. They are not things we can just try harder at and expect to do better. The way to grow them in our lives is to grow closer to Jesus.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "The days are coming,' declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. **V32** It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to the, declares the LORD. **V33** This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time, declares the LORD 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. **v34** No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,' declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." **Q: Why is this important?**

Hebrews 4:12 "For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joint and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." God's Word is not just words on a page but is _____ and _____.

Colossians 3:2 "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." We are to set our minds on things _____ and not on _____ things.

Ephesians 6:10-18 v14 The belt of _____. Victory in spiritual warfare starts with knowing truth. The breastplate of _____. It guarded the heart and life of the soldier. Righteousness guards the spiritual life and comes from Christ. **V15** Feet fitted with...the gospel of peace. Our _____ in God through Jesus gives us security in the face of Satan's accusations. **V16** The shield of faith extinguishes the flaming arrows of the enemy as God's promises extinguish the lies of Satan. **V17** The helmet of salvation protects Christian's minds from doubts Satan uses to attack us. **v17** The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of _____. The only offensive weapon.

2Corinthians 10:5 "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Q:How has your ability to understand and keep God's Word grown over time as a Christian?

Lesson 4 Doers of the Word

James 1:21 "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."

Colossians 3:5-14 "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature; sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **V6** because of these, the wrath of God is coming. **V7** You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **V8** But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **V9** Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **v10** and have put on the *new self*, which is being *renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator*. **V11** Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. **v12** Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, *clothe yourselves with* compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **V13** Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **v14** And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

Barbarian: from an alien land, or culture, believed to be inferior, violent.

Scythian: rude, ignorant, degraded.

2) God's Word is implanted in our hearts so we can live by His ways.

Q: What is the implanted word? How does it save our souls?

The word "implanted" is used only here in the New Testament. Some Bible dictionary's say it means "engrafted". But it is not the same word used for branches being "grafted" into a tree. It has more of the sense of a seed that has been implanted. Not just planted but implanted inside of us suggesting a deep, inborn natural connection, or blending. When your beliefs were no longer words and ideas but the way you live, pointing to the idea God's Word in not just something external to us, but has been implanted inside of us.

God prophesied through (Jeremiah 31:31-34) He would write His law on our _____. God's Word is _____ and active. (Hebrews 4:12) His Word is internalized in us!

God's Word is implanted into our souls, and begins the process of sanctification in us.

Sanctification: Being set apart for God's purposes. Being cleansed from sin and transformed to the likeness of Christ. Pointing us to the Fruit of the _____. His Word growing in us each

year. The _____ itself does not change, but our understanding of it, ability to apply it _____.

Christ dwells in us from the _____. He does NOT CHANGE. His Spirit is inside us. His Spirit grows _____, _____, _____, and so on inside us. (Galatians 5:22-23). What is our part in this growth process? Circle in **Colossians 3:5-14** above what we are challenged to "put to death". In the new self what are we to "put on"? Underline our "new clothes" we are to grow into? Write out the role of love: _____ **v14**

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Lesson 4 Doers of the Word

Scriptures 3

Matthew 7:16-20 “By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? **V17** Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. **V19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **V20** Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”

Believers glorify God and identify themselves with Him by producing spiritual fruit, which includes good works and steadfast character. Where there is no spiritual fruit there is no spiritual life, (faith). The fruit of the Spirit that indwells a believer is : Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.

John 13:34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **V35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Jesus final command to His disciples reiterated (repeated, restated) what He demonstrated washing their feet: As I have loved you, so you must love one another. This is the preeminent, (greatest, foremost) mark of being His disciple. Love for others is not an option; it is the way the world sees Christ in His followers.

Philippians 3: 12-14 “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. **V13** Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do; Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **v14** press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Paul is not satisfied to rest on his couch or sit in a pew. He must press on toward God’s plan, purpose, and prize of eternal life. Paul has yet to grasp or take hold of the prize (being with God in heaven). The spiritual maturity believers accomplish; achieve, or reach, comes through obedience to God’s principles, disciplines, and His commands. **They are not to let anyone change their approach to the Christian life!**

Q: How have you seen that following Jesus’ ways turns out best for you?

The Christian life is not a spectator sport—we are to get in the game! Brainstorm with your group areas in which you would like to be doers of the Word. Commit to opportunities to exercise obedience in specific ways. _____

Which commands are opposed to the way the world tells us to live and tells us to value? How can we know **“What Jesus Would Do”** in every situation? Pray for the strength, love and wisdom to live like He did! Ask the Spirit to grow His spiritual fruit in you more and more each day.

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James 1:22-25 “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

V23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror **v24** and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. **V25** But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.”

Matthew 7:24-27 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. **V25** The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. **V26** But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. **V27** The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

3) Followers of Jesus don’t just hear His Word, they do it.

Q: How are hearers (but not doers) of the Word deceiving themselves? What does it mean to forget what we look like, and how does that relate to being doers of the Word?

Because God’s Word is implanted in us, and is not just a list of rules external to us, but is and internal heart change, we can keep His law. We can be doers. By the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we can follow Jesus and do what He said. God’s Word is not just an intellectual discussion or argument, but a lifestyle that is meant to be lived.

Those who forget what they look like as soon as they walk away from the mirror, do not _____ themselves and are not being _____ about who they really are. They’re putting on a mask of being a Christian, but aren’t living like _____. He said we would recognize His followers by their fruit (**Matthew 7:16-20**). His disciples would be known by their _____ for one _____ (**John 13:35**). This doesn’t mean we can’t make mistakes or be less than perfect. We are all in process of sanctification: we are all growing; no one has _____ (**Philippians 3:12-14**). **If you aren’t bearing any fruit, you need to honestly examine your _____.**

Disciples are not just people who believe in Jesus; *they are followers*. They study His teachings and imitate His lifestyle, *to be like Him*. You cannot be a “Christian” without being like _____ Obeying His words is what is best for us. It makes our lives stand firm in a storm like a house built on a rock. Because Jesus is God and He loves us and wants what is best for us, His ways are the best way for us to live. Those who follow His ways will be _____.

Q: When we see Christians not being doers of the Word, how can we encourage them rather than criticize or tear them down? In what ways do you struggle to follow Jesus?