

James 1:19-27 – Behaving Faith – Part 6

1

Introduction

Just as there are three elements to hearing and receiving the Word (with submission, purity, and humility), so there are also three elements to obeying the Word. Thus, the true believer, the hearer and doer of the Word, proves his faith in three ways: In relation to **himself**, he is willing to **apply the Word without deception** (1:22b–26); in relation to **others**, he is willing to **apply the Word without selfishness** (v. 27a); and in relation to the **world**, he is willing to **apply the Word without compromise** (v. 27b).

2

James 1:19-27

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. 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. ²⁶ If anyone among you thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless. ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

3

A Willingness to Apply the Word without Compromise.

James 1:27b

And to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

The third proper reaction to the Word of God is the **willingness to apply it to one's life without moral or spiritual compromise.**

"To keep" indicates regular, continuous action. This means keeping oneself unspotted from the world is the perpetual obligation of Christians, allowing for no exceptions. Those who belong to God are to be characterized by **moral and spiritual purity**, by unspotted and unblemished holiness.

4

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Peter admonishes believers to “conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; ¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”
(1 Pet. 1:17b–19).

5

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Every Christian falls short of the Lord’s standards. Like Paul, we find ourselves doing things we know are wrong and not doing things we know are right (cf. Rom. 7:14–25). Even the most faithful and loving believer does not always show as much compassion as he should, love his fellow believers as he should, or love God as he should. James is speaking of the **basic orientation of our lives**, of our central commitment and allegiance. If that allegiance is right, then our deepest desire will be to love and care for others and to confess our selfish sin to the Lord when we do not.

6

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James 1:27b

And to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

It is not our perfection that proves our salvation but rather our hating our imperfections and seeking, with God's help and power, to correct them. In his inmost heart, the genuine Christian longs to speak and do only those things that are holy, pure, loving, honest, truthful, and upright, things that are uncorrupted and unspotted by the world.

7

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The term "**world**" is used here to represent fallen mankind and its ungodly spiritual systems of philosophy, morals, and values (see John 7:7; 8:23; 14:30; 1 Cor. 2:12; Gal. 4:3; Col. 2:8).

We are surround by the **lies** of the world. We are lied to by advertisers who promise us happiness if we just buy their product.

The world thinks that we are foolish and attempts to force us into conformation. We need to stand up, keep our eyes on Jesus and refuse to compromise our holiness. It is the world who is foolish.

They invest their time and energy into that which they cannot keep!

8

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John warns, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” (1 John 2:15–16).

Love of God and love of the world and the things of the world are totally incompatible and mutually exclusive.

9

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The phrase “**from the world**” does not pertain to such things as participating in business, being involved in social activities, or buying and using the material necessities of life. It is the overriding love of and **allegiance** to such things that are ungodly and come between men and God.

10

So What ...

As Christians we claim that our lives are based upon Christ and His Word. Yet are we willing to truly receive and obey Christ's commands without argument or hesitation?

We need to fall in love with the author of Scripture. When we love Him more than anything else, then obedience and holiness will be our delight.