

August 9, 2020

“Hearing and Doing”  
Lesson 2 of Unit

James 1:19-27

### **Intro**

Today’s Scripture passage hits pretty close to home: the disconnect between hearing and doing. For most of us, the problem isn’t that we lack information. The true issue is what we do (or don’t do) with that information.

This pattern of hearing but not doing is at the heart of what causes sin, and runs throughout the Bible. Adam and Eve were told not to eat of one tree, but chose to listen to a different voice. God delivers the Israelites from Egypt, but on the way to the Promised Land they make a golden calf to worship as God. The book of Judges is filled with numerous examples of the people turning away from God, being oppressed by an enemy, crying for and receiving deliverance, and then relapsing to repeat the cycle.

James reminds us in this passage of the power of our speech, and that knowing what to say (and how) but not doing what is right is sin.

### **Read James 1:19-27**

1. What are the three commands James gives in vs. 19 about our speech conduct? How does vs. 18 make these vs. 19 commands more imperative?

(A note on vs. 19 from our text: “These instructions are about how members of the community interact with one another and, to some extent, how they interact with outsiders. (It’s) not so much about casual conversation as...as it is about how they should conduct themselves in verbal interactions that hold the potential to become aggressively confrontational.”)

2. What is the difference between human anger (vs. 20) and righteous anger? How do they get expressed differently? How might our anger get expressed non-verbally as well? What is the righteous God desires of and from us?

3. Verse 21 begins with “therefore”, which indicates a connection between this current idea and the previous one(s). What is the connection between verses 20 and 21? What are the three things that James tells his readers to do to deal with speaking correctly?
  
4. What are the two things James tells his readers to do in vs. 22? Which of these does he place the highest value on? Why that one? What does it mean to give “lip service” to something?
  
5. What is the value of looking in a mirror physically (vs. 23-24)? What is James cautioning his readers against in these two verses?
  
6. In vs. 25, what’s the spiritual “mirror” that James is referring to? How/why can laws give freedom? What actions must be taken here to receive a blessing?
  
7. Verse 26 is an application of vs.22-25. What does James say makes one’s religion “worthless”? Why would this action cause this result?
  
8. What are the two aspects that James says make up a “pure and undefiled” religion to God? What two general areas are represented by these two examples?

Application: Our speech helps to define who we are. So do our actions. James points out to us the value and importance of both of these, and indicates that our words and actions should be saying the same things. These two areas are crucial places for us to work with God to change so our religion isn’t “worthless”.

Prayer: Father God, help us to discipline our mouths so they speak things that please you, and the build up others, especially those in Your body. Help us to act to help others in need. In Jesus’ name, Amen.