

**GreyStone EDU James: GS.EDU 2020**  
**SESSION 03 HEARER/DOER**  
**WEEK OF 6/16/2020**

Welcome back! Thank you for registering for our Distance-Discipleship Summer Study: JAMES by Matt Chandler; hosted by Grey Stone EDU with Small Groups by Lifeway! We are going to grow spiritually over the next 13 weeks by studying this vital book together!

**Video reminder:** In order to view the video teachings each week, you will need to download the **Lifeway Small Groups Application**. The study videos are FREE on your ROKU, APPLE-TV, or AMAZON FIRE TV devices (as well as the Apple Store for i-Pad & i-Phone and Google Play for Android devices). Simply search for the "Small Group by Lifeway Application" and install it. After installing the app, open it on your device and look for the JAMES Study to access the 13-week study. (Note: There are several other free studies available as well.) You can even download the video to watch later.

\*\*\*Every Tuesday, registrants will receive an email link with the Resources, Video Teaching information and weekly Study Notes. The study runs from June 2 -August 25, 2020 online.

**MAIN POINT**

True belief causes Christians to live out their faith according to God's Word.

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

- **How have you experienced evidence of the truth of the saying, "Actions speak louder than words"?**
- **How does the way we live and act prove what we truly believe in life?**

We've laid a foundation for the Book of James and addressed the fact that life is difficult—even for Christians. In life, especially when facing trials and temptations, we'll constantly face the same decision: will we do what God's Word says? That question will present itself in different circumstances; yet underneath the surface, the central point is the same. Those who have true belief in Christ will act in accordance with God's Word.

**Watch the session 3 video (today's Session features Beau Hughes).**

**Video Teaching Notes:**

- God has decided to R\_\_\_\_\_ and reconcile all things to Himself.
- The church is the model home of the community that will one day be in heaven.
- James wants their vision of their identity and their destiny to T\_\_\_\_\_ their character and their present circumstances.
- Moral instruction without a captivating vision of beauty will only produce whitewashed tombs and rebels. Beauty transforms.
- Take O\_\_\_\_\_ all manner of filthiness and wickedness and receive, put on, welcome, absorb, submit yourself to, meekly humble yourself and receive the W\_\_\_\_\_ of God.
- This is the message of Christianity: that left to ourselves, we can't and don't P\_\_\_\_\_ God. But God has made a way for us to bring Him pleasure and to be accepted by God, and that's through what Jesus Christ has done.
- The one who merely hears the word and has a lifestyle that is characteristically against doing what he hears has N\_\_\_\_\_ truly received the gospel.
- They're satisfied in the church with the buds of hearing without the fruits of obedience.

\*\*\**Redeem, Transform, Off, Word, Please, Not*

**Scriptures used in today's session: James 1:22-27**

- Matthew 6:40
- Philippians 3:21
- Colossians 1:20
- Matthew 5:21-22
- Matthew 7:24-27
- Matthew 13:9
- Romans 2:13
- I Cor. 8:1
- Luke 8:21

- Luke 9:23
- Romans 5:8
- Phil. 2:4-9

### Conclusions & Remarks

1. What indicators would be present if our church had only “hearers” and not “doers” filling our church?
2. James 1:25 talks about the Word of Truth, which is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Luke 10:27).
3. A Doer acts and is blessed. A Doer exhibits genuine faith.
4. Religion is worthless if we just call it our “faith” without actually working at faith. This is why our day-to-day speaking and acts are revealing.

### Notes from Pastor Randall:

- These verses indicate a choice we have: hear and forget –OR– hear and do. ...Which choice is Christ-like?
- In James 1:23-24 the illustration of a mirror is given. In the first century, mirrors were rare (they had metal with blurred images). So it was common for one to not know what one looked like (or forget). Today we don’t have that excuse, and shouldn’t have it with our faith in action.
- A forgotten faith is the same as a discarded faith...which does not please God.
- The journey to obedience in hearing and doing is simple:
- A. **Receive** the Word, Humbly; B. **Remember** the Word constantly, and C. **Obey** the Word Wholeheartedly.

### MY PERSONAL STUDY

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Read James 1:22-25.

- **How did James’s earthly relationship with Jesus lend credibility and passion to his message of being a doer, not just a hearer, of truth?**
- **In the video Beau said, “Moral instruction without a captivating vision of beauty will only produce whitewashed tombs and rebels.” What did he mean? How does this statement help us think about religion and our relationship with God?**
- **What did James mean when he said we deceive ourselves (see v. 22)?**

James was concerned that believers persevere in living out God’s Word. James maintained that just listening to God’s Word was insufficient. When one hears the Word and does not act on the admonitions contained in it, that person really is engaging in self-deception. Simply listening to the message is not enough. For James, genuine religion and daily life could not be separated. He had little patience with those who claimed to be pious or religious but gave no evidence of inward change by their daily conduct.

The Bible is a living and active book that is able to speak to our lives at any moment. It is not a dated or irrelevant message, but one that is sharp today and for all eternity. However, for it to cut into our lives, we must spend time in it. It alone has the ability to recognize our sin, which means that when it does, we must respond.

Read James 1:26-27.

- **How well does your speech reflect the truth of who you are in Christ?**
- **When are you most prone to lose control of your tongue?**
- **What does losing control of our tongues suggest about where we’re looking for our identity in that moment? How do we see ourselves in that moment?**

James identified our language, relationships, and attitudes as visible reflections of what’s in our hearts. Today’s video focused primarily on controlling our tongues. Just as a right understanding of God’s Word produces godly action, so does it produce godly speech. Often we are tempted to not hold our tongues when we feel that we are being wronged in some way. Those who have been redeemed by the gospel can hold their tongues in a way that is honoring to God, knowing that He values them and has given them grace through Jesus.

True religion expresses itself in loving service and in holy living. Put another way, true religion includes both social ethics and personal ethics. Orphans and widows were some of the most helpless members of society; by taking care of them, the church put God’s Word into practice. Both aspects of religion brought together in this verse indicate that we are to be in the world rendering service to others. Yet, we are not to succumb to the evil of the world. Jesus perfectly modeled this balance for us during His time on earth. Jesus also went so far as to secure our adoption by God in the ultimate example of sacrificial, loving service.

## APPLICATION

Identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to our lives.

- **How does your life currently give evidence of what you most believe? What needs to change?**
- **What can we do this week to help one another live out the truth of the gospel—the perfect law of freedom? When and where do you need reminders of who God is and who you are in Christ?**
- **How do loving service and holy living point others to the truth about God?**
- **What remaining questions or comments do you have regarding this session’s video teaching?**

E-mail Pastor Randall with your questions or comments after today’s session: [Randall@gsdurham.com](mailto:Randall@gsdurham.com)

**This Week's Companion Reading: James Session 3 from Lifeway:**

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/product-family/james-bible-study>

**Next Week is Session 04: James Judgement/Mercy – will be sent Tuesday 06.23..20**

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## PRAYER

Pray that your faith would lead you to act in accordance with God’s Word. Pray that you would not passively hear the Word, but that your heart would be changed and action would follow.

## COMMENTARY James 1:22-27

1:22. James’s command is literally to “keep on becoming doers of God’s Word.” He insisted on an obedience which lasts. This does not minimize the importance of hearing God’s Word. It does emphasize strongly the need for acting. Too often Christians view a sermon as an interesting moral or theological lecture. We need to do something other than sitting and listening.

Jesus pronounced a blessing only on those “who hear the word of God and obey it” (Luke 11:28).

The command to listen to God’s Word describes someone who attends a lecture. The hearer could nod agreeably to the message but do nothing as a result. God wants a listener to become a disciple, an obedient follower of Jesus. One who hears the message without doing anything is self-deceived. Such a listener has made a false estimate of the situation. Jesus warned against this error (Matt. 7:21-27).

1:23-25. James presented a negative and a positive illustration of a response to God’s message. Via a vivid picture of listless listening, verses 23-24 compare those who only hear God’s Word to people who gaze into a mirror and dash away with little memory of what they saw. Mirrors in New Testament times were made of polished metal. People used them to wash their faces, shave their beards, apply cosmetics, and comb their hair. Then they quickly left, giving little thought to the image they had seen. People can repeat this experience in the spiritual realm. We give a quick glance into God’s Word, find a morsel of truth, and jump into another task without remembering or applying what we read.

Verse 25 uses the mirror metaphor with four verbs to picture the response of obedient listeners to God’s message. First, obedient people look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom. This describes someone who gazes at God’s message with a desire to learn. The same verb—translated as bent over—pictures the apostle John staring into Jesus’ empty tomb (John 20:5). John’s look led to an obedient faith (John 20:8).

Second, obedient people continued to do what God said. They put God’s Word into practice and follow through with commitment. Third, obedient listeners do not forget what they hear. Spiritual amnesia never conquers their minds. Fourth, obedient listeners do what God’s message instructs them to do.

Good listening, endurance, clear memory, and obedience characterize committed Christians. They are eager to receive and obey what God tells them to do.

God’s Word is the perfect law that gives freedom. Obedience to Jesus’ commands in Scripture brings freedom from sin and death. Whenever we submit to God’s message, this law of liberty produces a disposition to obey God’s will joyfully. We have freedom because we truly want to serve God. Jesus promised this freedom in John 8:31-32.

Obedient people are promised a blessing. We do not need to wait for a future blessing. We already have the blessing in our grasp. Doing what God requires brings a blessing with it.

Psalms 1:1-3 summarizes the blessings of obedience. Those who meditate on the Law of the Lord will be “like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”

1:26. This verse describes a person who considered himself to be religious but did not listen well to God’s Word. The person focused on the externals of religious action such as public prayer, fasting, giving, and worship attendance. James did not belittle this action, but he added that inner control of the tongue must accompany outward performance.

Keep a tight rein on his tongue sometimes described the bridle used with a horse. The tongue is compared to an unmanageable horse which needed bit and bridle to tame its excesses. Controlling the tongue is so important that James devoted most of chapter 3 to its use.

James leveled two accusations at the person who practiced outward religion without inner control. First, he deceives himself. This repeats the idea of verse 22 in different words. What a pity to find after a lifetime of pseudo-religion that you have only been practicing self-deception!

Second, his religion is worthless. Peter used the same word—translated as empty—to describe useless pagan practices his readers had followed before they became Christians (1 Pet. 1:18). Religious practices without inner control have no more saving power than paganism.

1:27. Two evidences demonstrate pure religion: deeds of compassion and inner purity. This does not reduce Christianity to mere benevolence. True religion has more features than James has mentioned. The emphasis here is that for God to accept our worship it must be accompanied by loving ministry and a holy life. Both Christians and non-Christians could see and understand this type of evidence.

To look after orphans and widows demanded demonstrations of concern and active involvement. The psalmist pictured God as a defender of orphans and widows (Ps. 68:5). Christ used the word for look after in Matthew 25:43 to describe the ministry of caring for those in prison. Obeying this appeal calls for more than an occasional visit. It demands genuine compassion and true engagement.

(Not) polluted demands a freedom from contamination by the world. Peter used this word to refer to Christ as “without. . . defect” (1 Pet. 1:19). Christians are to model their purity after that of Jesus.

Some months ago I assembled a small playset with a sliding board and some climbing sections. I placed it in my backyard for my grandchildren to use. Although the process was not difficult, I constantly referred to the instruction book so I would know where to fit each piece. The writers of the book know how their product should fit together. I needed to follow their directions.

We must follow God’s instructions devotedly if we want to produce a lifestyle honoring to God. Obeying God’s Word demands control of the tongue, a compassion for others, and a separated life. These are the identifying marks of pure and faultless religion.