

## Scripture

<sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup>For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. <sup>25</sup>But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

## Commentary

'But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.' - James continues, saying that hearing and embracing the Word is not an end unto itself. One who believes he is doing well in just hearing but not doing will be sorely disappointed on the Last Day. Hardly anything is more bitter than being betrayed by someone we trust and believe in, and how more so than when we've 'deceived ourselves'? Faith without good works cannot be a saving faith, but is counterfeit. Why? Because faith in Jesus, that met with a true relationship with the Savior, which this faith must be in order to have such a relationship, has already proven itself true by that same relationship. Yet, this same faith leaves no choice but to bear the fruits of works, if it is, in fact, real. Nothing can suppress the response of a saving relationship with Jesus, for He is Holy.

So, firmly anchored in this, there are two issues, one on each side, pointing back towards this Truth. James is speaking to those assumed to be believers, (*Jas 1:19*), and as so, those who follow his instruction to embrace the Word of God, doing everything in their realm of responsibility to make the most of their opportunity. As a result, James warns them to follow through, pressing forth the change in their works, made necessary by the Work of the Word in their hearts. They are not to ignore their conviction nor their inspiration, but follow through with works resultant of all of this. These are the same works which Jesus equates to the 'house' (*Matt 7:24-27*) the wise and the foolish man each built. Their worth in that 'house' will be tested on the Last Day, and their reward presented accordingly. Therefore, this said by James, he tells them not to otherwise 'deceive themselves'. And how might we escape this deception, the one we might bring upon ourselves? By examining the evidence of the fruits inherent to a real relationship with the Creator of the Universe. No one can brush past His Presence, in a saving relationship, without experiencing the fruits of the Spirit. So we must always cry out to the Father for the means to be 'doers of the word' and not to let the Truth of God fall to the ground and be trampled.

'For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror' – The Word is given to us to encourage and convict. The Holy Spirit shows us for what we truly are by the Truths of the Word. It is a mirror in which we may see a reflection of insight into our heart and then use that opportunity to respond accordingly to the change It brings. Note here that it is both the doer and the hearer who look into the mirror of the Word – the mere hearer will have no excuse before the Lord, for it is for his actions, and the lack of, that he will be judged.

'for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.' – He has heard the conviction of God on his sin, then turned away without a comment or response to the Almighty. 'But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.' – The 'law of liberty' is an amazing statement of the overall Oneness of God's intent, direction, and design. It comes full circle, encompassing everything and meeting itself at the other end; the beginning of the perfect, seamless circle, which has no beginning nor end. Consider how something can both contain, guide, and define, while at the same time provide perfect, free liberty. How is this possible?? It can only be possible because both are One in the same, both of the same Substance, a part of and thus inherent of the Perfection of God Himself. And how does He make It so? It is so through the satisfaction of His seamless Justice, by His Promise of Affection, in His Endless Grace. Amen! Amen!!

'...and continues in it' is the qualifier of a true saint by God's provision of perseverance. God keeps His children in tow, compelling us forward in our growth, our Sanctification. This does not mean the saint never sins, but that the overall direction of his life, covered by the Forgiveness in the Lamb's Blood, continues forward in the Father's Will. (*1Jn 1:7*) God drives, compels, enables us on this journey, and what a wonderful trip it is!

'...and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work' – In this translation of the Bible (NKJV, KJV) as well as in the original Greek, James has used 'work' interchangeably with the 'doers of the word'. It takes work on our part to fulfill our portion of responsibility in our Sanctification. The desire, and later the ability and means to do this is the direct result of the Father's Election of each saint to be included in His wonderful Salvation Plan – His Plan to transform us.

'...this one will be blessed in what he does.' – The saint who follows through has much reward to enjoy now and later in Glory. Our Lord illustrated His Law of Love in washing the Disciple's feet. (*Jn 13:5*) Jesus fulfilled the Law. (*Lk 24:44*) He shows us how He lived It out in faithful, perfect obedience to the Father. (*Lk 22:42*) And in His act of washing their feet, He showed us His Perfect Love, which embodies true fulfillment of doing what the Word says. Our Lord's actions testify to what it means to be doers, and on a higher level, proves that His basis is of Love, which runs through and through Him, in a Holy Work in which the Master, living out His Own

edict, stooped to serve His servants. And if He does this for us, then we have no choice but to do the same. **'If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.'** (Jn 13:17)

On the other side of this faith, resultant in a relationship with the Lord, is the test to try the relationship, seeing if it is proven and true. Anyone might have faith, yet also in the wrong things or persons, and thus in the wrong way. James will later point out that even the demons have faith in God's intent, willingness, and surety of carrying out His Plan. (Jas 2:19) But this is their indictment, not their Salvation. So the same will prove true for one professing a faith in Jesus, yet who does not exhibit a response in works which are a sure outcome of a real, binding, saving faith in Jesus.

However, the resultant 'building the house' cannot be likened to our Salvation. The brethren in v.22 won't risk **'deception'** ending their Salvation, but of the treasure lost when the 'house' falls under the Test. (Matt 7:27) It cannot at all mean our own Salvation, for we have no part in It to begin with, so how can we contribute to It's destruction? God alone is responsible for our Salvation, through all of It's stages, from Foreknowing through Glorification. (Rom 8:29-30) It is His Will which makes our Salvation assured. Our job is to do our best in faithful response to His undeniable Will. The 'house' must be viewed under our responsibility of works, compelled by God, out of faith from God, for our works will be tested on the Last Day for their worth. And our 'house', our life's works in response to God's incitation, must be built on a Solid Rock, on the foundations of the Word and of sound Doctrine if it is to endure on the Day. **'Do not deceive yourselves'** beloved brethren, for **'if anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.'** (1 Cor 3:15) He has lost his reward, but not his Salvation. The one who is attentive and **'a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does'** and will be rewarded accordingly on the Last Day.

## Key Summary

Merely hearing and embracing the Word is not an end unto itself.

The Word convicts us in our sin and we are changed. We must expect works accordingly, our behavior rooted in our changed heart.

This Passage is an issue of our reward for our life's works, not of our Salvation, secure in God.

## Study Questions

If you are following Jas 1:19-21, and are under the teaching of the Word, do you see a response of change and thus works in your life?

Are your works in correlation with the change in your heart, or are your change or works out of balance in your life?

When your 'house' of your life's works is finally tested, will it stand up to the Lord's scrutiny? Is it really of value according to the Word?

## Cited Scripture

### James 1:19

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

### Matt 7:24-27

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

### 1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

### John 13:5

After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

### Luke 24:44

Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

### Luke 22:42

"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

### **John 13:17**

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

### **James 2:19**

You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!

### **Romans 8:29-30**

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

### **1 Corinthians 3:15**

If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.