

James 1:19-27

Week 2 - Turning Listening Into Action

? What are some verbal and nonverbal responses someone shows and does that make you feel heard? What are some that make you feel unheard?

James 1:19-27 (NIV)

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹ Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

²⁶ Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Listen (v. 19-21)

? How would you describe your listening skills? What's your typical reaction when someone tells you something you disagree with?

? What does it mean to produce the righteousness God desires (verse 20)?

? What does it mean for the word to be planted in us? What does that say about the relationship that God has started with us?

? Optional question: Read Genesis 4:6, Proverbs 25:23, and Matthew 5:33. What do these passages and this passage say about anger? How does that fit together with other examples we find in Scripture?

Consider/Meditate (v. 22-25)

? Are you listening to the word? What are some obstacles or excuses that you have?

? How does a person deceive themselves if they only listen to the word? Hint: the Greek for this use of “deceive” means “falsely reason” or “delude”.

? How is someone who merely listens to the word like a person who looks into a mirror and later forgets what they saw?

? Optional question: In what way(s) is the Law like a mirror? James is talking about the Old Testament law (Ten Commandments law, specifically) here. What freedom comes from obedience to God’s word?

? What’s at stake when we fail/neglect to live out God’s Word?

Apply (v. 26-27)

? What is James saying in verse 26 that adds to his exhortations in verses 19-25?

? James takes note of widows and orphans because they were often the most in need. But this can be extended to all who are in affliction in our lives. Do you have any widows and orphans in your life?

? There's a difficult tension between remembering that we are saved by faith alone, yet recognizing that our faith should lead us to action--should bear fruit. What does it look like to live with balance between these two? What does it look like to slip too far in the "license" side? The "legalism" side/defining our faith by our works?

For Discussion and Accountability

? Are there sins you've committed in the past - or feel stuck in currently -that you believe are unforgivable? Have you talked to someone about them? Have you confessed them to God?

? What are the things that are keeping you from feeling 100% confident in your salvation?

? Are there areas of your life that you feel you are still working to somehow achieve or maintain your salvation/righteousness in God's eyes?