

## WELCOME

Alright, if you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to James chapter 1. James 1. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to James 1. If you open one of the hard-backed black bibles under your seat, James 1 will be on page **1011**.

## INTRODUCTION

Now, I know what everyone's been wondering after last week's sermon. How's Betty? Man, I got more questions about my dog... and I appreciate it.

- Betty made it through surgery.
- Tumor was benign.
- I appreciate your care!

Alright, we're back in James today, and we're going to finish James 1. Now, I'm calling today's sermon **SLIDE DO THE WORD**.

You see, I meet with a lot of guys who don't really take their relationship with God very seriously.

- They care more about their financial standing,
  - or their hobbies.
- They care more about their business,
  - or their kid's activities,
  - or the Broncos.

And while, I don't think that any Christian would say outright, *"I don't care about my relationship with God."*

- I find often that there is this underlying thought that,
- *“One day...I’ll take my devotion to God seriously.*
- *Like, one day I’ll take that more seriously.*
- *One day I’ll get in the word, or pray, or serve, or be generous.*
- *One day!”*

But to quote theologian D.A. Carson, **SLIDE**

*“People do not drift toward Holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.”*

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## **TRANSITION**

This whole *“one day”* thing, James counters it with this: do the word. So, let’s get to work. James 1 starting in verse 19:

## **JAMES 1:19**

**[19] Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;**

## EXPLAIN: FALSE CONTEXT

Now, this is like a thesis statement for our passage this morning. And this is a very popular verse. But it often gets taken out of context.

- How many of you have heard this verse...
  - used in the context of how one is a good parent,
  - or how to be a better spouse,
  - or how to be a better employee?

Yeah! This verse is applied to relationships all the time.

And those are good APPLICATIONS of this verse.

But we shouldn't move to application too quickly, lest we misinterpret.

- You see, that's not the primary context here.

Remember the rule of Bible study:

- it cannot mean for US what it did not mean to THEM.

And if we're not careful, what we can begin to do is read the letter of James in this sort of moralistic or therapeutic way without even knowing it.

- And when we pluck a verse out of context
  - that's exactly what we're doing.
- It becomes wisdom...
- but wisdom that's detached from the context.

So, yes, in your relationships you should be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

BUT JAMES ISN'T TALKING ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS HERE.

## CONTEXT

So, the context is this:

You have a group of Jewish Christians.

- They are ethnically Jewish,
- but they have come to believe that Jesus is their Messiah!

But there is another group of Jews

- they are the religious leaders of the time
- and they have NOT come to the same conclusion about Jesus.

What's more, they believe that these Jesus followers...

- present a threat or danger to their religion.

And so, they move into action...

- They have ostracized people in the Jesus community.
- They have arrested and imprisoned these people.
- They have even executed people in this community.

And this persecution led to this community dispersing from Jerusalem.

And you can imagine,

- they're questioning their decision to trust Jesus.
  - It's all this Jesus stuff has led them to social ruin.
  - They're exiles now.
  - They're frustrated...
  - and they're even getting angry!

And so, James, the pastor from their home church in Jerusalem, is writing to them saying: these trials are for your maturity.

And last time he concluded with this...look back to verses 17-18:

## JAMES 1:17-18

[17] Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. [18] Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

So, here's what he just said:

- you were brought forth...
- you were saved...
- you were made Christians...
  - the cause of all this suffering...
  - of this persecution...
  - of these trials...
- All this happened...of God's own will...by the word of truth.

And then knowing this...be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

The context here is the will of God revealed in the word of God.

So, with that...let's re-read verse 19, and continue on...

## JAMES 1:20

[19] Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; [20] for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

## EXPLAIN: ANGER

So, James is warning them not to get angry with the will of God as revealed in the word of God.

- When hearing God's word...
- slow your roll...
- and don't get angry at what you hear.
- Don't get angry at the word of God!
- It won't produce maturity and righteousness.

Now what kind of anger are we talking about here?

- Well, the word here for anger is *orgē* [ar-gay],
  - Which means a deep-seated resentment.
- It's not an outburst. It's not *thumos* [thoo-mows].
  - It's not some kind of explosion
  - where you lose your temper.

This is a deep-seated resentment.

## POINT 1

So, let me make my first point of how we DO THE WORD.

We **SLIDE** DON'T RESENT THE WORD.

He's saying,

- *"I want you to be eager to hear the Word,*
- *very reluctant to put in your two cents,*
- *and very slow to boil inside with resentment when you hear it."*

So, it's back to what I said about Abortion last week:

- we don't start with what we think or feel...
- we start with what God's word says!

He's saying: I want you to hear the Word, and I want you to hear it without any resistance.

- But often people who hear the Word of God
- get hostile toward the truth.

My inbox has many illustrations of that hostility.

- Some people begin to resent...
- when they hear something...
- that's different than what they believe.

Some people resent when they hear something that confronts them.

They are hostile to the truth because they're convicted by it.

- Some people come to church...
- hear me say something....
- and say *"I'll never go back there again. That offends me."*

Now, sometimes that's cause I'm a dummy and say something wrong.

- But sometimes that's an anger...
- a resentment toward the truth.

And that won't produce what Christians are going after:

the righteousness of God.

## TRANSITION

### DON'T RESENT THE WORD OF GOD.

But what do we do when we start feeling that resentment...

I've said it before:

- if this book doesn't challenge you,
- you're probably not reading it.

So, what do we do when we start feeling that resentment...

- towards God's word...
- towards the trial we face...
- towards all that God is doing to mature us?

Well, look at verse 21.

### JAMES 1:21

[21] Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Now, this is a great verse! That word there "put away", that Greek verb came to refer to taking off your clothes. So, he's saying,

- *"Take off this anger,*
- *this filthiness,*
- *this wickedness in your heart*
- *that's coming out in your life,*
- *take all that junk off."*



## ILLUSTRATION: McDONALDS

It's like this: my first job was at McDonalds.

- I was fourteen years old.
- Which is right on the cusp of child-slave-labor laws.

And I picked McDonalds because it was close enough to rollerblade to.

Now don't laugh!

This was in the back in the 1900s when rollerblading was still kinda cool...

- So, I was a fourteen-year-old,
- pimply 8th-grader,
- wearing a McDonald's uniform,
- on rollerblades...
- with a bowl cut.

Ladies...line up!

Now, because I was the youngest there, my jobs at McDonalds were relegated to whatever the other employees didn't want to do!

- So, I would have to clean the dining room,
- and the bathrooms,
- and mop the kitchen,
- and do dishes...

Those things I expected. But when I ran out of those normal tasks...the manager would make me do things that I just thought were cruel and unusual.

- One afternoon the boss told me to go outside and scrub the trash dumpster...

- “So, you’re telling me...
- to clean the thing...
- that we put trash into?”
- They made me climb into the play place
  - with a rag and a spray bottle,
  - and I had to clean the inside of the tubes...
  - which you can imagine...
    - I’m loving it!
- But the worst thing I had to do at McDonalds
  - was I had to climb into the ball pit,
  - and collect any debris that had been left in there,
    - which included happy meal toys...
    - dried up food,
      - and yes,
    - once I came out with a rolled-up diaper.

Now after an 8-hour shift at McDonalds,

- and a subsequent rollerblade home,
- I was disgusting!

Not only from the diaper pit...

- but I was also covered in a thin film of fry grease
  - to add to my already greasy adolescent skin.

And when I got home, I would smell so much like McDonalds,

- my mom made me strip off my work clothes in the garage,
- put them straight into the washer,
- and head right to the shower.

## APPLICATION

That's the imagery here. Take off all that **filthiness**.

- It was a word used for dirty clothes.
- But it also came metaphorically to refer to inequity and sin.

But it's a very interesting Greek word.

- The root word, *rhupos* [hrew-paws]...
- is used in other Greek writings
- to refer to wax in your ears.

Isn't that interesting?

- Get rid of any filth that accumulates
- and plugs up your ears...
- so you can't hear the Word.

You can become deaf because of accumulated wax;  
deaf because of the accumulated sin.

- Throw it off!
- Get rid of it!
- It's a cancer that has to be cut away.
- It's a wax that plugs our ears.
- It's a garment that's filthy and has to be thrown off.

The whole filthy, ugly, dirty mass of wickedness and sin must be

- confessed,
- repented of,
- and removed.

And that's how we're to receive the Word.

## TRANSITION

So, that's the slow to anger part. DON'T RESENT THE WORD.

But next, James goes deeper on the quick to hear part.

Verse 22:

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## JAMES 1:22-25

[22] But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

## EXPLAIN

Ah! So, there's James' burden. Some of the Christians in these churches are deceived!

What are they deceived about?

- They're deceived about their faith!

There are men and women in the church who think they're pleasing God...

But they are only hearers of the Word.

- That means they receive it.
- They profess to agree with what they hear preached.
  - They come to the church's gatherings.
  - And they sing the songs...
  - They hear the teachings.
  - And they nod along...

But their lives don't match up with what they're hearing.

- Their lives are filled with bad fruit.
- Their lives are void of OBEDIENCE to what they're hearing.
- Their hearts are filled with anger
  - and all manner of filthiness and wickedness.

These Christians are deceived! That means they don't even realize it!

Back to what I had Haley read over us this morning...

- They are unaware that they are building their life on sand.
- They are convinced they're building their life on the rock,
  - and they continue to chug along,
  - falsely believing they're doing well.

This is why James goes here!

Because James understands...

- that to be quick to hear...
- means to embrace God's Word,
- and to, in faith, ACT UPON IT.

## TRANSITION

What he is saying is...

- the one who merely hears the Word...
  - and has a lifestyle that is characteristically
  - against doing what he hears,
- that person has NOT TRULY received the gospel.

And he goes on to illustrate.

## JAMES 1:23-25

[23] For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. [24] For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. [25] But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

### EXPLAIN: MIRRORS

Now, that illustration is really helpful, because unlike today, mirrors in the time James is writing were not common objects.

- In those days, there were no glass mirrors.
  - Glass mirrors didn't come until the 19th century
  - in case you want a little trivia.
- So, the mirrors they did have were metal.
- And the reflection was distorted and sort of blurry.

So, let this blow your mind: people were generally unfamiliar with what they looked like!

But if they did catch a glimpse,

- they would see it,
- and it would be sort of blurry and distorted.
- And then they'd walk away and forget what they looked like.
- They couldn't keep the image with them.

He is saying that is exactly you who hear the word and don't do it are like.

## POINT 2

And it's my second point this morning.

### **SLIDE DON'T FORGET THE WORD**

Some, when they gather with the church on Sunday...

- You hear the Word.
- You receive some comfort or challenge,
- and then you just walk out the door.

And as soon as you walk out the door...

- like we'll do in about 30 minutes...
- you forget it!
- And it has no bearing on the rest of your life.

Some of you have been listening to preaching for years,

- and every week you do this.
  - You're up...
  - and out of here...
  - and you've forgotten what you've heard.

But DON'T FORGET THE WORD! It's like a mirror!

### **ILLUSTRATION: CANCER SCANS**

So, here's a helpful illustration:

- On December 26th, 2011
- I got a phone call from my mom at about 3:30am.
- She had awoken extreme stomach pain,
- and needed me to take her to the ER.

She had a large section of her bowel surgically removed...  
and she was told that the obstruction was, in fact, a tumor.

Now, they weren't sure if it was cancer or not, but the next step was a PET scan.

- So, they throw her in that tube,
- And the scan does whatever it does.
- And, we end up in her oncologist's office
- to receive the scan results.

And the results aren't good: He says,

- *"You have stage-4 Colorectal cancer.*
- *We've gotta hit it with heavy radiation*
- *and chemo-therapy for six months,*
- *and then maintenance chemo*
- *for as long as there is evidence of disease.*
- *You'll be lucky to live 5 years."*

## APPLICATION

Now, here's where this comes back to the James...verse 25:

[25] But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

- The perfect law...
- the law of liberty...
- That's like mom's PET scan!



They showed us that she had a problem.

- Without that scan we don't know that the tumor was cancerous,
- and without the scan we don't know the extent of the disease.

The word of God shows us what's wrong with us...

- But this is where James goes,
  - you can't simply be a hearer...
  - you've gotta be a doer!
  - You've gotta **persevere** to **be blessed**.

So, back to my mom. The scans showed her that she had a problem...

**But the scans are powerless to cure her.**

Right?

- No matter how many times she had those scans,
- no matter how many times she got in the tube,
- they were powerless to do anything.
- **The scans are only going to diagnose that something is wrong.**
- **They can never be the cure.**

You can be a hearer of the word...you can look into the mirror...

- But just hearing the word is not enough!
- It's not the cure!
- You've gotta be a doer of the word.
- You have to act on what you hear!

This is what James is saying. **DON'T FORGET THE WORD!**

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## TRANSITION

And that's really the crux of this passage. Now, if you're all freaked out now about whether you're a DOER of the word, or if you're only a HEARER...James gets real practical.

All right? Verse 26 and 27. James ends with THREE litmus tests, as it were, to diagnose if you're a DOER. Verse 26:

## JAMES 1:26

[26] If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

## SPEECH

Here's the first test to show if you're a DOER OF THE WORD. It'll show up in **SLIDE SPEECH**.

You want to know if you're a doer?

- Listen to what you say.
- Listen to your conversation.
- Listen to your words.
- Listen to your jokes.
- Listen to your retorts.
- Listen to your conversations.

What comes out of your mouth?

- Lofty things,
- Godly things,
- things that exalt, lift up, and honor Christ?

Because if you're an obedient believer and you're not just shallowly hearing the word. It'll show up in your speech. Because "out of the abundance of the heart he mouth speaks."

And then verse 27:

## **JAMES 1:27**

[27] Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

So, it'll show up in your speech...

Secondly, it'll show up in your **SLIDE RELATIONSHIPS**

- If you want to know whether a person is a doer
  - listen to what they say...
- AND watch how they deal with people in need.
  - You'll see the love of Christ in a doer.
  - You'll see sacrifice,
  - you'll see compassion,
  - you'll see kindheartedness,
  - you'll see tenderness,
  - you'll see mercy,
  - and you'll see grace.

## HOLINESS

And then thirdly, at the end of verse 27... **Keep oneself unstained by the world.** What's that? **SLIDE HOLINESS**

- Holy living.
- Godly living.
  - Are you growing up?
  - Are you maturing?

That's how you'll know you're doer.

- Pure speech,
- loving relationships,
- and holy living.

If you're not seeing those area characteristically growing, you might be hearing the word, but doing doing it.

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## ILLUSTRATION: KIDDIE POOL

So, let me end with this illustration I've used before: in our neighborhood there's a community pool. So, we got a pool membership.

Now, at the pool, there's a full-sized pool...

- with a slide
- and a diving board
- and a deep end
- and all that.

But then, there's also a little gated section with a smaller pool... it's the kiddie pool.

- And the kiddie pool isn't as deep.
  - Like, water to my knees.
- And the water was MUCH warmer than the main pool...
  - I mean creepily warm...
    - A bunch of toddlers...
    - in a small body of water...
    - you do the math!

But when Harper was little, she loved the kiddie pool.

- And so, she'd play, and I'd sit on the side and soak my feet,
- or sometimes I'd get down in the kiddie pool with her.
- And we'd play and splash.
- And I'd try not to think of the cesspool of human fluids I was in...

But you know why it was great? BECAUSE SHE WAS THREE.

Now, here's the thing. If you went to the pool...

- and you noticed off to the side,
- a grown man just hanging out in the kiddie pool,
  - without kids of his own,
- just floating around in there...
- with water wings on or something...

You'd think: something is seriously wrong here!

- I mean if there's a 200-pound guy
- with a beard
- just sitting in the kiddy pool,
- soaking...

I mean, call the cops or something! Right? Something has gone wrong!

## APPLICATION

But that's a good picture of what can happen...

- if we resent God's word...
- if we forget God's word...
- if we simply remain hearers of God's word...
- and don't DO the word.

It's like a grown adult in the kiddie pool.

- It's not only awkward and sad...
- but it's seriously sketchy...
- and might even be an indicator of danger.

Where are you at today?

Let's just end with some questions:

Are you a Christian? Have you humbly received the word of God?

- If you answer NO to that question...

Then the most important thing for you today is to believe on Christ!

- I'd invite you,
- I'd encourage you,
- I'd plead with you to believe on Christ.
- He loves you! Come to him!

But if you answered, "*Yes, I'm a Christian,*"

- is this evidenced in your life?
- Would other godly people affirm that about you?
- Does your daily life align with your profession of faith?

- Is there any chance that you're deceived...
  - about what your relationship with God is?
- Any chance?
- Any chance that you might be the one
  - who looks in the mirror
  - and walks away and forgets what you see?
- Any chance that you're an adult in the kiddie pool?

If so, take the invitation from James this morning.

- Take off those clothes.
- Put away all filthiness and wickedness
- and receive the word!
- Build your house on the rock!

And mere intellectual assent...hearing the word only... isn't enough...

It's time to DO THE WORD. God help us!

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.



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