

Faith Works to Apply God's Word

(James 1:19-27)

Hear It (Romans 10:17)

It has been said God has given us two ears and one tongue and we should use them in proportion. James seems to make a similar point in James 1:18-19 when he says we should be **swift to hear**, slow to speak and slow to wrath.

We will focus on the first phrase, "swift to hear," because there will be an entire session on the tongue later. So, are you ever guilty of determining what you're going to say next while someone is talking? _____ Are you truly listening when you're doing this? _____

Have you been guilty of listening for mistakes (or Scriptural error) every time a certain person talks so that you have more ammunition against that person? _____ Anything that distracts us from listening, especially to God's Word, should be avoided.

In Romans 10:14-17, how does hearing produce faith? _____

We're told to hear the Word, and we will see that we should act on what we hear. However, we are never told to make any judgements based on our feelings regarding what we hear. It has become common in our society for people to make a judgement of what they hear based on their own logic or feelings. This is the opposite of faith. How do you think things would have turned out for Abraham if he had acted on his feelings regarding offering Isaac versus his faith? (Hebrews 11:17-19)

According to Romans 10:1-3, what is the result of using our own logic and reasoning? _____

Receive It

As we read James 1:21, we are told to receive the implanted Word. What is this Word that we are to receive?

Read Romans 1:16-17, 1 Cor. 1:18, and 2 Tim. 3:15, and create a list of the attributes of "the Word" in these passages. _____

What do we learn about the Word in Heb. 4:12? _____

Lastly, what do we learn about the Word in John 12:48? _____

Now, let's think about what it means for this Word to be implanted in us. The Word has two ideas or meanings.

- First, it could be to be planted like a seed and allowed to grow. If that happens, the plant that springs forth from the ground will be determined by the seed. If I plant a tomato seed, I will get tomato. If I plant a carrot, I will get carrots, and so on. This brings the parable of the sower to mind (Luke 5:4-8). The seed that fell into the good soil **sprang up and yielded a crop a hundredfold.**
- Second, it could mean “engrafted.” Grafting is where you take a young tree (ex. plum), cut the top out leaving only the root, and graft (insert) a limb from a different tree (peach). The original plum tree will never bear a plum, but rather it will bear peaches forevermore. So, if we cut out the top of the original tree—lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness—and implant “**the Word**,” we will no longer be filthy nor wicked but rather righteous (saved).

Do It!

Now that we have heard it and received it (v 21), James is very clear that we should be doing something with it. Christianity is not an academic exercise! I worry about some that may have studied and may have the most enlightened understanding of each passage, but yet they never let it affect their actions beyond the doctrinal matters. Yes, the Scriptures tell us what we should believe and teach. However, it also tells us that we should love God and our neighbors and serve them. Knowing is only half the battle.

As we prepare to lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness (v. 21a), list below some things with which you or those your age struggle (ex. smoking, drinking, porn, etc.). This list may include things that you do that you shouldn't do, or things you don't do that you should be doing.

Now I want you to consider the next question with me carefully: when it comes to laying these things aside, are you “interested” or “committed”? “Interested” is not like the hypocrite who is acting. Interested people are sincere and want to do what is right. They lead singing, they lead prayers, and they participate outwardly in every way. However, when the lure of sin (speeding, cussing, smoking, etc.) or the consequences (negative grade, ridicule, being belittled, etc.) of doing what is right are before them, they revert back to the world. When confronted, they may say, “I just can't do it.” The committed will purpose in their heart (Dan. 1:8) and set their face like flint (Isa. 50:7). They may fail, but a more likely statement may be, “I can't do it **yet.**”

So, are you committed? If so, may I offer the following suggestions?

- Make a checklist of items where you find yourself falling short of God's expectation. (Note: These should be items that are revealed from reading and studying His Word.)
- You can't fix everything at the same time; so prioritize the list. (For example, if you haven't obeyed the Gospel, that must be the highest priority.)
- Now take an item off the list and set a mini-goal for one week, month, and year.
- Check in on the list, pray about the list, and note progress regularly.

To practice this, refer back to the list where you or your peers are falling short, pick an item, and create a set of mini-goals to stop or start that activity. James ends this section with one item that is a common failure (bridling the tongue).

Do you struggle in this area? _____ If yes, a committed person will “**purpose themselves**” or “**set their face like flint**” in order to overcome this. What are you going to do in the next week, month, and quarter to overcome this obstacle? _____

James ends with two things that we should be doing in our walk as Christians. When is the last time you “visited an orphan in his/her trouble”? _____ If the answer is never, what can you do? _____

When is the last time you “visited a widow” in his/her trouble? _____ If the answer is never, what can you do? _____

There is no profit in hearing God's word if we fail to apply it (Matt. 7:24-27). The things we are learning in the other lessons in this series need to be applied; we must follow through! *A lack of follow-through is a lack of faith!*