

## James 1:19-27

### *Applying the Word*

---

**How does James address his readers in verse 19 (and verse 16)?** Dear brothers.

**What's the message James is sending to his readers?** Affection. They know he's motivated by love. He's not giving orders, he is encouraging them on the path they should take as the Lord directs their hearts.

Leadership principle: People listen when they know you care.

**The application of verses 19-27 is almost overwhelming. How can I do all this? How do we approach this laundry list of things to do?** Don't blow through these verses. Meditate and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal one or two things that He wants you to do differently this week. These are very practical ways of being the people the Bible tells us to be.

### **Verse 19**

**We all like talking to a good listener. What makes a good listener?** Eye contact and body language lets you know you have their undivided attention. Some people never ask about you, but are content to talk about themselves. Talkers are not good listeners. Problem: our brains can think faster than our mouths can speak so we're busy figuring out what we're going to say next. Good leaders know how to listen—and hear.

James places value on listening much and talking little. One idea is to write notes when listening in order to listen better. What are other ideas? Consider Proverbs 10:19 and 13:3.

### **Verses 19 & 20**

An angry response to trials and temptations does not bring about the righteous life that God wants to see in the believer.

**Application: What things make you angry?**

**How does anger get in the way of bringing about the righteous life that God desires? What are some of the negative effects of anger?** We lose our credibility and witness as Christians. Remember we are being watched. How we respond either honors our Lord or does Him a disservice. When we get angry, it's usually an indicator of pride. Our anger pushes God away and renders us ineffective. Our wrath does not accomplish the righteousness of God—it almost always defends our own agenda. We focus on self. Much of our anger and wrath comes from being self-centered not others-centered. Being swift to hear is one way to be others-centered. Being slow to speak is another way to be others-centered.

**We know God doesn't want us to be angry, so if you get angry with someone, what are some ways to deal with it?** Apologize. Confess. Pray for that person—it's hard to be angry with someone you're praying for. Memorize Scriptures such as Proverbs 29:22 and Matthew 5:22.

**Can you be angry without sinning? When is it okay to be angry? What kind of anger would not be sinful?** Consider Ephesians 4:26-27.

### **Verse 21**

**Application: What does moral filth and evil look like in the life of the Christian?**

God calls us to be morally clean. Be pure. Our behavior is important to God. Consider Psalm 24:3-5.

**Why is humility so important in receiving God's Word?** The Bible is going to reveal, convict, and transform. Do I read the Bible with a humble desire to have God rebuke me, teach me, and change me? The Bible reminds me I'm not in charge. Am I anxious to have my tongue bridled? Do I justify my temper/behavior or do I want victory over it? The Bible doesn't give out strokes. It is not a feel-good book. It exhorts, convicts, directs, and commands.

**What obstacles can get in the way of humbly accepting God's words?** Pride (I think I know better). Self-justification (I'm not all that bad). Distraction (I'm not concentrating). Busyness (I don't have time for this). Fear (Do I really want to know?).

**.....word planted in you which can save you—from what?** By obeying God's Word the believer is saved from the consequences of sin. Three aspects of salvation are: being saved from the penalty, the power, and ultimately the presence of sin. Consider Jeremiah 31:33 and Romans 1:16.

### **Verses 22-25**

Whereas verses 19-21 stress the importance of *listening* to the Word, verses 22-25 emphasize the necessity of *applying* the Word—putting it into practice—in our lives.

The call to “do what it says” sums up the message of the whole book of James. Put into practice what you profess to believe. Our walk should match our talk.

**How is a man who hears without doing like a man who looks in a mirror and later forgets?**

**How can we avoid forgetting what the Word of God tells us about ourselves or about what He wants us to do?** Don’t just read—meditate. Look for one principle to take away. Memorize Scripture.

In the ancient world, it was common for people to hear/listen to a teacher. But if you followed the teacher and tried to live what he said, you were called a disciple of that teacher. Jesus is looking for disciples—doers, not just hearers.

**What does God promise to those who remember and do what they have heard?** Blessing. Obedient adherence to the Word of God is the key to experiencing God’s blessing. Consider John 15:9-11.

*Application:* **What does it mean to be blessed in what you do?**

**What will that look like? Financial prosperity?** Blessed with success, joy, and opportunities to share. It has been said that for every one hundred Christians who can handle trials, only one can handle prosperity.

In Matthew 7:24-27 Jesus used this same point to conclude His great Sermon on the Mount. He said that the one who heard the Word without doing it was like a man who built his house on the sand, but the one who heard God’s Word and did it was like a man whose house was built on a rock and could withstand the inevitable storms of life and eternity.

### **Verses 26-27**

**To be religious refers to outward practices. How would you expect that to be manifest?**

**James says that true religion will be demonstrated by controlled speech/tongue. Controlled in what ways?** No foul language, no gossip, not too talkative.

The Jews who were James’ original readers typically regarded alms-giving, prayer, fasting, regular attendance at worship services, and the observance of holy days and feasts as signs of true spirituality. However, James said a better test of spirituality was to control one’s tongue.

**What does James specify as a sign of pure, faultless religion?** Looking after widows and orphans and keeping oneself from being polluted by the world.

*Application:* **What if I don’t know any orphans or destitute widows? How can I apply this verse to my life?**

The principle here is how one who is strong deals with those who are weak. The biblical model is that the strong use their strengths to minister to the needs of the weak.

**What does it mean to be polluted by the world?** Look, think, act like them. Be pulled away from God

*Application:* **What pollutants of the world are the biggest dangers for you?**

It’s one thing to identify pollutants such as money/greed, sexuality, power, prestige, materialism, selfishness, etc.—and it’s a necessary first step. But what do we do next? What would God have us do about it? It’s a lot easier to study the Bible than to obey it!

---

---

**MEMORIZE: James 1:22**