

Be Doers of the Word and not Hearers only

James 1:22-25

James 1:22–25 (NKJV)

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 observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Introduction:

The world is full of counterfeits. If there is something true then there is usually something false. There is counterfeit money, counterfeit diamonds. Some of the top ten counterfeits are food, clothing, computers, smartphones, watches, handbags and wallets. There are even counterfeit debt collectors trying to collect fake debts from people. And now one of the most popular terms is “fake news”. We

are consumed with counterfeits to the point that even the news is fake.

So it is not a new thing for us to encounter counterfeit christians and if you have been a christian for sometime, you probably know some fake christians. People who claim to be Christians but don't have the proof.

In fact, if many in the churches were brought before the court to be convicted of being a christian, there would not be enough evidence to convict them.

And in a time of prosperity for the church in America, the counterfeits flourish.

Jesus reminded us of this long ago, when he spoke on the parable of the wheat and the tares

Matthew 13:24–30 (NKJV)

²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶ But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

Matthew 13:36–43 (NKJV)

Tares is from *zizanian*, a variety of darnel weed that closely resembles **wheat** and is almost

impossible to distinguish from it until the **wheat** ripens and bears grain. Because of this resemblance, sowing **tares ... among the wheat** was sometimes done in ancient times out of spite or revenge by an **enemy** who wanted to destroy or at least greatly reduce the value of someone's crop. It was a common enough crime for the Romans to have had a specific law against it.

It was not until many weeks later, **when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, that the tares became evident also**

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 2, p. 367). Moody Press

Matthew 13:36–43 (NKJV)

³⁶ ThenHis disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

³⁷ He answered and said to them: “**He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.** ³⁸ **The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*.** ³⁹ **The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.** ⁴⁰ **Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.** ⁴¹ **The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those**

who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Jesus also talked about good trees and bad trees

Matthew 7:17–21 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

The sayers and the doers

Matthew 7:21 (NKJV)

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

He talks of 2 gates, 2 roads, 2 houses, 2 foundations

The Ten Virgins, 5 wise, 5 foolish...

Matthew 25:1–2 (NKJV)

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.

John talks of The children of God and the children of the Devil

1 John 3:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother.

Paul talked of the professors and the possessors

Titus 1:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ They profess to know God, but in works they deny *Him*, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Puritan Richard Baxter wrote in his book, “The Reformed Pastor”

See that the work of saving grace be thoroughly wrought in your own souls. Take heed to yourselves, lest you be void of that saving grace of God which you offer to others, and be strangers to the effectual working of that gospel which you preach; and lest,

while you proclaim to the world the necessity of a Savior, your own hearts should neglect him, and you should miss of an interest in him and his saving benefits. Take heed to yourselves, lest you perish, while you call upon others to take heed of perishing; and lest you famish yourselves while you prepare food for them.Many have warned others that they come not to that place of torment, while yet they hastened to it themselves: many a preacher is now in hell, who hath a hundred times called upon his hearers to use the utmost care and diligence to escape it. Can any reasonable man imagine that God should save men for offering salvation to others, while they refuse it themselves; and for telling others those truths which they themselves neglect and abuse? Many a tailor goes in rags, that maketh costly clothes for others; and many a cook scarcely licks his fingers, when he hath dressed for others the most costly dishes. Believe it, brethren, God never saved any man for being a preacher, nor because he was an able preacher; but because he was a justified, sanctified man, and consequently faithful in his Master's work. Take heed, therefore, to ourselves first, that you be that which you persuade your hearers to be, and believe that which you persuade them to believe, and heartily entertain that Savior whom you

offer to them. He that bade you love your neighbors as yourselves, did imply that you should love yourselves, and not hate and destroy yourselves and them.

It is a fearful thing to be an unsanctified professor, but much more to be an unsanctified preacher. Doth it not make you tremble when you open the Bible, lest you should there read the sentence of your own condemnation? When you pen your sermons, little do you think that you are drawing up indictments against your own souls! When you are arguing against sin, that you are aggravating your own! When you proclaim to your hearers the unsearchable riches of Christ and his grace, that you are publishing your own iniquity in rejecting them, and your unhappiness in being destitute of them! If you speak of hell, you speak of your own inheritance: if you describe the joys of heaven, you describe your own misery, seeing you have no right to 'the inheritance of the saints in light.' What can you say, for the most part, but it will be against your own souls O miserable life! that a man should study and preach against himself, and spend his days in a course of self- condemnation!

<https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/baxter/The%20Reformed%20Pastor%20-%20Richard%20Baxter.pdf>

In my opinion, the hardest, most terrifying words in all the Bible are found in

Matthew 7:22–23 (NKJV)

²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’

²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

These words are soul searching, and heart breaking.... that so many will be fully convinced that they are saved until the day of judgment, only to find themselves being ushered out of the throne room of heaven and cast into the lake of fire.

They talked of Jesus, preached and taught the Bible in his name. claimed miracles in his name, participated in ministry. Shared the gospel with others, read their bibles, read good christian books, went to church, sang in a choir, served as deacons or elders and yet never were really saved.

It that does not shake you to your core and make you do extensive inventory of your heart and soul, then nothing will.

And there is really one thing that makes the difference between the real and the fake.

Matthew 7:21 (NKJV)

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Luke 6:46 (NKJV)

⁴⁶ “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not **do the things which I say?**”

There are those who say and claim to know Christ

Then

There are those who do and follow Christ.

Review

James 1:19–21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

²¹ Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Lesson

I. The Command

II. The Comparison

III. The Contrast

I. The Command

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

James begins by explaining what it means to receive the implanted word. more than just knowing or having but doing.

²² But **be** doers — — better And.....

The conjunction *de*, not in the NIV rendering, is not adversative but continuative,⁴³ indicating that something further must be said. Receiving the regenerating Word (1:18) is only the beginning. Attentive listening to the Word must be followed by active obedience. James states (v. 22) and illustrates (vv. 23–25) the required obedience

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 118). BMH Books.

be

ginomai: to come into being, to happen, *to become*

Original Word: γίνομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: ginomai

Phonetic Spelling: (ghin'-om-ahee)

Definition: to come into being, to happen, to become

1096 *gínomai* – properly, to emerge, become, transitioning from one point (realm, condition) to another. **1096** (*gínomai*) fundamentally means "become" (becoming, became) so it is not an exact equivalent to the ordinary equative verb "to be" (is, was, will be) as with **1510** /eimí (**1511** /eínai, **2258** /ēn). 1096 (*ginomai*) means "to become, and signifies a change of condition, state or place" (Vine, Unger, White, NT, 109). M. Vincent, "**1096** (*gínomai*) means to come into being/manifestation implying motion, movement, or growth" (at 2 Pet 1:4). Thus it is used for God's actions as emerging from eternity and becoming (showing themselves) in time (physical space)

A more literal translation of the present middle imperative tense of *ginomai* (**prove yourselves**) is "be continually," or "keep on striving to be," **doers of the word**

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 79). Moody Press.

[New American Standard Bible](#)

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not just hearers who deceive themselves.

Becoming a doer of the word is the command.

Why does James use the word *ginomia*, to become a doer. It is not that these believers did not have a desire to do the word anymore than those

here today who are truly saved have the same desire. But James is saying that we should make it a habit to become doers of the word and not fall or slip into the trap of just being a listener..

The use of the present imperative underlines this demand as a continuing duty. It does not imply that his readers have never done so, but they must never stop being doers

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 118). BMH Books.

It is an admonishment to the believer not to be just a listener but one who is known to practice the word inside and outside. It is how someone receives the Word. We are quick to listen and apply the Word, ridding ourselves of all sinfulness and sinful attitudes because it is the The Word and the application of it that can save our souls.

Later in the text, it is the man who is a doer and not one who forgets the Word that is Blessed in what he does.

Rotherham literally renders it “Become ye doers.”⁴⁵ Mayor suggests that here it means “show yourselves more and more.” Then the meaning is a call to demonstrate the reality of their profession

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 118). BMH Books.

The Greek and Roman philosophers and moralists emphasized the need for teachers and adherents of particular viewpoints to show their sincerity by “practicing what they preached.” And the absolute bottom-line importance of doing God’s word in practice was also widespread among the Jews. “Not the expounding [of the law] is the chief thing, but the doing [of it]” is a representative comment, from a second-century rabbi.

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 89). Eerdmans; Apollos.

When people are blessed with regular, in-depth preaching and teaching of Scripture, they may become so enamored with their knowledge of God’s Word that they become self-satisfied with that knowledge and forsake the effort to live out the profound truths they have come to understand. But a true believer will not be inwardly satisfied with merely knowing the Word. His conscience and the prompting of the indwelling Holy Spirit will keep convicting him of his failure until he becomes obedient

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 79–80). Moody Press.

22 But **be doers** of the word,

“Doers” (*poiētai*) is a favorite word of James. Four of its six occurrences in the New Testament are in this epistle (1:22, 23, 25; 4:11).

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 118). BMH Books.

The substantive form of *poiētē* (**doers**) carries the characterization of the whole personality, all of a person’s inner being—mind, soul, spirit, and emotions

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 80). Moody Press.

The use of the noun rather than a verbal form calls attention to the individual characterized as carrying out the demands of the Word. James wants his readers to be individuals who habitually submit to and comply with the requirements of the Word of God.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 118–119). BMH Books.

akroatés: a hearer

Original Word: ἀκροατής, οὔ, ὁ

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: akroatés

Phonetic Spelling: (ak-ro-at-ace')

Definition: a hearer.a listener to.

Word Origin

from the same as [akroatérion](#)

Definition

akroatérion: place of audience, or listening

Original Word: ἀκροατήριον, ίου, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: akroatérion

Phonetic Spelling: (ak-ro-at-ay'-ree-on)

Definition: place of audience, or listening

Usage: auditorium, recitation hall, court room (for hearing cases).

We get our word and practice of auditing a class from this. I know when I was in Bible College, there were certain classes that you could audit. And all that meant was you could attend the class and listen to the lectures and you were not responsible to fulfill the other requirements of the class which were the quizzes and the test and also writing papers. There was no grade it was given, and no credits towards your degree. But you could come and listen and learn.

It is not listening to the word that James opposes or diminishes, but *merely* listening

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 88). Eerdmans; Apollos.

My fear is that there are some of you here today that are only those who audit the sermons. You come, and you listen and you leave. And you have no intentions to ever change your behavior or your thinking you're not a doer of the word. This is an extremely dangerous place to be. It is one of the visible signs of what it means to be in unbelief. That you can listen to the word with never any desire to obey or to follow through or to do what it says. But you can listen with an academic interest but that's about it. But even as a believer, you can slip into a state for all you end up doing is auditing sermons for the sake of theology, knowledge, debate, argumentation, or even curiosity.

If all who are auditors of the Word on Sunday would put it into practice during the week, what a difference that would make! Roberts tartly remarks, "Our churches are filled with spiritual sponges who soak up the information, sit, sour, and eventually stink!"

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 119). BMH Books.

But there should always be a desire, whenever we hear the word, taught and preached. Hope we read it explained with a good book. That we ask ourselves. How is it that I can do what it says and

then, what way should I be repenting of my behavior to become more like Christ.

Wholehearted acceptance of the Word must result in active obedience to the Word. Such obeying of the Word constitutes the essence of a living faith.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [*James*](#) (Revised Edition, p. 118). BMH Books.

2 Classic passages give us ample warning regarding the danger of of just becoming a listener
There are academic listeners who Audit sermons
Acts 17:30–32 (NKJV)

³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,
³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

³² And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this *matter*.”

Romans 2:17–23 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, ¹⁸ and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being

instructed out of the law, ¹⁹ and are confident 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 babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. ²¹ You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? ²² You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

Romans 2:13 (NKJV)

¹³ (for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;

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

deceiving

paralogizomai:

Original Word: παραλογίζομαι

Definition: to miscalculate, to reason falsely

Usage: I deceive, beguile, reason falsely, mislead.

3884 paralogízomai (from 3844 /pará, "contrary when compared side-by-side" and 3049 /logízomai, "to reason") – properly, to reason contrary to truth, in a misleading (erroneous) way.

3884 /paralogízomai ("deceive close-beside") operates by distorted reasoning – using what seems "plausible" but later lets the person down ("disappoints").

The present deponent middle participle (*paralogizomenoi*) denotes a process of self-deception by means of fallacious reasoning.

Paralogizomai (delude) literally means to reason beside, or alongside, and therefore refers to incorrect reckoning or reasoning, often including the idea of deliberate false reasoning for the purpose of deceiving. In mathematics, the meaning is that of miscalculation.

Their conclusion, that attentive hearing of the Word was the fulfillment of all that was required, had led them astray from the path of truth. In resting satisfied with possessing the means of grace without applying it, they were the victims of their own deception. "It is sad to be deceived, most miserable to be self-deceived. Many still determine their godliness by the quality of hearing (for instance sermons) or reading (even God's word) instead of action and obedience

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 119). BMH Books.

People who *merely listen to the word*, James says, are on dangerous ground: they *deceive* themselves. Paul uses this same verb in Col. 2:4 (its only other occurrence in the NT), where he warns the Colossian Christians about false teachers who “deceive” people “by fine-sounding arguments.” The idea of “deceive” in these contexts is clear: to be “deceived” is to be blinded to the reality of one’s true religious state. People can think that they are right with God when they really are not. And so it is for those people who “hear” the word—regular church attenders, seminary students, and even seminary professors—but do not “do” it. They are mistaken in thinking that they are truly right with God

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (pp. 89–90). Eerdmans; Apollos.

Matthew 7:26–27 (NKJV)

²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

James 2:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

James 2:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

. Professing Christians who hear the Word without obeying it make a serious spiritual miscalculation, which causes them to delude themselves. They are self-deceived. An old Scottish expression speaks of such false Christians as “sermon tasters who never tasted the grace of God.” Any response to the gospel that does not include obedience is self-deception. If a profession of faith in Christ does not result in a changed life that hungers and thirsts for God’s Word and desires to obey that Word, the profession is only that—a mere profession. Satan, of course, loves such professions, because they give church members

the damning notion that they are saved when they are not. They still belong to him, not to God.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 83–84). Moody Press.

I. The Command

II. The Comparison

23 if anyone is a hearer of the
word and not a doer, he is like a
man observing his **natural** face in a
mirror;

For

By introducing the negative portrayal with *hoti*, “because,” not in NIV, James advances a grim reason for the warning against self-deception in verse 22

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 119). BMH Books.

The “if” is a 1st class conditional sentence that assumes as true that a person is only listening to the word and not doing... then follows the warning.

“Is like a man” (*houtos eoiken andri*), more literally “this one is like a man,” vividly sets such an

individual before the gaze of the readers. Such an individual “is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror, and after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.” The word “man” (*andri*) generally denotes the man as contrasted to the woman, but here its use seems to be quite general (cf. 1:8, 12, 20), as for example in Luke 11:31–32. Nor is there any basis for holding that the portrait drawn applies only to the male sex.

observing *katanoēó*: to take note of, perceive

Original Word: κατανοέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: *katanoēó*

Phonetic Spelling: (kat-an-o-eh'-o)

Definition: to take note of, perceive

Katanoēō (**looks**) is a strengthened form of the verb *noēō*, which means simply to perceive, or look at something. The compound verb James uses here, however, carries the additional idea of careful, cautious consideration of what is being looked at

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). *James* (p. 84). Moody Press.

2657 katanoéō (from 2596 /katá, "down along, exactly according to" and 3539 /noiéō, "to think") – properly, to think from up to down, to a conclusion; to consider exactly, attentively (decisively); to concentrate by fixing one's thinking " 'to perceive clearly' (kata, intensive), 'to understand fully, consider closely' " (Vine, Unger, White, NT, 123). 2657 (katanoéō) expresses real comprehending – "thinking decisively to a definite (clear) understanding."

[2657 (katanoéō) has "the notion of considering attentively (note the kata, 'down into,' " WS, 349).

“Looks at,” rendering a present active participle, “beholding,” denotes linear action and apparently suggests this as a characteristic activity of the individual. There is no reference to abiding, as in verse 25. The verb implies that the beholder took note of what he saw, and the picture implies that the look revealed something that needed attention. That the observation was careless and hasty is not stated in the verb, but it may be inferred from the entire picture of this man

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 120). BMH Books.

23 if anyone is a hearer of the
word and not a doer, he is like a
man observing his **natural** face in a
mirror;

“His face” (*to prosōpon tēs geneseōs autou*) is literally “the face of his genesis,”

natural

genesis: origin, birth

Original Word: γένεσις, εως, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: genesis

Phonetic Spelling: (ghen'-es-is)

Definition: origin, birth

Usage: birth, lineage, descent.

and has been differently understood. It may mean “the face he was born with” (Beck⁵³), “his natural face” (ASV), or “the face of his (present) existence,” that is, he “sees himself as he is” (TEV). Under either meaning, the reference is to mere material perception—“his natural face.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 120). BMH Books.

he is like a _____
 _____ man observing his **natural** face in a
 _____ **mirror;**

mirror;

esoptron: a mirror (i.e. an object for looking into)

Original Word: ἑσόπτρον, ου, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: esoptron

Phonetic Spelling: (es'-op-tron)

Definition: a mirror (i.e. an object for looking into)

Usage: a mirror, looking-glass (made of highly polished metal).

2072 *ésoptron* – a metallic mirror (not made of glass). Ancient mirrors (merely made of polished metal) only produced an indistinct image (reflection). So, to get an accurate picture (reflection) the viewer had to look from several different angles ("standpoints"). This has profound implications in "doing theology"!

In New Testament times, mirrors were typically made of highly polished brass or bronze, although a wealthy person could buy one of silver or gold. But even the most expensive mirrors were primitive compared to glass ones, which were not developed until the fourteenth century. Consequently, those early mirrors gave a dim and distorted reflection of the person using them. But by carefully turning the

mirror and finding the best light, a person could eventually see a fairly accurate image of his face, and that is the idea James has in mind. By careful and patient observation, as indicated by *katanoēō*, he could eventually discover what he actually looked like.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 84). Moody Press.

_____ ²⁴for he observes himself, goes
 _____ away, and immediately forgets what
 _____ kind of man he was.

epilanthanomai: to forget, neglect

Original Word: ἐπιλανθάνομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: epilanthanomai

Phonetic Spelling: (ep-ee-lan-than'-om-ahee)

Definition: to forget, neglect

Usage: I forget, neglect.

1950 epilanthánomai (from 1909 /epí, "on, fitting" and 2990 /lanthánō, "unnoticed") – properly, to overlook, especially the effects that go with failing to notice. 1950 /epilanthánomai ("overlooking"), as an intensification of 2990 (lanthánō), focuses on the consequences that build on the forgetting (note the epi, "upon").

I called this the dangerous deception of spiritual dementia.

Think of it in these terms, God speaks to you through his word to show you the truth of who you are, and who he is, and you forget it. Of all the things in the world that you should never forget this with the eternal God, who holds your destiny in his hands, says.

Whether because of distraction, not being pleased with what was seen, or simply because of a poor memory, all the careful looking suddenly becomes wasted. Whatever the original purpose was for looking at oneself, what is seen is quickly forgotten.

A person who looks at God's Word, even if it is carefully and accurately done, and yet does not apply the truths he has discovered to his own life, is like someone who immediately forgets what he has just seen in a mirror—except that the consequences are immeasurably worse. He sees his sin portrayed for the horrible evil that it is and he also sees God's gracious provision in Christ for a remedy, yet he goes on his way as if he were never exposed to those realities.

I. The Command

II. The Comparison

III. The Contrast

25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

“But” (*de*) marks the contrast

he who looks

looks A.A.Pt. He who having looked.

parakuptó: to stoop sideways, to stoop to look

Original Word: παρακύπτω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: parakuptó

Phonetic Spelling: (par-ak-ooop'-to)

Definition: to stoop sideways, to stoop to look

Usage: I stoop, peer in, look down, look intently.

John 20:5 V-APA-NMS

GRK: καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει κείμενα

NAS: and stooping and looking in, he saw

pictures this individual as bending over the mirror with eagerness and intentness in order to examine

more minutely what is revealed therein. “Into” (*eis*) suggests a penetrating look

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 121). BMH Books.

Both are compound forms with the preposition *para*, “beside, alongside of,” suggesting proximity

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 121). BMH Books.

[parakypsas](#)
 παρακύψας
 having looked intentl
 y
 V-APA-NMS

[parameinas](#)
 παραμείνας ,
 having continued in [it
]
 V-APA-NMS

[genomenos](#)
 γενόμενος
 ,
 having been
 V-APM-NMS

The participles are gnomic aorists, describing the events that characteristically take place whenever there is active obedience to the divine Word.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 121). BMH Books.

25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*,

the perfect law that gives freedom” (*eis nomon teleion ton tēs eleutherias*). The context makes clear that the reference is to “the implanted word” in verse 21 or simply “the word” in verse 22. Now it is given a different designation. “Law,” without the article, has a qualitative force: the object being examined or looked into has the authoritative nature of law. In calling the Word “a law,” James refers to that authoritative body of truth that is the foundation of the Christian faith. It is the message contained in the apostolic preaching and now embodied in the New Testament. Christians accept this body of truth as the authoritative standard by which life is to be regulated. This title for the Word of God is in keeping with James’s stress upon the importance of doing the things found in the Word.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 121–122). BMH Books.

This “law” James characterizes as “perfect.” This law is final and complete, embodying the full and effective revelation of God in Christ Jesus.

The perfect law, so called because Scripture is inerrant, sufficient, and comprehensive (cf. Ps. 19:7–9

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 85). Moody Press.

In the words of Knowling,

This Law is “perfect,” not only because it may be contrasted with the burden and yoke of the Law in its Pharisaic observance, but because it completes and realizes the object and meaning of the Mosaic law, Matt. 5:17, cf. Jer. 31:33; because it sums up all the commandments in the one command and principle of love: “he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law,” cf. Rom. 13:8ff; Gal. 6:2.

The genitive “of liberty” is subjective, denoting that this law “gives” the experience of freedom in the lives of those who voluntarily observe it. The definite article with “liberty,” “the liberty,” points to the well-known Christian freedom from bondage that the believer knows through faith in Christ (John 8:31–36). As he submits himself to its transforming power,

this law of liberty works in his life a disposition and ability to do God's will joyfully (Phil. 2:12–13). It does not promote antinomianism but prompts obedience without compulsion.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 122). BMH Books.

25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but ('alla') a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

“not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it.”
This is his crowning excellence and sharply distinguishes him from the preceding “no doer”
(vv. 23–24)

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 122). BMH Books.

epilésmoné: forgetfulness

Original Word: ἐπιλησμονή, ἥς, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: epilésmoné

Phonetic Spelling: (ep-ee-lace-mon-ay')

Usage: forgetfulness, oblivion.

Cognate: 1953 epilēsmoné (from 1950 /epilanthánomai, "neglect")
– properly, forgetfulness (failing to notice), emphasizing the

natural effects that go with (build on) the neglect (note the epi, “upon”).

*1953. ἐπιλησμονή **ēpilēsmōnē**, ep-ee-lace-mon-ay´; from a der. of 1950; negligence:— x forgetful.*

Strong, J. (2009). In [A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible](#) (Vol. 1, p. 31). Logos Bible Software.

Implicit in James 1:23–25 is the idea that one’s motive and attitude in studying God’s Word become evident by the response to what is learned. A person who pays no heed to what he learns from Scripture proves his motive for studying it is not godly. At best, he is interested in mere factual knowledge, and even that he soon forgets. In doing so, he brings even greater judgment on himself than a person receives who has never been exposed to the Word. He also gives strong evidence that, despite a profession of belief in Christ, he is not really saved.

One of most serious and pervasive obstacles to salvation is fallen man’s natural aversion to serious spiritual thought. He may love to study philosophy and man-made religions and theology. But he is not inclined to seriously search for God’s truth, realizing, even if subconsciously, that his life falls short of divine standards and that God will demand more than he is willing to give. Men are not naturally

inclined to look at themselves honestly, to perform a self-evaluation under the bright and perfect light of God's Word. They know instinctively that their pride, self-will, and love of sin will be exposed under the Lord's righteous standards.

On the other hand, the person who humbles himself, by figuratively stooping over to get a better look at the Word, proves his right spiritual motive and attitude. His concern is not with bare facts but with divine truth, and he therefore obeys what he learns. In doing so, he is blessed and God is glorified. He also detests the reflection of himself that he sees in the mirror of the Word, and his overriding desire is to have every sin, every spiritual and moral blemish, removed and replaced with God's righteousness. Seeing himself as he really is, he says, in effect, "Lord, continue to expose my ugliness, my hopelessness apart from You. Draw me to Yourself and cleanse me from my sins and fill me with Your truth, Your love, and Your purity." Such a person is **not ... a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer and will be blessed in what he does**. The genuine believer sees things as they really are, and his will is brought into union with God's will. He loves to do what the Bible commands him to do, because that is the will of his heavenly Father.

God's blessing results from a believer's obedience. Through Joshua the Lord commanded and promised: "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful *to do according to all that is written in it*; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success" (Josh. 1:8, emphasis added). The only way to a spiritually blessed and prosperous life is through faithful study and application of God's Word, to "meditate on it day and night," and "to be careful to do according to all that is written in it." The hearer and doer of the Word discovers that its demands are just as Jesus said: the "yoke is easy" and the "burden is light" (Matt. 11:30).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 86–87). Moody Press.