

**I. Introduction.**

**II. Receive the word – tend your garden. v. 21**

**A. Pull the weeds. v. 21a I Pe. 2:1**

1. You can't receive the word if you are still engaged in your old life of sin.
2. This is like Paul's exhortations to put off your old self. Eph. 4:22ff Col. 3:8
3. Put off filthiness and the remaining (abundance of) wickedness. 2:2 Zech. 3:3-4  
Isa. 64:6 Eph. 4:31 Col. 3:8 I Pe. 2:1,17

**B. Cultivate the implanted word. v. 21b I Pe. 2:2**

1. The Lord has already planted His word within you. v. 18 Jer. 31:33 Ezek. 36:36-37
2. You wouldn't be able to fight sin unless the word was already working inside of you. v. 21a Rom. 6:17ff I Jo. 3:9
3. What is your heart's response to God's word? Mark 4:1ff Col. 3:16
4. How can one humbly (meekly) receive God's word? Ps. 1:1ff 25:4-5 119:11  
Pr. 3:5-6 2:10 Isa. 57:15 Acts 17:11 8:14 11:1 I Th. 2:13 I Pe. 2:2
5. How do many fail to meekly embrace the word? John 8:37 Mt. 8:12 13:41-42,49f

**C. God's word is powerful and able to save your soul. v. 21c 4:12 Heb. 4:12 9:28  
I Jo. 2:14 Phil. 2:12-13 I Pe. 2:1-2 1:5,9 I Th. 5:9 Ro. 5:9-10 13:11**

**III. Be doers of God's word. v. 22-25**

**A. Don't be a self-deluded hearer who refuses to act upon God's Word. v. 22**

1. Hearing is not enough. Heb. 3:15 John 5:39-40 Mt. 23:1ff II Tim. 3:7
2. Who would want to be religious enough to hear the word without acting upon it?
3. The person who claims to be saved, but does not practice God's word deludes himself. I John 2:3-4 4:7-8 II Pe. 1:10
4. We are not saved by doing the word, but those who are truly saved obey God's word. 2:14-26 3:13 Ro. 2:13
5. James echos Jesus' teaching. Mark 4:1ff Mt. 7:13-27 John 14:15 8:31 15:14  
Luke 11:27-28
6. James also echos Old Testament demands that the Word of God be received and acted upon. Ex. 13:3 Num. 15:39 Dt. 8:2 Mal. 4:4 Heb. 4:1ff

**B. James illustrates his point with mirrors. v. 23-25 I Co. 13:12 II Co. 3:18**

1. The mirror illustrations are more complex than first meets the eye.
2. The important contrast here is the result of looking -- inaction or action.

**C. The careless hearer is unchanged by his forgetful looking (listening). v. 23-24**

1. This man sees himself as he truly is. v. 23
2. But when he walks away, he forgets what he saw. v. 24 Ex. 13:3 Mal. 4:4
3. The result is inaction (and self-deceit). v. 24

**D. The wise hearer is transformed by God's perfect law. v. 25**

1. This man gazes intently. John 20:5,11 Luke 24:12 I Pe. 1:12
2. The object of his gaze is the perfect law – to what law is James referring? 2:8  
John 13:34 Jer. 31:33 Ezek. 36:26f
3. This law is perfect and liberating. Ps. 19:7ff 40:8 Ro. 6:18,20 8:15 I Jo. 5:3  
Ga. 4:31 II Co. 3:17 Mt. 11:28-29 II Tim. 3:16-17

4. This man does not forget what he saw (heard).
5. He acts upon what he has seen (heard). John 13:17
6. This man who does God's Word is blessed. v. 25b,12 Mt. 7:24-25 Ps. 119:1  
1:1ff

#### **IV. Concluding applications.**

- A. How does this passage point to Christ?
- B. Are you humbly receiving and doing God's word?

#### **II Co. 3:18**

#### **Discussion questions**

1. What gospel foundation does James lay for his commands for us to do God's word?
2. How does sin in our lives prevent the reception of God's word? v. 21a
3. How does one humbly receive the word?  
What does the opposite look like? Give examples.
4. What is the benefit of meekly submitting to God's word?
5. Why would someone bother to hear or read God's Word without bothering to do it?
6. Is James being harsh by warning professing Christians that they may be deluded?
7. How does James echo Jesus' teaching?
8. How do the mirrors illustrate the contrast between merely hearing versus doing the word?
9. What is the perfect law of liberty?
10. Where is Christ in our text?