

**Study of James / Spring Quarter 2011
Bellevue Church of Christ / Lesson 3**

I. Receiving of the Word (19-21)

Keys to Receiving God's Word:

- Listening First (19)
- Meekness (21)

Barriers to Receiving God's Word

- Speaking First (19)
- Anger (19-20)
- Wickedness (21)

II. Practice of the Word (22-27)

*Why would this message have been especially relevant for Jewish readers?
-Romans 2:12-29*

παρακύπτω - parakuptō
-to stoop to look in

One is Blessed if They (v. 25):

Seek the Truth (John 20:1-5)

Stay on Track (Psalm 1)

Shape their Thinking (Phil 4:9)

See it Through (Matt 7:21-23)

James 1:19-27

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 that God requires.

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

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

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**.

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

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.

How does each of these barriers interfere with the acceptance of God's Word? If these barriers are present, what does it say about the focus of our life?

Ecc1 5:1-2
-Sacrifice of fools
Phil 4:5
-Forbearance

Rom 3:21-26 - The righteousness of God

Heb 12:1-2 - putting aside every weight
Matthew 5:2-12 - "The Beatitudes" - Pathway to Righteousness

Hearing without doing, indicates hearing without true faith in God
-Romans 10:14-17
-James 2:14-26

Matt 13:3-9, 18-23
The parable of the sower.

θρησκός - thrēskos
Describes the person who performs the external acts of religion, such as public worship, fasting, etc.

3 Ways the Truth Should be Put Into Practice:
*In speech (**James 3:1-12**)
*In love toward others (**Matt 25:31-46**)
*In avoiding the world's pollution (**Gal 5:19-21**)

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Questions for Discussion

The Practice of the Word

What three barriers to receiving the Word does James lay out in verses 19-21?

How do each of these things interfere with the acceptance of God's Word? If any of these barriers are present in our life, what does that say about the focus of our life? (vv. 19-21)

In a practical way, what can we do in our daily life to demonstrate that we listen before we speak in our spiritual life? (v. 19)

What is the only way in which we can fully receive God's truth? (vv. 21; Matt 5:2-12)

What is the next step for a believer after removing the barriers to receiving the Gospel? What is the purpose of listening to the truth? (vv. 22-25; James 2:14-26)

Explain the illustration of the man who looks in the mirror. (vv. 23-24; Matt 13:3-9, 18-23)

In verse 25, James describes a man who is "blessed in his doing." What are the four reasons why this man is "blessed?"

In verses 26-27, James points out three specific areas where truth should be put into practice. They are:

What is the connection between "Pure Religion" and visiting orphans and widows? Contrast this with false or superficial religion. (vv. 26-27; Matt 25:31-46)

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“Righteousness” in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3 – 6:34)

- 5:3-12 For a fortunate life, follow the “steps” to **righteousness**.
5:13-16 Let others see this **righteousness** that God may be glorified.
5:17-48 Your **righteousness** must exceed the scribes and the Pharisees.
6:1-18 Do not parade your **righteousness** to receive glory from others.
6:19-34 Seek this **righteousness** before and above material things.

“Blessed” = Fortunate

The Beatitudes – Matthew 5:3-12

¹¹“Blessed” are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. *Romans 8:12-18*

Step 8: ¹⁰“Blessed” are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Step 7: ⁹“Blessed” are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. *Romans 12:18-21*

Step 6: ⁸“Blessed” are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. *Psalms 24:1-6*

Step 5: ⁷“Blessed” are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. *Matt 18:21-35; Luke 10:25-37; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60*

Step 4: ⁶“Blessed” are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. *Psalms 63:1-11*

Step 3: ⁵“Blessed” are the **meek**, for they shall inherit the earth. *meek = πραῦς – praus James 1:21*

Step 2: ⁴“Blessed” are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. *Psalms 51:1-4*

Step 1: ³“Blessed” are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. *Luke 18:9-14; Rom 1-3; Rev 3:17-19*

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Illustration: Simplicity of James. John and I have conversation about eschatology or the fulfillment of old-testament prophecy. Many times I crave those simple teachings which are most practical for my daily life. Even Paul's customary style of writing included a practical section which followed his deep theological discussion.

I. Seek the Truth

James 1:25 - 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.

Illustration: Truck hit our house. Heard a loud noise, and the house shook. Immediately wanted to know what had happened. Intensely looking outside to see what was going on.

Look Into Greek NASB Number: 3879

Greek Word: παρακύπτω

Transliterated Word: *parakuptô*

Root: from 3844 and 2955;

Definition: to stoop sideways, to stoop to look:--

List of English Words and Number of Times Used

look (1),
looks intently (1),
stooped and looked (1),
stooping and looking (2).

John 20:1-5 (ESV)

¹Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵And stooping to **look in**, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.

James 1:19 - Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be **quick to hear**, slow to speak, slow to anger;

II. Stay on Track

James 1:25 - 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.

Psalms 1:1-6 (ESV)

¹Book One Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ²but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ⁴The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. ⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; ⁶for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

James 1:19-21 (ESV)

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

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Three barriers to receiving God's word and persevering in our study:

(1) Speaking First

Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 (ESV)

¹Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. ²Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.

(2) Anger

(3) Wickedness

Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV)

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

What do these three barriers indicate? Focus on self!

Illustration: *So focused on work that I tune everything else out. When I'm that focused on one thing, everything else gets blocked out. Same is true when the focus of our life is on self. We "tune out" the message of God.*

We must recognize and remove these barriers before we can persevere in the study of God's word:

III. Shape your Thinking

James 1:25 - 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.

Illustration: *Before motherhood, Olivia was afraid of forgetting our daughter in her bucket-seat. After motherhood, she experienced so changed her that the idea of forgetting Kate is inconceivable.*

James 1:21-24

²¹Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and **receive with meekness the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls. ²²**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only**, deceiving yourselves. ²³For 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. ²⁴For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

Meekness indicates that we are willing to let God change our lives:

Matthew 5:5-6 (ESV)

⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

When we focus on God's word, and soften our heart to allow God to change us, we will naturally put his words into practice. If we do not put them into practice, it indicates that we never had faith to begin with:

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James 2:14-26 (ESV)

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Illustration in verses 23 & 24 is similar to parable of the sower in Matthew 13:

Matthew 13:3-9 (ESV)

³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. ⁴**And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them.** ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, ⁶but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹He who has ears, let him hear."

Matthew 13:18-23 (ESV)

¹⁸"Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹**When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.** ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

IV. See it Through

James 1:25 - 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.

Illustration – Taking a foreign language in school. Can't remember it unless you practice. How many took a foreign language, and how many can speak the language now. If my number one mission in life were to be able to speak that language, then I would have worked hard to put in into practice.

James 1:26-27 (ESV)

²⁶If anyone thinks he is **religious** and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion 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.

"Religious" – Describes the person who performs the external acts of religion

"Religious" - Greek NASB Number: 2357

Greek Word: θρησκος

Transliterated Word: *thrêskos* of unc. or.

Root: *religious*:--

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This message would have been especially relevant to Jewish readers because of their focus on ceremonial religion:

Pure and Undefined Religion:

(1) In Speech

James 3:1-12 (ESV)

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ² For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. ³ If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. ⁴ Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵ So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. ⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

(2) In Love Towards Others

Matthew 25:31-46 (ESV)

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?' ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?' ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' ⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

(3) In Avoiding the World's Pollution

Galatians 5:19-21 (ESV)

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Other Texts in Handout

Philippians 4:4-7 (ESV)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your

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requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26 (ESV)

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Matthew 5:2-4 (ESV)

² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Romans 10:14-17 (ESV)

¹⁴ But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Philippians 4:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Matthew 5:7-12 (ESV)

⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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Romans 2:12-29 (ESV)

¹² For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. ¹⁴ For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵ They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them ¹⁶ on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. ¹⁷ But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God ¹⁸ and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; ¹⁹ and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— ²¹ you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? ²² You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. ²⁴ For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." ²⁵ For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. ²⁶ So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷ Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. ²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV)

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'