

How do YOU Respond to God's Word?

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[0:00] Thank you.

I assume Pastor Jim is a little taller. Not really. I'm just short. I'm just short. Good morning. Good morning. Well, first of all, thank you for having me, me and my wife.

Our kids, we have three and then four on the way. We left them with my parents. My parents are visiting from Florida, so they're down there going to our church this morning.

So it was kind of nice driving up here. No kids in the back. We were able to enjoy the scenery and just talk, and now we're here. So we're thankful to be here, and happy Mother's Day to the mothers. And I agree. I agree. When we moved to Phoenix three years ago, we were in Florida before that. We were at that church for about eight years, nine years. And we not only had our parents locally in Florida, but we had spiritual mothers and grandparents in that church.

[1:23] So when we moved to Northwest Community Church in Phoenix, that was one thing that was in my mind. Who are going to be our spiritual mothers and who are going to be the spiritual grandmothers to our children.

And the Lord has blessed us with those women. So thank you for pointing that out. We are blessed to have godly women in the church, especially in the work of the spiritual work.

So again, my name is Roy. My wife's name is Leslie. We have three and one on the way. And we've been in Phoenix at Northwest Community Church there for three years.

I'm their youth pastor there. And we moved there from Florida, where we met and where we got saved, where we got married, where I was trained in seminary.

Never been to Arizona. Well, we have. We went to the Grand Canyon for an anniversary trip, but never been to Phoenix. Didn't really know that we would land here several years later.

[2:32] So the Lord had his plan, and we've been growing, and we're thankful. We're thankful for our church down there. We're thankful for the other churches down there and your church up here.

So it's a blessing to know that there are other churches doing the same work, gospel ministry, in different places, especially for the state of Arizona. So thank you for having me this morning.

Well, we will be in the book of James this morning, so I invite you to open your Bibles to James. And you can make your way to chapter 1.

James chapter 1. Have you ever wondered how many sermons you'll hear on average in your entire lifetime?

Listen to these numbers. Let's say you average about three sermons a week. I think that's a safe average, three sermons a week. One from your Sunday morning from Pastor Jim.

[3:42] One from your Sunday school. And maybe during the week, you have a favorite pastor on your favorite app that you listen to on your way to work and on your way back.

So let's say three a week you average. Then let's say you heard sermons from age 10 to, let's say, 75. From 10 to 75.

So you do the math. In those 65 years, you would have listened to 10,000 sermons. 1, 0, 0, 0, 0. 10,000 sermons. If you are one of those, you know, not overachiever, but you just say, I'm about four, four sermons a week, then you're quickly up to 13,000 sermons.

And if you like, if you listen to four, and then let's say you read blogs, or you read actual manuscripts of sermons, so let's say you're up to five a week, you're in the 17,000 sermons in your 65 years of listening and hearing God's Word.

[4:55] Now, my question for you this morning is this. Not so much how many sermons have you heard or how many times have you heard God's Word taught and preached to you, but my question for you this morning is, how many times have you applied what you heard?

Here's the question from James chapter 1. James is going to ask us this morning, what are you doing with what you're hearing? What are you doing with what you are hearing? Every Sunday, every weekend and week out, what are you doing with what you're hearing? So, we will be in James chapter 1, and before I read verses 19 through 27, a little background, a little big picture of the book of James.

James the Less, the half-brother of Jesus, was the one who wrote this letter. He wrote it around mid-40s, pretty early, and he wrote it to Jewish believers who had left Judaism.

So, pretty early in the church stage, the gospel was spreading, right? Jesus Christ started the gospel ministry, and then he passed it to his disciples who became apostles.

[6:10] He sent them out, and now the gospel is spreading, and you get to the early 40s. Now, Jewish people are being saved. They're leaving their old traditions.

They're leaving their old ways of works-based, just focusing on the law, doing the law, and now they're hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ, and now they're getting saved, and now they're moving from synagogues to churches, early, early churches.

They're moving from living by the law to now believing in grace, justification by faith, and God's mercy. So, it's a complete 180s switch for these early Jewish Christians.

So, that's the context here, and because of that, they were heavily persecuted. To kind of give an illustration for today, it would be for a Muslim to say, I'm done with my Islam upbringing.

I'm done with this religion. It's empty. It's fake. I just got saved. I heard the gospel for the very first time. I believed it. I was saved by grace, by faith, and that mom, dad, I'm now a Christian.

[7:31] You can imagine the persecution, not just from the workplace, not just from friends, but from your own family. So, that's kind of what was going on with these early Jewish believers, and they were heavily persecuted in the workplace, especially in the home, and also from their king, from Herod.

He didn't like that. So, as a result, all of those things together, they were persecuted, and as a result, they were dispersed. That's why this letter was written and sent to the believers who were dispersed abroad.

You can see that in chapter 1, verse 1. To the 12 tribes who were dispersed abroad. James says, Greetings. So, James is going to tell these Jewish believers to, he really had two main things for writing to them.

Number one, to test, to test, and really see if they were genuine believers. To really test them. And he lays out a lot of tests from chapter 1 all the way to the end.

And secondly, he wrote to them to help them respond to the persecution they were receiving. Because again, they were heavily persecuted for their faith. For leaving the old ways, the empty religion, and now following Jesus Christ.

[8:57] So, James is saying, I'm going to give you some tests from God's word, from the Holy Spirit, to make sure that you are really a genuine Christian.

And also, at the same time, I'm going to make sure that you are encouraged, and you are helped, so that you know how to respond in ways that are pleasing to the Lord when you are persecuted. So, that's the context. And one of those tests is here in chapter 1, verses 19 through 27. It's the test of how do you respond to God's word?

What are you doing with what you're hearing? So, follow as I read verses 19 through 27. Verse 19, James says this, This you know, my beloved brethren, but everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness in humility, receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

[10:08] But prove yourselves doers of the word and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 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 the mirror.

For once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 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. 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. 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 this morning, I'm going to give you five necessary responses to God's word. So think about the necessary responses every time you either read it or you hear it.

Every time you're exposed to the teaching of God's word from your Bible reading in the morning, from your pastors teaching and preaching to you, every time you're exposed to God's word, I want you to think about these five necessary responses.

[11:38] Five necessary responses to God's word. And number one is here in verses 19 through 20. Number one, submit to the authority of God's word.

Every time you hear God's word, every time it's taught or preached to you, this is number one. You need to come with a submissiveness to the authority.

Because I'm not the authority. You're not the authority. This is the authority. Right? This is the authority. So number one, submit to the authority of God's word. Look at the beginning of verse 19. This you know, my beloved brethren, James says. The question is, what did they already know? Right? What did they know? I think James is referring back to verse 18, back up there a little bit, where he said, in the exercise of his, that's God, his will, he brought us forth by the word of truth. Here's the result. So that we would be a kind of first fruits among his creatures. He's talking about salvation. So James is talking about the time when they got saved, these Jewish first time believers. [12:52] When they first responded in faith and repentance to God's word. They heard the gospel, right? They heard the gospel and they reacted with faith and repentance and for the very first time, the result was being a first fruit, becoming saved, being added to the family.

So that's verse 18. Now in verse 19, James is saying, now as Christians, you are to continually respond.

Verse 18, yes, you responded when you got saved for the very first time and it resulted in your salvation. But that's not, that's not the only time that you respond to God's word.

There's a continual response to God's word and now here he's saying in verse 19, it's a continual response to God's word. And look at, look at the next statement.

But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. So he's saying, you guys already know. You already know that because of the gospel, because of God's word, you were saved.

[13:56] But now I'm going to tell you that on the continual life of sanctification, you're to keep responding.

So verse 19, you must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. James' point here is not so much how you and I respond to people. Although that's true, although that's wise, if I tell you, if you say to me, yeah, we need to be quick to hear other people, we need to slow to speak when people are talking and we shouldn't be angry at people.

That's wise and we should do that. But here, in the context of James, he is really focusing not on how we respond to other people, but how we respond to God's word.

How we respond to God's word. Here's why. Let me show you. Again, the main theme so far is God's word. That's the main theme so far. Look at verse 18. He calls it the word of truth.

Verse 21, jump down to verse 21. He calls it the word implanted. Verse 22, doers of the word.

Verse 23, hearer of the word.

[15:11] And verse 25 is synonym to God's word, the perfect law. So clearly, James' focus here is God's word. That's the theme.

So he's saying, yes, yes, you guys already know it saved you when you first responded by faith and repentance. But you are to have a continual response to God's word and you need to be quick to hear it, slow to speak it, and slow to get angry at it.

I believe that's the intent of James here because of the theme of God's word. It's everywhere here in this section. So if you were to take up all these three commands, right, be quick to hear, be slow to speak, and be slow to anger, if you were to take all those three and give a one word summary, it would be submission.

It would be submission. You are to submit to the authority of God's word. Number one, you're submissive to God's word when you're quick to hear it.

That's a sign of submission when you are quick to hear God's word. Actually, literally, the wording here by James is to be quick to the hearing. It seems like he's kind of highlighting an event.

[16:29] Every time God's word is preached or taught, James seems to be saying, you need to be physically quick to that place or to that event so that you get exposed to God's word.

Practically, you can say, Sunday school, is that an opportunity for me to hear God's word? It is.

Okay, I need to be quick to get there. I need to be there as much as I can.

It's a priority for me. Church service, it's a priority for me because I need to be quick to the hearing, James is telling me. And in other opportunities that you can avail yourself to the hearing of God's word.

Secondly, James says, you're submissive to God's word if you are slow to speak it. Now, this doesn't mean you don't share God's word with others. We know that's not what it means because we're actually commanded to share God's word to others, especially the gospel.

We're ambassadors of Jesus Christ. This is a warning against those who are desiring or currently preaching and teaching God's word, which he will address later on, right, in chapter 3.

[17:42] In chapter 3, James will say, let not many of you become what? Teachers. Whoa, James, why is that? Why is that? Well, because, he says in chapter 3, you will incur stricter judgment.

So he's not saying, he's not saying, no pastors, no teachers, no preachers, no conferences, no Sunday school teachers. He's not saying that. He's just saying, be slow to speak it.

Meaning, meaning, you better be careful and you better be slow when you are desiring to become a Bible preacher or teacher because you need to know first and foremost that when you place yourself in that position, you are essentially inviting God's stricter judgment.

So, yes, quick to hear it. It's a priority. You are quick to the hearing. Secondly, you are slow to speak it.

You're just careful. You know what it means to prop yourself up to be that teacher. And thirdly, another sign of submission is here also.

[18:58] You're submissive to God's word if you are slow to get angry at it. So, put yourself in their shoes, right? They're quick to the hearing.

You're always listening, always being exposed to God's word, whether it's through a Sunday school or a church service. And you're saying, yes, I need to be careful. I need to be careful.

I can't just leave church this morning and use my Bible and just bash people over their heads and be the Bible teacher, the Bible thumper. I don't need to do that because I know that I'm going to incur a stricter judgment.

But here, thirdly, you are to be slow to get angry at it because again, the more you are exposed to the hearing of God's word, what does it do?

It unveils your heart and it convicts. You're right. It convicts. And does that feel good or not so much?

[19:58] No. Conviction does not feel good but it's the work of the Holy Spirit through His word. It is His work and we need to be thankful for that but let's be honest, we don't like that feeling.

We don't like that feeling. That's why a lot of churches today gain popularity and masses of people because they avoid the convictions.

People want to come to a church service want to feel good. So that's how the churches grow. But that's not what we're after. What we're after is what God is after and that is to convict, to reveal our hearts and then we see how ugly we are and we are convicted.

So when that happens, when that happens, we only have two options. Number one is to have a wrong response and that is to get angry.

Ah! The pastor again stepping on my toes. Did you talk to my wife? Right? Ah, again, you know, I came here last Sunday and I got convicted.

[21:09] I was expecting to have an easier, smoother experience this Sunday and it's the same thing. What is this? Right? That's one response. You get angry.

I thought I was better. I thought I was better. Don't I deserve a break from God's convictions?

Right? That's one response. And the other response is the right response and that is to just take a big, big swallow and say, God, whatever you're showing, I need it to see.

Right? Because you want me to work on those things and whatever you have not shown me, thank you. Because I know there are more down there in my heart that's really ugly.

So you know how much I can handle and you show that to me after the preaching of God's word and thank you, now I can work on those things. So you have two responses every time you're convicted. Here, James is saying you need to be slow to get angry when you're exposed to God's

word and you're convicted.

Why is that, James? Well, verse 20 gives us the answer. Why shouldn't you get angry? Verse 20, For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God, James says.

[22 : 24] You know what the main goal of God is in you every time you're receiving God's word taught to you and preached to you?

It's right here. It's righteousness. Another word for sanctification, another word for becoming more and more like Jesus Christ. That's the main main goal of Jesus Christ, of the Holy Spirit, and the Father himself every time you are exposed to God's word.

And James is saying, you know what's the number one thing that gets in the way of that goal for you to become more righteous, for you to become more sanctified, become more like Jesus Christ? It's your response of anger because you do not like that feeling, that painful feeling every time God's word just peels the cover and your sinfulness is shown.

So James is saying, whenever you hear God's word and you don't submit to it, which is the right response, you do the wrong response, which is you get angry at it, what you're really doing is inhibiting your spiritual growth.

[23 : 34] three sermons a week, four sermons a week, five sermons a week, 10,000 sermons later, 65 years later, if most of the response was anger, there's no spiritual growth.

There's no spiritual growth. James says, here's how I want you to respond to God's word. First and foremost, you need to submit to the authority of God's word. How do you do that?

Be quick to hear it. Be careful, very carefully, slow to speak it. And most of all, to not get angry. To not get angry.

That's submission. Here's the second one. The second necessary response to God's word. Every time you hear it, every time you read it. Number two, put off all hindrances to God's word.

And the counterpart will come, will come later in the second half of this verse, which is the put on.

So, first of all, put off all hindrances to God's word.

[24 : 39] Verse 21. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness. Take a pause there and we'll finish the second half on point number three.

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness. The word filthiness here is related to another word which means earwax.

Isn't that interesting? That word filthy is the same root word is connected to the same word where we get our word earwax. And it's interesting because I think James is using a great illustration with the hearing of God's word, right?

Again, he's going to compare the hearer and the doer. The merely hearer and the doer later on. So, here he's saying make sure that you're putting aside this is the put off, put on language that the New Testament always uses.

It's to take off, to take off, to shed off all of those spiritual earwax if you can describe it that way. because here's the truth, right?

[25 : 56] God's word has to reach our minds so that we can understand it, right? We first of all need to understand what we're learning and then hopefully it will reach our hearts so that it can do the transformation, right?

So, mind renewal takes place as we're hearing and it's clear and it's understandable and we know what's going on and then it moves on to our hearts and it's doing the transformation in our hearts. It's convicting us but we're not getting angry so it's transforming us. That's kind of the steps in hearing God's word but sometimes it gets into here but it doesn't get into here because of spiritual earwax.

The filthiness that James is talking about. the filthiness that James is talking about and here are just some examples that I've thought of.

Number one, idols that have slowly replaced God. That's a filth that needs to be put aside. Idols that have slowly replaced God.

[27 : 07] Here's the second thing. Good things, okay, there may be good things but they have become distractions. good things that have become distractions.

Number three, coddled sins, sins that we embrace, sins that we Jerry Bridges calls them respectable sins, those sins that we just don't want to let go of.

We're not ready to put them aside. Those things can be spiritual earwax or a worldly lifestyle that you've been secretly enjoying.

just be honest. A lifestyle that's not pleasing to the Lord because it's worldly. One foot in the church, one foot in the world.

So James is saying, do an honest heart check. Is there anything that's hindering you from truly, genuinely listening and hearing to God's word?

[28:08] James says, whatever they are, he says, all filthiness, right? All filthiness and all that remains of weakness, whatever they are, all of those things, he says, put them all aside.

Clean them out so that you can actually really, truly listen and hear. So it can go into your mind and it can renew your mind and it can go to your heart so it can transform it so you become more like Jesus Christ.

Again, the goal is righteousness. righteousness. So put off all hindrances to God's word. Here's the third necessary response, second half of that verse, verse 21.

Put on a teachable heart to God's word. Put on a teachable heart to God's word. So we're to submit to the authority, we're to put off all hindrances, now James is going to tell us to put on a teachable heart.

Second half of verse 21, James says, In humility, receive the word implanted which is able to save your souls.

[29:18] In humility, receive the word implanted which is able to save your souls. James says first, receive the word implanted.

This is that one time event of justification. Receive the word implanted. It has a picture of receiving and welcoming for the very first time and it's like a seed, the gospel seed and it's implanted in your heart and it's there, stays there.

That's justification, right? That's the first step of salvation when you heard the gospel and it was implanted in your heart by the Holy Spirit and as a result you got saved.

And then secondly, James describes it which is able to save your souls. Now this one is the ongoing event of saving, right?

Sometimes the Bible describes salvation in the justification event and then also it uses that same word of salvation in the being saved, the sanctification event and then also the Bible uses sometimes that salvation language or word in the glorification event when you're finally saved, finally, completed, finished.

[30:37] So here is more in the middle of sanctification when you continue to hear God's word making you more like Jesus Christ. So James says you are to receive the word implanted, make sure you are a Christian, make sure that the gospel seed has been implanted in your heart.

Why is that important? Because it's the very thing that is able to continue to save your soul, to continue to sanctify you. Now I kind of skipped the first word there.

How do you do those two things? In what? In humility. In humility, receive, welcome, embrace God's word.

In humility, you are to do that. And in the context of hearing and listening to God's word, really the number one sign of humility is teachability.

It's teachability. I remember in seminary, my professors who were also my pastors because the seminary was in the church campus and my professors were the pastors in the church, they would always challenge us on this.

[31:52] You need to be humble. You need to be humble. And sure, humility means serving others and loving others, putting others first. But in the context of listening and hearing God's word so that eventually later on you can be the pastor who preaches and teaches, they just drilled it in our minds that the number one sign for you right now and for the rest of your life in your relationship to God's word every time you open it and every time you hear it is teachability.

That's the number one sign of humility. Are you actually teachable? Or do you kick and scream? Do you complain? Do you skip verses in your reading?

Do you skip books in your reading because it's too complicated? It's Old Testament. It's a minor prophet. What am I going to get out of that? Moving on. That's not a sign of teachability.

And because it's not a sign of teachability, humility, it's a sign of the opposite of humility which is pride. You pick and choose what you want to read. You pick and choose what you want to believe. You pick and choose what you want to apply.

And James is saying here, in humility, in an attitude of a humble heart, you are to receive the word implanted which is able to continually do the work in your soul which is your sanctification.

[33:21] If you're not teachable, James is saying, it's not going to do that work. It's not going to produce righteousness. So, here's a picture of a heart that's humble and teachable.

Number one, nothing in your personal life should be off limits to God's word. That's a humble, teachable heart. Right? All doors should be open.

God's word should be able to go into every corner of your heart and just expose what it needs to expose. And you, as a teachable, humble student, you respond to that.

You don't close doors. You don't say, not that room. Don't go in that room. Here's another sign. You come to God's word ready to be comforted and convicted.

God's word does both. Right? It does both. And if you want to be a humble, teachable student of God's word, you come to God's word always ready to be comforted and convicted.

[34:33] And a third sign is this, you are thankful for what you are learning and you are eager to apply it. You are always thankful for what you are learning and eager to apply it.

So back to the outline here. We're to submit to the authority of God's word first. That's very important. Number two, we are to put off all hindrances, all of those spiritual earwax need to come out and be cleansed.

And thirdly, we need to put on a teachable heart and then here's number four, verses 22 through 25. Number four, obey the proclamation of God's word.

Here's where the obedience comes in. Obey the proclamation of God's word. Verse 22. Verse 22. James says, but prove yourselves doers of the word and not only merely hearers who delude themselves.

Quick observation, James is not saying don't hear, right? You notice that? What he's saying is, prove yourselves doers of the word and not only merely hearers.

[35:52] So yes, you need to be quick to the hearing, you need to hear it. It needs to enter your mind so it can renew your mind so you understand it and then it makes it to your heart so it transforms it.

So the hearing part is very important, but James warning here is that make sure that you not only merely hearers but you're also proving yourself as doers of God's word.

The Greeks back then used the same word hearer in more of the academic world. That's kind of where this word was widely used also.

In the academic world, these would be those students, well they're not really students, they're more of people who audit classes, right?

Maybe you pay a little fee, so that you can enter the classroom and you can do what? So you can hear, but when it comes to homework, when it comes to assignments, projects, not for me, I'm just auditing, I'm just sitting in, we say it today, just sitting in a class, right?

[36:57] I can be here today, next week I have something more important so I won't be here, maybe after that if I'm open I'll be back, but I'm just sitting in, I'm just auditing, I'm not really a student, that's the word here.

Unfortunately, some church attenders today do the same thing, right? They do the same thing, they are in the church, they do come, and they do sit, and they do not fall asleep, and they actually listen, right?

They actually hear, audibly, and they actually listen, but what? But they leave as just, I'm just, I just sat in, it's kind of nice, you know, it's Sunday, it's kind of nice, it's Christmas, you know, what do people do during Christmas holiday?

We go to church, it's Thanksgiving, so we go to church, you know, it's Easter, my neighbor invited me, so what do we do on Easter? We go to church, but it was nice, I just kind of sat in, I heard, you know, the pastor, I don't know him, but I heard him, it was good, it was nice, and then what do they do?

they walk away, and they didn't learn anything, and let alone plan on applying it. What were they?

[38:18] They were auditors, and James is saying, be careful, when you are only a hearer, when you are a hearer only, essentially, that's what you are doing to God's word, you are auditing the class, you are auditing your pastor's sermon.

Don't give me homework, pastor, don't give me any of that assignment things, I'm just sitting in. That's the attitude here that James is warning us against. He says, you need to be a doer, a student, you need to be a student, committed, dedicated, you're in the class, and you do expect work, and you are excited and thankful to do the work that's given to you.

You're there to learn, and you're there to apply what you're learning. And James says, when you're only a hearer, he says, you're deluding yourself.

It's a mathematical picture. He says, if you're a hearer only, here's really what you're doing. You're saying to yourself that being present and hearing God's word automatically equals signs spiritual growth.

That's what you're saying, James is saying. And he says, you're delusional, you're deluding yourself. He's saying, your math is wrong.

[39 : 49] You're making a very, very dangerous spiritual miscalculation because God God is telling you that hearing God's word coupled with doing God's word equals sign spiritual growth.

That's the math. If you're saying, here, here, here, here, here, and that's it, equals, that equals to spiritual growth.

James is saying, you're deluding yourself, sorry, your math is wrong. It doesn't work that way. Don't be merely a hearer, but also proving yourself a doer.

And to make his point clear, this is a familiar section of this chapter, to make his point clear, James presents an illustration. Look at verse 23. He makes an illustration here for us to really clearly understand this.

Verse 23, verse 23, verse 25, contrast, but one who looks intently at the perfect law, this is the real student, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer, but an effectual doer, this man, this student, will be what?

[41 : 20] Blessed in what he does. He got his math right. He heard it, and then he did it. Equal sign, spiritual growth, blessing. The first guy, the first guy, he looked at a mirror, which is God's word.

He saw his face, which is his imperfections, and what did he do? He immediately what? Walked away. He immediately walked away.

And what's the result? He forgot his imperfections, therefore he didn't do what's necessary to his imperfections, and next Sunday he shows up, he is the same person spiritually.

It's neat to see the similarities between the two, okay? Look at it again. They both looked at the same thing. God's word, right?

They both looked at the same thing, God's word, and they both saw something on their faces, spiritual faces. They got confronted, they got convicted, they saw something.

[42 : 29] But then, but then one did something, and then the other did something that's different. The first person immediately walked away, the second person, what?

Abided. That's the game changer in this illustration. The first person walked away, right? Consumed by worldly things and his thoughts, walked away.

The second person, what did he do? He abided in God's word. It's interesting, right? They were both exposed to God's word. They might have sat in the same church, same Sunday morning.

And most likely, they probably felt the same convictions, right? What they saw, what they saw in the mirror. But the one guy said, eh, done with this, walking away.

The other guy said, hmm, I need to abide. I need to really think about this. I need to abide in God's word. And what's the result for him?

[43 : 33] He did not forget. He did not forget. the imperfections that God's word pointed out. Instead, he did what he obeyed.

So you can see the result, the game changer in the middle, abiding and leaving, and the same two things in the beginning. They both heard.

They both got convicted. So, here, James is telling us you need to obey the proclamation of God's word. You need to obey the proclamation of God's word.

One pastor said this, appreciation of God's word is not application of God's word. Appreciation of God's word is not application of God's word.

I appreciate a lot of preaching and teaching. I'm kind of in four sermons a week. For me, that's the lesser issue.

[44 : 40] The greater issue for me is that I'm teaching it. But we tend to be more of the appreciating type. That was good. Have you heard of this one?

Yeah, I heard about that one. That was really good. Have you gone to this conference? Listen to session number five. It's really good. Oh, I did. It was so good. He's my favorite celebrity pastor or whatever.

And it's a great warning. Appreciation of those things is not application. Again, the question, what are you doing with what you're hearing?

Right? What are you doing with what you're hearing? There's a book that I highly recommend, very helpful in this topic. I recommend it to all Christians.

The title is Expository Listening. Have you heard about that book? Expository Listening. Very simple, very thin, very short. And it's written by a pastor.

[45:39] His name is Ken Ramey. He pastors, I think, in Houston, Houston, Texas. And it's a really, really good, helpful book. It's called Expository Listening.

He said there are so many books about expository preaching. Right? There's not a lot of books about expository listening. And his premise is really centered on this text here from James chapter 1.

At the end of the book, he gives three responsibilities of those who hear God's word. As a pastor, he's thinking about his flock, his church, and they do exposition there in their preaching like you do here.

And he gave three responsibilities. he said, before the word is preached, you need to anticipate. So he talks about your week, and he talks about your Saturday night, what you're doing, because you need to be anticipating the Sunday morning's message.

And then the second responsibility he gave his church is the responsibility while the word is preached, being preached, and that is attention.

[46:51] And then he has some good recommendations of what to do and what not to do so that you can actually pay attention during the sermon. And then number three is after.

So before, during, after, right? Anticipation, and then attention, and then number three, application, your responsibility to apply right away, not walk away, but abide, applying, obeying right away what you just heard.

So I highly recommend that. Again, it's expository listening by Pastor Ken Ramey, R-A-M-E-Y. Here's the last point, the last necessary response to God's word. So we're to submit to the authority, we're to put off all hindrances, we're to put on teachable heart, we're to obey the proclamation of God's word.

Number five, we are to align our conviction to God's word. We are to align our convictions to God's word. Convictions would be the truths or principles that the Holy Spirit has cemented deep in our hearts that were never there before.

[48:13] A conviction can sound like this, before I used to be okay with this, but now it's a conviction of mine that I will stay away from this. That would be a conviction.

You got convicted once, right, by the Holy Spirit, and it did the work in your heart, and now it's developed into a conviction. It's a conviction of mine to do this every morning, or it's a conviction of mine to never say this word, whatever it may be, that's a conviction.

So, we all have convictions, but we need to align all those convictions under God's word, and here, James, I think, gives three convictions that are very important for a Christian.

Number one is godly speech. Look at verse 26. He talks about godly speech. If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is what?

Worthless. It's worthless. If you profess to be a Christian, but your words are not pleasing to the Lord, and not edifying to other people, most likely you're just a professing Christian.

[49:38] You're not a Christian deep down. You're not a genuine Christian. Jesus says the same thing. Out of the mouth, the heart speaks. So if you really want to know what the person is really all about, just do what?

Just listen to his speech. If your speech hasn't changed, then most likely it's because your heart has not been changed.

So that's a conviction for a Christian. conviction, I need to be to other people. Conviction number two, first half of verse 27.

It's this, selfless service. Selfless service, that too need to line up under God's word. Verse 27, pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their distress.

Here in church, do you gravitate more to those who are helpless, those who can't take care of themselves, and those who can't return your favor like orphans and widows?

[50:50] Sure, James is using orphans and widows, but I think he's using orphans and widows that as an example to test these people in their church if they are really serving sacrificially.

It's easy to serve those who are popular. It's easy to serve those who are in position of leadership. It's easy to serve those who are wealthy, and it's easy to serve those who will say, oh, thank you. Thank you so much. I'm going to return the favor later on. We can all serve those type of people, but James again is testing us believers and saying, how about those who are helpless? How about those who cannot take care of themselves? And how about those who cannot pay you back, like the orphans and the widows in your congregation? So that has to be a conviction for a Christian.

I need to serve selflessly. No favoritism, no picking and choosing. I need to serve selflessly and James says, when you do that, that is the pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God.

[52:05] He's actually the number one audience when you serve. In the sight of our God and Father. Here's the third and last one, conviction. Conviction number three is a holy life.

Second, verse 27, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. This is talking about staying away from the things of the world, its sinful influences, and immoral lifestyle.

You should become more and more like Jesus Christ and not more and more like the world. So that has to be a conviction. So this last section here, James is just saying, if you are a hearer of God's word, if you are a true student of God's word, it's going to start to convict you, it's going to start to change you and transform you, it's going to start to show ugliness and sinfulness in your heart, and those convictions are going to turn into foundational convictions that hold you, and here are the three.

You need to be more like Jesus Christ and not like the world. You need to serve your church selflessly without favoritism, especially those who cannot take care of themselves, and also you need to have a speech that's pleasing to him.

When those things are a conviction of yours, and you are obeying God's word, you are a student, you're not just here auditing, and you're always putting on a heart that is teachable, and you're putting off all the spiritual earwax, you're constantly saying, what are they this week?

[53:47] put them off, put them off, and ultimately you are submitting, you are taking yourself, you're not putting yourself on top of God's word, but you're actually putting yourself under God's word, and you're submitting to its authority, whatever it says, whenever it says, however it says it, then you are a hearer, and a doer.

You are responding to God's word in the way that is pleasing to him. Friends, the Lord has blessed you with a church that prioritizes God's word.

I have not met your pastor, I've talked to him over the phone, and I believe he's been here for many, many years, and 12 years, and he's been doing the same thing, right?

He's been doing the same thing. He takes the week to prepare, and he takes the Sunday to teach and preach. So, the Lord has blessed you with a church that prioritizes God's word, and a pastor who preaches God's word.

If you want to be, and I believe this is your heart, if you want to be pleasing to the Lord, and if you want to be a sweet encouragement to your pastor, I know he's not here, but if you want to do those two things, you want to be pleasing to the Lord, and you want to be a sweet, very sweet encouragement to your pastor, James says it's simple, be a what?

[55:08] A doer. Be a doer. That is glorifying and pleasing to God when he looks down at his children, and they may be a one sermon a week Christian, or a five sermon a week Christian, but when he sees them obeying what they're hearing, he is glorified.

And for a pastor to hear from the grapevine that, oh so and so really appreciated your sermon, and just listen to this, he obeyed it, and he did this, and he did that, he shared the gospel with his co-worker, or whatever it may be, he and his wife, they're having a great marriage, that's the sweet encouragement to the pastor.

So don't be merely hearers, but doers. Amen? Amen? Thank you. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[56:29] Amen. Thank you.