

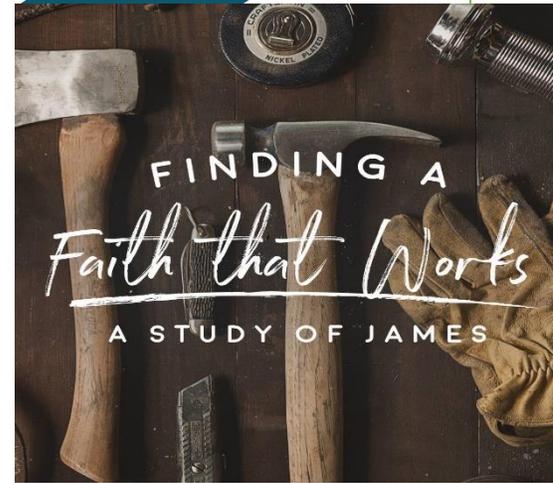
# JAMES: FINDING A FAITH THAT WORKS

## Lesson 3 - Hearers and Doers - James 1:18-27

### INTRODUCTION - "IDENTITY" - VS 18

- Before we look at vs. 19-27, we must consider the message of vs. 18 in regard to our identity.
- James is laying out a vision for his readers. Our faith has rules and our faith demands works, but our faith is based in beauty first.
- Rules and actions do not transform people. Beauty, vision, and reasoning transform people.
- Verse 18 tells us that God saved us through His Word of truth "that we should be a kind of firstfruits." Firstfruits were the earliest crops of the year that were rendered as sacrifices or gifts to display the goodness of God.

*God has called us to be a display of His nature and goodness all who interact with our lives. Our lives are a sacrifice or gift that others may see God! - This is why the "doing" is so important!*



### 1. PROBLEM? BEHAVIOURS THAT DID NOT DISPLAY THEIR IDENTITY OR THE GOODNESS OF GOD IN THEIR LIVES - LISTENING - SPEAKING - ANGER

**Vs. 19** - James addresses three ways in which this Christian community was not living in light of their identity and destiny as firstfruits of God. Evidently, people were...

1. **Not listening**
2. **Speaking quickly and brashly**
3. **Quickly rushing to wrath and judgment**

**Vs. 20** Their behavior was not approved by God. -Their anger was manifesting itself in an unwillingness to listen, and in turn, anger was directing their words. Their words and actions did not display good fruit.

- James is not simply addressing moments of fits of anger. He is speaking to the deeper, underlying anger that was directing all their other actions. **Wrath (passionate anger / vengeance) does not produce any godliness.**

*Many of us are far angrier than we realize. Some of us are enslaved to anger. It guides, directs and poisons many of our thoughts and actions.*

### 2. SOLUTION? REMOVE THE DIRT - RECEIVE THE WORD

**Vs. 21a** - *Lay apart* (Literally: lay aside, renounce) - *all filthiness* (moral dirt, pollution in our spiritual lives) and *superfluity of naughtiness* (the abundance of evil, malice, and spite)

-Speaking directly to this subject he says, "Get rid of polluted thoughts about others and lay aside the abundance of sinful thoughts." **Angry thoughts are extra thoughts; they are not needed!**

Do not bring dirt into God's house; take it off!

**What extra angry thoughts have you been dwelling on recently?**

**Vs. 21b** - *Receive with meekness the engrafted* (implanted) *Word which can save your souls* (because anger will destroy spiritual growth). Submit humbly to the Word of God. Submit to the Gospel.

-Get rid of the abundance of sin or anger in your lives. While you hold on to it, there is no room to receive the Word. **"A clinched fist receives no gift. In this case, the Word of God."**

-The paradox here is that it is the power of the Word of God that will help us lay these things down and be clean. **How well have you been receiving the Word lately?**

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### 3. RESULT? A HEART THAT HEARS AND THEN RESPONDS IN ACTION.

A life that is freed from anger and impatience is able to receive (like good soil), and then it will produce good fruit. True faith produces consistent Christ-like works.

**Have you ever been stuck spiritually even though you were hearing God's Word regularly? Could there be a deeper heart issue, a stone of anger and impatience, that has stunted your growth?**

Vs. 23-24 - A "hearer only" profits nothing from God's Word. It is like looking in the mirror and walking away. **Do you come to the mirror of God's Word prepared to change what is seen?**

Vs. 25 - We need to look into the mirror of God constantly and consistently. We need to come before the Word ready to be doers. True faith produces a willingness to submit and follow what we learn in the Bible. "Hearing" the Bible is not like waiving a magic wand over our lives. There are things to take off, things to put on, and work to be done by faith. God knows what is best for us.

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### 4. WARNING! SOME ARE DECEIVED IN THEIR RELIGIOUS LIVES.

Vs. 26 - James teaches that there are some who hear the word but are not changed by it. To them he says, "You have been deceived. Your religion (he does not call it faith) is vain and useless."

**Are you constantly and consistently being changed by the Word of God?**

Vs. 27 - Pure and undefiled religion or faith is moving and changing. It is revealed in a person's life by their actions and their righteousness.

May we not, as one preacher stated, "Be satisfied with the buds of hearing without the fruits of obedience." Let's get our minds and eyes on the perfect Word of God and prepare to be changed by faith in His way and His will.

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### FAMILY DISCUSSION / PERSONAL STUDY

The Book of James teaches us that true faith reveals itself by works. What we do in our Christian life is fueled by what we believe.

Take time together as a family in God's Word. Think throughout the day to reinforce the main truth of the week. Remember significant ways God has worked in your lives.

#### TAKE TIME

- Read Matthew 13:1-9 - List the different types of soils and what Jesus taught that they meant.

Soil Type	Meaning

#### THINK

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how receptive is your heart to the Bible. How easily does it change your life and produce fruit in it?

Hard/Lifeless - 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10 - Fertile/Productive

- What things stress or speed up your life and tend to make you quick to speak and slow to listen?

#### REMEMBER

- What are some things have the Gospel freed you from that you are to put away? Do they creep back in at times? What environments or circumstances tend to nurture weeds of angry or impatient thoughts in your life?