

**A Blessed Application**  
**James 1:22-25**

**Notes**

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| Believers who genuinely seek to live out a Christian faith will be obedient to the Word of God |
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**I. INTRODUCTION**

**Astronaut, General Charles M. Duke described the Apollo 16 mission to the moon and his driving the Rover on the surface of the moon. He was asked that once on the moon if he was free to make his own decisions and carry out some of his own experiments, maybe stay a little longer if he wanted. He said, "Sure if we did not want to return to earth."**

**The General then described the intricate plan, the exact and precise instructions, the essential discipline, the instant obedience that was needed right down to the split second. He said they landed "heavy" on the moon, meaning they landed with more fuel than necessary. They had one minute of fuel left in the tank. Talk about exact!**

A rebel does not follow instructions and would not be fit to be an astronaut and a rebel who does not follow the instructions of Jesus is not fit to be a disciple.

Far too many people profess to be Christians but do far too little regarding actually following Jesus.

Some may say, "I love God." "I follow Jesus."

But to observe their lives you would never know it.

Many of our lives look more like a living commercial for the secular worldview complete with a progressive sexual ethic, prideful self-indulgence, a disdain for discipline and self-control, and an appetite for gluttony, than a life that faithfully follows Jesus.

What about you? Would you describe your life as one of obedience to Jesus?

Would you say you follow Jesus in your daily life? In the conversations you have, in the way you spend your money, in the way you serve in the church, in the way you love, in the way you apply the Bible to your life?

Today, as we continue our walk through the book of James, we turn our attention to 1:22-25.

In these verses James is going to be extremely direct with us regarding our professing Jesus, our hearing the word, and our following Jesus and living the word.

Throughout this message we will be confronted with opportunities to look at our lives in light of our obedience to Jesus.

Are we disciples who actually follow Jesus, or do we simply say we do?

*<sup>22</sup> But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who*

*looks at his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. <sup>25</sup>But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.*

Referring back to verse 21, since the Word has been received with humility and is growing in the heart of the believer, there will naturally be an application of the word in the life of the believer.

There are several truths that are relevant for us as we seek to faithfully follow Christ as disciples.

**Christians who have the word of God growing in their hearts will naturally apply the word to their lives.**

Bro. Gene showed us last week that we are to humbly receive the word which has been implanted, put down roots in our hearts.

Notice the language of verse 21, because it is important to understand our passage.

If we do not receive the word, we will not apply it to our lives.

But notice this, and we cannot miss this, we must receive the word humbly. Why in humility?

If we do not see the word, as the very words of life, as the very words of Jesus himself then we will not see them correctly.

If we do not see the words as lofty, as holy, as inerrant, infallible, able to give life, sustain life, and judge life, we will not see them correctly.

We are to humble ourselves to the word and put them over our lives and simultaneously place ourselves under the gracious direction of the word.

For those who have the word implanted and growing in their hearts they will receive that word with humility because they know their lives have no power without that word.

When we have the word of God growing in our hearts, we will naturally apply it to our lives.

Is the word of God growing in your heart? You might respond, "What does it look like for the word of God to grow in my heart?"

Well, I am so glad you asked.

When the word of God grows in our hearts:

- We have a passion to read the word
- We have a passion to understand the word
- We have a passion to share the word
- We have a passion to apply the word

Sure, there will be times of struggle. There will be times when the word and the Spirit will battle your flesh.

There will be instances when your pride, or greed, or lust, or bitterness try to raise their voices and defeat the word in your heart and in your life, but that does not keep you from applying the word to your life.

Because you realize the danger of not applying the word to your life. You realize that if you fail to apply the word to your life, you don't have the power to, truly live.

You recognize that those who never apply the word of God to their lives delude themselves into thinking they are in fellowship with God

**When we hear the word of God or read the word of God and do not apply it to our lives, we do so to the detriment of our own spiritual health.**

Notice the word James uses here. He says that those who are only hearers, but never apply the word "delude" themselves.

The word delude is interesting and means to deceive or to trick.

Just knowing what the Bible says does not make one right with God.

The demons know the word of God and they are not right with God.

Just hearing a sermon every now and again does not make one right with God.

What happens is this. We go to church, or we had a church experience when we were younger, or some type of religious encounter with Jesus, maybe it was genuine salvation, but then we go a long time without ever actually following Jesus.

Then, when someone asks us about our faith and why we are not living it out; why we cuss the way we do; why we joke the way we do; why we watch what we watch; why we don't love the way Jesus loves; why we act the way we act, we get all upset and tell them, "Don't judge me I'm a Christian."

Sorry, I couldn't tell.

Why is there such a disparity in the way we perceive our Christian walk and the way we actually walk?

The answer is the word, or the lack of the word.

When we are actively, regularly in the word of God we see our real sinfulness. We see our great need for Jesus and our utter dependence upon him.

When we are in the word, we see our sin and how far from Christ we actually are and we are drawn to him with an even greater passion.

But when we don't actually spend real time with Christ. When we fail to be intimate with Jesus, we become people who hear the word, don't practice it, but think we are good Christians.

**Those who hear the word of God, but don't practice the word forget what God has done for them.**

When we get away from the word, we get away from the righteousness of Jesus and when we get from Jesus' righteousness, we don't see our own unrighteousness.

When we get way from Jesus' righteousness, we forget how much his righteousness has covered.

Jesus' righteousness has covered all your sin.

Jesus' righteousness has covered your greed, your lust, your addictions.

Jesus' righteousness has covered your fornications, and your adultery.

Jesus' righteousness has covered your theft, and your bitterness, your anger, and your pride.

When we get away from God's word and living out God's word, we become like the person who looks at their face in the mirror and immediately forgets what they look like.

This is an absurd situation. Who forgets that fast?

James is showing us the absurdity of a person forgetting that fast with the absurdity of someone saying they are a disciple or at the very least thinking they will be blessed by God for simply being a hearer of the word and not a doer.

What about you today? Have you been deluding yourself into thinking you are ok with God even though you don't spend time in the word or apply it to your life?

**If we are going to be followers of Christ, we must be doers of the word.**

Going to church alone does not satisfy the demands of discipleship.

This is for all the good church going folks who think that if they check the went to church box that they are right with God, forgetting that discipleship is a daily intimacy with Christ, not a once a week friendship.

The Pharisees who condemned Jesus thought they were right with God because they did all their religious stuff, but they never actually obeyed God or followed his word, which would lead them to Jesus.

This is the basis of works-based salvation.

Works-based salvation says that I only need to satisfy certain requirements and then God will accept me.

But this salvation is not a biblical salvation.

Works do not satisfy our discipleship or our salvation.

Both our salvation and our discipleship are founded on the gospel.

We must understand that we are sinners in desperate need of a savior and when we understand this we come to Christ in repentance and in faith we come into a relationship with him.

Our discipleship in Christ is no different. Our discipleship is just as much about the gospel in our lives as our salvation.

What about you? Are you trying to make up your salvation by works?

Are you trying to be right with God by "doing church?"

If we want to live for Christ and follow Christ we must allow the truth of the gospel, the word of God to daily wash over our sinful hearts and empower us to live for his glory.

**Obedience to the word of God comes from intimacy with the word of God.**

When we spend time in God's word, genuinely seeking Christ, drawing close to him, we cannot help but be changed by the word.

Those seeking Christ and his righteousness are rewarded in full.

When we spend time with the word of God our sin is exposed bare, and we have to see it for what it is—an affront to the holiness of God.

When we see our sin with no filters, we immediately know we can't handle our sin on our own.

We turn to Jesus himself for the power to forgive our sin, but not only to forgive, for the power to surrender our sin and defeat our sin.

Intimacy with Christ gives power to our lives.

What sins do you need to surrender today? What do you need power to overcome?

What might your life look like if you could conquer this particular sin in your life?

When you are intimate with Jesus you are empowered to be more than a conqueror for Christ.

We have spent a lot of time discussing how we end up away from Jesus, how we delude ourselves.

What does it look like to spend time with Jesus? What does intimacy with God entail?

I want to give us a few tips on how to spend quality time with Jesus.

- Make a habit of setting aside the same time each day to be with God.
- Before you read, ask God to open your heart to his word.
- Pick a Bible plan and stick to it. Start with a chapter a day.
- Pray through what you read and ask God to help you implement in your life
- Share with someone what you read

By daily spending time with Jesus, you will grow more in love with Christ and your heart will grow fonder of him and you will want to live for him.

Obedience to his word will be a natural outpouring of your life, instead of an obligation to keep.

God blesses those who humbly obey his word.

Notice the language James uses in this verse. This is Beatitude language.

The person (man, woman, grown person, young person) will be blessed.

We learned a few weeks ago that to be blessed was not some super spiritual thing that we only get when we get to heaven.

To be blessed is to be happy. Truly, deeply, intimately, joyously, happy.

Think about that. What do we all seek? Honestly?

If we strip away all the church language, all of our preconceived notions, all of our pretenses, we all just want to be happy.

The wonderfully beautiful thing about happiness is that true happiness, heavenly happiness is a happiness of holiness.

God's happiness that he bestows upon an individual is not dependent upon circumstances or situation, but on his blessed presence in the life of the believer.

When we, as believers humbly obey the word of God, we are blessed by God himself.

Speaking in John 8:31-32 Jesus tells us, *"If you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."*

Set us free from what? Sin and death.

Are you happy in life right now? Are you chasing happiness?

Are you humbly applying the word of God to your life right now?

To your marriage? To the way you treat your kids? To the way you obey your parents? To the way you respect your boyfriend or girlfriend and honor Christ's sexual ethic in your relationship?

Are you applying the word of God to your emotions? To your motivations? To your dreams? To your temptations?

And I'm going to tell you, happy is the person who knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that they have been set free from sin and death.

Are you consistently spending time in the Bible so it may be properly applied to your life?

Are you hearing and listening to the Word of God, but not applying it to your life?

Do you know the word, but just don't do it because it's too hard, you don't have time, you want to have fun while you can, you will obey God later?

Imagine a man standing in the middle of some train tracks, reading a newspaper. You're standing to the side of the tracks, and you notice that he needs to be getting off. In the distance behind him, you can see the train coming toward him, you can hear the noise it makes. Strangely, though, he doesn't seem to notice. You scream at him and wave your arms. Get off the track, you scream. He looks at you, and calls, I'm alright here, I'll do something when I need to.

By now, you have no idea why he can't hear the train quickly coming up behind him. You can feel the vibrations on the ground. Get off, get off, get off, you scream. There's a train coming!! But he just looks at you and calmly says, "Give me a few minutes, I've got plenty of time. Let me finish the paper!" You pick up a handful of gravel and start hurling it at him. One stone makes a hole in the paper right on the article he's reading, so he gets a bit annoyed. "I told you to leave me alone! I'll do it in my own time. Just go - " and he never finishes the sentence.

I'll follow Jesus, one woman says. But not now. How about when I'm older, when I really need it. You hear a splat as the train hits her.

The Gospel sounds good to me, says the father with his two children. But I've got a family to bring up. Tell me about it later. You can hear the bones crack as he's flung off the track into the ravine below.

Yeah, I believe it, says the teenager. But I'll do something about it when I'm older. I've got to have fun with my friends now. The broken body is crunched under the train wheels.

Beloved this is a desperate situation. Listening to and obeying the word of God is paramount to life.

For the lost person here today, if you hear this word, this gospel. If you understand you are a sinner and you willingly walk out of here today and reject that gospel, your life is in your own hands.

I beg you, turn your life over to Jesus today. Don't suffer the consequences of unrepentant sin.

For the professing believer here today. You can't call yourself a follower of Jesus if you don't follow Jesus.

Maybe there is an area of your life that is kept hidden from obedience to the Word.

Maybe you're a teen and you are struggling with things, and you are caught up in trouble and you don't know what to do. Turn to Jesus today. Get with an adult, come see Pastor Hayden this morning.

Maybe you are an adult and there is an area you know right now that you are willingly disobeying God in your life. Maybe it is in regard to how you spend your money; pornography; drugs; alcohol; unforgiveness; theft; pride; or idolatry.

Would you submit that to the Lord today?

Don't be the believer who looks at Jesus and walks away from him, not remembering what he has done for you.

God is calling us to himself today.