

Practicing the Word

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Bible Text: James 1:22-27
Preached on: Sunday, January 19, 2014

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Take your Bibles and let's go to James 1 and continue with some of these practical exhortations from this local New Testament church pastor, James, a pastor of the Grace Life Church of Jerusalem about 2,000 years ago. And you have to appreciate James the way he's a brass tacks kind of guy. I mean, he wants to give practical instructions on living the word of God and this aspect of James 1 is very directly on what the word of God is for and that we are to have a disciplined lifestyle of reading, studying and hearing the word of God and not fall into that carnal, worldly, immature notion that, "If I come and I sit through the service, then I've done what I'm supposed to do." No, really this is not a sacrament. You don't get some kind of grace infusion by coming through the motions here. This is a blessed benefit that God gives you so that you might grow in him and walk in him and be more like him but it takes some effort.

Now, I thought about this, you know, 52 weeks a year and 2 or 3 maybe services a week and it's going to be impossible, I suppose, for you to be at a high pitch every week. I mean, just spiritually on fire, ready to go, humbled down, "God show me something." I understand that but what you can avoid, you can avoid getting into a rut of hollow, cold emotions of coming to church. The Bible says when Paul was writing to Timothy about what it was going to be like as he's helping get these churches started, all these new church plants are beginning all over the world of 2,000 years ago and Paul tells young Timothy as he's appointing pastors and organizing these churches that the time is going to come when they will not endure sound doctrine. Interesting word, endure sound doctrine. He said you're going to preach and teach and there are going to be a good number of professing Christians who are going to say, "Can we do something different? I mean, is this it? This is the same stuff again?" Immaturity and false professors, of course in particular, just can't hang with disciplining their hearts and minds to receive the undiluted truth of the word of God preached. But I look across this room and some of you have been enduring it pretty good now for 30+ years some of you sitting back there, and it gets rather addictive, doesn't it? I do think that a good percentage of this body, if you went somewhere where either the word is not faithfully preached or there was not a genuine effort to practice the word in the church, you wouldn't last long there. You'd say, "I love these people. Some of them are very genuine, but that's not what a church is supposed to be." And I appreciate that.

But let's sharpen ourselves with James's exhortation and challenge ourselves afresh and anew about what it means to practice the word and that would be the simple title for this message: Practicing the Word. James 1, let's begin in verse 22. James 1:22, he says,

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. 26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

So you have this general truth that jumps off the page. It's very obvious the word is meant to change you. It is to have an effect on what you are, your being, and what you do, your behavior. But let's talk, first of all, about the exhortation here that he gives them in verse 22 to practice the word. It's a present tense verb so it means continuing action. He says, "But prove yourselves doers of the word." That means keep on keeping on at applying the truth of Scripture to the totality of your life. I can say with a clear conscience, weakness, yes, inconsistency, yes, but it is my pattern to prepare to preach with a prayerful repentant and application spirit as I prepare to preach for you during the week and I'm very grateful for the meditation time that I have. It is absolutely essential to true long-term effective preaching to have the time to let the word just work on you, grab your heart and mind during the week so that, once again, you're not just giving a lecture but it's something that has done something to you. But as I'm doing that during the week, I find myself often having to stop and just say, "O God, help me to walk in this. God, help my thinking to be altered by this. Help my attitude to be renewed by the truths I'm seeing," and that ties into our earlier message today, does it not, because we are repentant ones, constantly letting the word change us and reform us.

So he has this exhortation to keep on keeping or doing the word and not merely be a hearer. You know, we do live in a day and it's always been that kind of day, as a matter of fact, we know that very clearly from the exhortations of the New Testament which was recorded 2,000 years ago that they had their sermon sippers just like we have sermon sippers who flip themselves around from one doctrinal dessert to another, kind of like a hummingbird taking a little taste here and a little taste there, as I said earlier today, trying to find something that fits them instead of saying what pleases God and what's good for me and for my family. Today we have in a lot of church growth seminars, you know, we're having a conference coming up here in a few weeks and we're thankful several hundred people come and dozens and dozens of churches are represented but I can take you to conferences with thousands of people there and hundreds of churches represented and they unashamedly just give a token of attention to the Bible and all their attention is

on style and climate and the latest thing and what would draw people and all these other things and we've had an unashamed motive in church growth life to develop a consumer mentality in the church. What do the consumers want? Now let's be that that we might reach them and keep them for the glory of God. Well, that kind of mentality where you just kind of sip a taste here and sip a taste there are kind of like Joshua Harris said in one of his books, "Stop Dating the Church," you just try on this church, date it for a while and try on that church and date it for a while until you find what you like the best. And far, far too many Baptists and Evangelicals are, they don't just date the church, they go through marriages and divorces with churches over and over and over again. We've got folks in the Shoals area that just voted on their third major building program in three different churches and, you know, I kind of want to send some of them a letter and say, "Hey, we're in the building you voted to build here. If you'd like to help us with the commitment you made a while back or at least show a biblical reason why you're no longer with us." One of the two would suffice for me.

That kind of spirit, though, is what I think James is talking about. Don't just a tidbit and a little bite, look for a little dessert and hop around here and there. Stick with something and take in the word and be serious about it and be a doer of the word. Don't be deluding yourselves. That's the word he uses in verse 22. If you just come and there's not a serious motive in your heart to let the word have an effect on you, then you're deluding yourself. That is, you're deceiving, you're cheating yourself. You have a false understanding of what the preaching of the word is about. By the way, preaching is a two way street. You are as involved as I am. I am to preach, you are to receive and affirm and the more you receive and affirm, the more it encourages me. It's like throwing biscuits to a dog. And that's what the word "amen" is all about. I'm not saying everybody's got to say a verbal amen, amen? Alright, but it is a biblical truth that the truth goes out. I've been saying the amen to my own heart about it all week long, now the truth goes out to you and you receive it, not because your natural man likes it every time, it may rebuke you, it may correct you, but it's God's truth so the new spiritual man in you rises up and affirms it and says an amen and that's being a doer of the word, purposing to be a doer of the word and not one who is deceiving themselves or Paul's specific word, deluding themselves. Too many Christians today mark their Bibles but their Bibles never mark them.

So we want to listen to the word that we might continually be repenters and reformers. Repenters and reformers. I was going to mention when we talked about repentance and perhaps I'll get this in next Sunday morning, Lord willing, about repentance because the narrative of Luke continues on that basic theme, but repenting does not mean that you deal with the sin and you never go back to it again. If it did, a week after you were converted you'd never sin anymore. I mean, basically within a week, about everything comes up in your heart that you could probably sin about and if true repentance meant, "Ah, I'm done with that," and if I didn't really turn from it and never go back, then I must not have repented. No, that's not true. If that were the case, you would have to adapt the doctrine of perfection, something that John Wesley talked about. I love John Wesley. I would let him preach here. I mean, I think he was a powerful Gospel preacher but I think he slipped off track when he formed the doctrine of sinless perfection. He said there was a time and a place when you get a second work of the Spirit and you quit sinning. Well,

wouldn't you like to meet that guy, the guy that has quit. Now, I think John Wesley was sincere; I don't know what all was going on in his mind when he wrote that because I don't think the Scriptures bear that out at all. Now, thank God there are some mountains we get over by the grace of God and we put them behind us. There are some things that have a public scandal to them and they have to be put aside, but there are besetting sins we wrestle with but I hope you're ashamed of them. I hope you're grieved by them. I hope you're in the fight against them and not just handing yourself over to say, "Well, that's just the way I am." No, you're a repentor. You're to be humble and you ought to be maintaining some victories in your walk.

Well, that's the exhortation: stop being just a sermon sipper; stop deluding yourselves and thinking, "Well, I came to the preaching. I've done my thing." No, you came so that the word might have an effect on you. That's the exhortation. Now briefly, let's take about the exercise of practicing the word. The exercise. Now he uses three or let me mention three things that are involved in the word being a mirror for our souls. That's what the word does, it reflects back. It reveals the truth of what is truly there.

Now look, first of all, a mirror, of course, has the idea of examination. Look at verse 23, "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror." So we're not going very far right now; we're just talking about the fact that a mirror is something that illumines, clarifies, enables one to examine. What we don't want to do is merely glance at ourselves. Look at verse 24, "once a man has looked at himself and gone away." By the way, that's the masculine word there for "man" because a woman would never just look at herself and forget when she went away, but men can just glance in the mirror and go away. You don't really comb the kind of hair that I have but I have been known to leave the house and forget to comb it all day long. Women just don't do that, at least unless she's one of these that goes to Walmart in her pajamas or is on methamphetamine or something. By the way, just on a side note, if you've ever been tempted to go out in your pajamas, don't do it. Just, dear heavens, don't. That's just...why do people do that? Their pajamas and their house shoes in Walmart. I don't know what they've been smoking but something's wrong.

But a woman doesn't look at herself and then go off so it's the masculine gender in this word and he says, of course, a man might do that but that's not what you're to do when you're sitting under the word of God. You're not to glance at it and go off and forget what you saw. Our conscience should be pricked in some areas. Our understanding should be illumined about some things. There should be a new understanding about application; a new teaching about humility; and a new insight on relating to others, whatever it might be. You know, when I was younger, we had Polaroid cameras. Most of these young people don't know what in the world a Polaroid camera is. It was the coolest thing back in the day. You'd take a picture and five seconds later an actual physical picture would come out the bottom. It wasn't a great picture but it was a picture. And now we have cellphones, smartphones and cameras on everything and the same principle, you take a picture and you can see it almost immediately. That's what you don't want to do with the word of God, just a quick picture. You want a little more like an x-ray machine that shows more of what's really there. Pictures only show the surface. Even better than that,

an MRI machine that gives a much clearer picture and now I hear there's something called a PET scan that gives even a more vivid picture of the reality of what's there. And that's what you want to do and that's what James is saying here, "Don't just take a little quick smartphone shot and be done with it." This is something where we want to let it examine more deeply the examination process.

He says some people look and then they forget what they see. If they'd look deep into their hearts, they'd be very shocked at what they see, at least as the word of God unveils the truth of the human heart. You know, I think we need some of that. Too many have looked at the old days of revival and written too much of it off as excesses and as extremes. Now, trust me, there is a balance in everything and there has never been a great awakening or a great revival that there was not a counterfeiting awakening and revival that went with it. You study church history and you'll find a genuine move of God and then you'll find all these false teachers and these counterfeiters trying to get in on the movement. It's always been that way. However, as much as I deplore manipulation and emotionalism, there's a lot of that out there, just whooping it up, no real substance or spiritual change. As much as I don't like that, I do believe there are, have been and ought to be and pray that we'll get some more of that at Grace Life Church where God moves on men's hearts and God moves on ladies' hearts and young people's hearts to where they get to see themselves, the examination gets real, the PET scan of God illumines their souls and what they see is horrifying before a holy God. They see the bankrupt wretchedness of their soul before God.

John Wesley writes in one of his journals, June 22, 1739, as he was preaching he said, "One before me dropped as dead and then a second and then a third, then five others sunk down within a half hour and most of whom were in violent agonies." I wasn't there but I've read enough of church history to know that Wesley and Whitefield and John and his brother and Jonathan Edwards and those men of that first Great Awakening saw people come to a broken, startling realization of their wretchedness before a holy God and that's one of the ways, brothers and sisters, you'll know it's true revival when men are deeply humbled and in awe at the glory and the goodness of God compared to themselves. All this other, "Woo! It's good! It's wonderful!" I'm not sure about a lot of that. Every true work of God has a deep humility with it about our sinfulness before a true and holy God.

Well, we may not see that all the time but there should be cycles. As a matter of fact, while I'm preaching to you on this Sunday night we've got a bunch of our folks out for sure, but those of you that are here, there are probably some of you that the Spirit of God is working in you right now in a deeper way than most everybody else around you. You just are sensing an examination where the screen is being shown of what you are and God said that's good. Come to hear the word of God with a serious heart of examination.

Here's the way you might describe yourselves if you see yourselves truly before the word of God, in Isaiah 6:5, Isaiah said, "Woe is me, for I am undone." Peter said in Luke 5:8, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Job said in Job 42:6, "I abhor myself and I repent in dust and in ashes." Examination, an examination where we don't merely just glance at the word of God, we don't look at it and then forget what we saw and we

don't fail to obey what the word of God tells us to do. Some people think coming and hearing the word of God is all they're supposed to do. Doing is not a part of it. It absolutely is a part of it. That's why body life is so important. That's why important for a church family certainly to have congregational worship which is centered in the preaching of the word, but it also must have small group body life where there is an aspect of loving, compassionate encouragement and accountability. Accountability doesn't have to be this cold, harsh ultra-structured thing, it's just that we're all there and we all know each other and we care enough to humbly and if it ever is necessary and it's going to be necessary, I shouldn't say if it ever is, but when it is necessary to bring correction but to bring it with confidentiality and personally and to help each other because doing the word is what we're about.

You know, a good doctor does two things: he takes some time with us and he tells us the truth. A good doctor would never be a doctor that doesn't take the time to, what's appropriate. Now some things don't take very long but you know what I mean. The perfect time to do a good examination of what you're about and what might be the problem, but also to tell you the truth and make the right prescription. Well, the Bible calls Jesus the great physician. He wants to take the time and he wants you to take the time to sit under the word of God and do a good examination of your soul.

Well, that's what I call the examination. Now, there's another part to the Bible being, using the metaphor rather of a mirror. Not only is it an examination, it aids in restoration. Now, I'm going to use examination and restoration and lastly I'm going to use transformation but I want to say something to you: while I've organized these three things, it's like so many systematic things in Scripture, we like to structure and organize and package it all up but it's hard to do that in reality. They are just overlapping is what I'm saying. They are intertwined. While you're examining, you're also experiencing restoration and you're also experiencing transformation is what I'm saying. But for our understanding I am going to separate them, alright?

Now, restoration. Look at verse 25 and he says there in verse 25, "But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it," he's not like that earlier guy who just looked and walked away now, "not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." A blessed man is a man that is restored back to God. There is a sense in which we are always returning back to God. There is a sense in which we are always purposing to restore our walk to be more real and more genuine. In Exodus 38, Moses took the looking glasses from the women of Israel and this was probably the upper class ladies of Israel, and he took those, actually it was pieces of polished metal they would use as mirrors, and he put those together and out of those he made the laver which was a huge basin that was placed between the brazen altar of sacrifice and the holy place. It was this deep reflective bowl that the priests would use to wash their hands and feet before entering the holy place. And that pictures, that's a metaphor of how the word of God as we pass through it, let it work on, it has a cleansing effect. It reflects to the end of cleansing which, of course, as you're cleansed, you repent of your sins and you're restored back to intimacy with God. John 15:3, "Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you." Ephesians 5:26, the word is

sanctified and cleansed, "with the washing of the water by the word of God. So the word of God is a mirror but it's a mirror that reveals so that we might be cleansed. Remember the Apostle Peter asked the Lord to wash his head, not just his feet and Jesus said, "No, I've cleansed you as far as your mind. You have a new nature but as you walk in this world, your feet get dirty again. You just need to clean your feet up again." That's the picture here, a regular cleansing again; a restoration back to the Lord.

David, I think I mentioned him just a few weeks ago, King David was at ease in Zion and found himself lustfully looking at Bathsheba probably on the palace porch. He instead of turning away in shame and repentance cultivated that very sin to the point where he had Bathsheba brought. He committed the sin of adultery with Bathsheba, then has Bathsheba's husband murdered to cover the sin. It's amazing how sin never sits still. Sin never is, it's like a fire. It keeps on and on, domino after domino after domino falls. Then the prophet comes in to David and the prophet tells him, "Thou art the man. You've committed this sin." Well, that's examination. Now, we live in a day where we have the finished Canon of God and it's to be preached and taught and that is God confronting us; that is God examining us. Well, in the day before, the Old Testament before the Bible was completed, God would call prophets and in this case, the prophet came right up to the king and announced God's truth, "You have committed this sin." Then he says right after that, "The Lord has put away your sin and you shall not die." So there was an illumination or rather an examination showed David where he was, but then because David repented and humbled himself, there was a restoration. There was some consequence, of course, to his sin but he was restored back to fellowship with God.

Now let's go to number 3. Examination to the end of restoration, a renewal, a new closeness to God and then the idea of transformation. In verse 25 again, he talks about we look intently at the perfect law of liberty. Now, when you look at the word of God, when you come in here and you sit under the preaching of the word of God, you have obligated yourself to what you've heard. You just indebted yourself in a sense. There is an obligation you've entered into here. You're to look intently. When he says here that this man looks, how does he word it there, he looks intently, he calls it, at the perfect law. That means literally to stoop down. Instead of me just saying, "Well, look at those ferns there. As a matter of fact, those are plastic ferns." But this word means this right here. You stoop down and you look intently at the word of God.

Can I challenge your thinking this Sunday evening? Do you come to church prayed up with the heart that says, "I'm ready to sit under my pastor's preaching. I'm prepared to look intently at the word and what it has to say to me today." Do you understand how that will fix 1,001 problems in you? I don't, whatever problem you've got with your husband, ladies, if you come intently to ask God to work on your heart, the problems you have with him just start getting dim and shallow and not really that big a deal. And it works both ways, guys. You've got a problem with your wife, but if you come and look intently at the word of God, all of a sudden, the problems you have with your wife just aren't that big a deal. It's amazing how if you do what the word says, it fixes 1,000 things it's not even addressing. Come to the service purposing to look intently, to stoop down, if you will, and carefully look at it.

Then he says in verse 25, not just look intently but he says, "and he abides by it." Looking with a ready response to obey what he sees. Then he calls it "the perfect law, the law of liberty." Now that's a unique phrase that James is using. Now, James is a Jew. He comes out of a religion of legalism. He comes out of the Jewish law system but here he uses the word "law" but he puts a modifier with it. He says the perfect law and I think what James is saying here, "Now we have law as God meant for law to be for his children." In the old covenant, we had law but law only could expose and condemn. Now we've got the word of God, that is the law of God, and it builds and encourages and strengthens and blesses. It doesn't just expose and condemn. It's the perfected, the mature, the completed law of God. And he calls it the law of liberty. Well, before the Old Testament covenant was the law, shows you your condemnation and really gives you no hope out of it, but here the law is a law that brings a liberty, a freedom from condemnation and guilt and sin.

What is it the Psalmist said, "I will walk at liberty for I seek thy precepts." We live in a world that is woefully enslaved and in bondage and they are so blind they parade themselves in the streets and on our television shows and in our magazines and in every form of media that they want to be free to be what they are. What you are is enslaved. You're enslaved in the strongholds of sin and you call it liberty. They're blinded. They're upside down because true liberty is to love the word of God and walk in the truth of the word of God. Everyone who commits sin, the Bible says, is the slave of sin. Now, that word "commits" there is present tense linear action verb; it means the one who as a lifestyle purpose and pattern chooses to walk in sin, promotes sin, excuses sin, welcomes sin in his life. Instead of being a repentor, he's right the opposite. He says this man is one who is the slave of sin. He has no liberty, none whatsoever.

Now I want to give you one thought and I'll be through. 2 Corinthians 3:18, would you turn there? Turn to 2 Corinthians 3 just for a moment and look at verse 18. There is a transformation element. There is an initial foundational transformation that happens to you the moment you repent and believe on Christ. Jesus called it being born again. Paul called it being quickened from the dead and you ought to search your souls regularly to say, "Have I been born again? Have I experienced that quickening from the dead?" Now but also you didn't just get changed and then God quit. No, you are in a progressive sanctification process whereby God is continuing the transformation process in your life and my life. 2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks to this. Paul says here to the church at Corinth, "But we all, with unveiled face," now that's reflecting back on Moses. Moses saw God in his glory, at least he saw something of God. God had to hide Moses in the cleft of the rock lest he be consumed if God just revealed himself completely, but he saw enough of God, he was exposed to enough of God that the Scripture says literally his face shone with the glory of God. He was so impacted by the physical nearness of God but as time went on, the glory began to fade and Moses became concerned, "They're going to see that I'm not as close to God as I was. The glory is departing and I'll lose my influence. I'll lose my power with the people." So he put a veil. Now Paul says we're not like the old covenant law that has an impact on us but doesn't last; it fades away, the effectualness of it is actually not effectual, it doesn't work very long. We're not like that. He says, "But we

have an unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." He says we're at one point when we're converted and there's a glory to that. When God saves you, Christ comes to live in you in the person of the Spirit and the glory of God is in you, but it's like looking in a mirror. It's like a piece, and in this day a mirror was, again, a piece of polished metal. It wasn't a great reflection and so it's kind of dim, it's not all that it ought to be, but we're going from that glory to a little greater glory, to a little greater glory, to a little greater glory, to one day we get home in heaven and our practice will be like our original position. We have the position of being perfected in Christ, the righteousness in Christ, but it's not lived out perfectly yet, but we're working on it. Well, God's working on us and we're to cooperate and commit to work on it and we're going from glory to glory to glory to glory until one day we'll have glorification.

Now, it's interesting here. He says we look not like Moses where there was some shame and it wasn't lasting. No, we're right the opposite. Moses was trying to hold on to what was lingering away from him, the child of God is growing in a new increasing glory and brightness and Christ-likeness. We are going in right the opposite direction. So we have a growing glory, Moses under the old covenant, had a diminishing glory. Now, I guess to be honest our glory kind of can go like this but over time, it's a growing glory, not a diminishing glory. Do you know why? Because it's not your glory. You didn't start it. You didn't put it there. You didn't jump through a hoop and get zapped. God did it and what God starts, God completes.

How many times have I stood in this pulpit and asked a hypothetical: how do you know if someone's the real genuine article? How do you know if this man is a false teaching, a hireling, or a true called man of God? T-i-m-e. Time will show. Over time, the glory diminished from Moses' face, that's the old covenant, but over time, the child of God keeps being drawn back, keeps coming back, keeps humbling, keeps repenting, keeps trying to grow. Oh, he may slip and slide, he may fall in a mud hole but he doesn't live in a mud hole. He goes from glory to glory to glory.

Now, this word "transformed" here in verse 18 of 1 Corinthians 3, "are being transformed," it's the Greek word that we get this metamorpho, we get the English word "metamorphosis" from it, he means God though he changed us when we're born again, he is actually continuing a supernatural changing of us as we come examining ourselves under the word of God, restoring ourselves under the teaching of the word of God, and continuing to being transformed by the word of God. There is no doubt in my mind there are things about Jeff Noblit today that are the pattern of my life. I wouldn't certainly hold myself up as anywhere to close to having arrived now, but there are things that are the pattern of my life today that I remember God showing through an examination, causing me to repent, giving me a new restoration, and then helping me to know and to live and walk out transformation. I mean, there are total areas. This may surprise you, did you know that I've probably been legalistic in my past? Now this is going to shock you. I know you just can't believe that but I found, now look, I found whole areas of my thinking and I do believe this by God's grace, I believe my motives were pure, I found whole areas of my thinking where I was more conservative than God. I thought up rules

and guidelines that God said we didn't need and do you know what God did? He transformed me in some of those areas. Where I understand those rules and those guidelines are good for some families and might be good for mine and good for others, but they're not good for everybody because they're not in the Scripture clearly, amen? Now you may have in your home the rule that, "My wife's hair can only change two colors in one calendar year." I don't know where that came from, by the way, it just came, you know, somebody said, "He says everything that comes to his mind but most things don't make it that far." I think that was one of those things that didn't make it that far. You may have a rule and it's fine and it works for you and your wife and that's wonderful but we don't enforce it as law on other brothers and sisters if it's not clear in the word of God.

So that's just for me. That's an area where I had to let God examine me. You know, it's hard, now I want you to hear this: it's hard, it's really hard for Jeff Noblit to say to be pleasing to the Lord, I've got to be more liberal in my understanding here. Amen? It's just hard to say that but you understand the context, I don't mean liberal politically and all of that, I mean in my application of God's truth there are times when we're more conservative than God, and vice versa, there are times when we're too loose, if you will. But let God's word do the examination. Let God's word show you where you need to repent and restore a deeper fellowship and then let God's word transform you so that now your life is marked by a new type of thinking and a new type of behavior in that area.

Now here's the final challenge: are you according to James's teaching here, regularly coming to the word of God, quiet time, Bible study and the preaching of the word, with a heart to practice the word? Seriously, soberly, and intently? Well, we never quit needing to remind and revive that spirit in our hearts.

Let's stand together, alright?