

HEARING AND DOING THE WORD

LESSON SCRIPTURE: JAMES 1:19-27

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JAMES 1:19-27

Key Verse: *But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. James 1:22*

James 1:19-27 (NRSV)

19 You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger;

20 for your anger does not produce God's righteousness.

21 Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.

23 For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror;

24 for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like.

25 But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

26 If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless.

27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

VOCABULARY

- **Righteousness** – Behaving according to God’s Word.
- **Sordidness** – To demonstrate the worst aspects of human nature such as immorality, selfishness, and greed.
- **Meekness** – Quietness, gentleness.
- **Deceive** – To convince yourself of something that is not true; lie.
- **Bridle** – To exercise control or restraint.
- **Undeiled** – Perfect, whole, unpolluted.

INTRODUCTION

Carla and Carmen always came home together after visiting the community pool. But one day Carla did return home until late. Her mother was waiting in the kitchen when she arrived home.

“Good evening, Carla. How was your day?” Her mother stared at her intensely.

“I had a good day.” Carla removed a can of soda out the refrigerator and sat down at the table.

“What time is it?” Her mother pointed at the kitchen clock.

“8:30 p.m.” Carla took a sip of her soda.

“You know our rule about visiting the pool. You and your sister must return home together. And then if you want to go out again, you must ask us first. Where did you go?”

“I decided to go visit Tonya. She just returned from her family vacation. I wanted to know about her trip to Ghana. I was only two blocks away. What difference does it make?” Carla rolled her eyes in disgust.

“We have rules and you must obey them! Since you disobeyed us, you are not going to the YPD party at church next week.” Mom got up from the table to wash the dishes.

“You’re not being fair!” Carla threw her can of soda on the floor. Her mother’s pants were sprayed with soda.

“Carla, clean the floor up! And you will be washing my clothes tonight, too.”

Carla kicked the soda can as she left to get the mop to clean the floor.

Do you feel Carla dealt properly with her anger? Why is it important to control our anger? In today’s lesson, we discover God can help us when our anger feels out of control or overwhelming.

BIBLE STORY

In our scripture today, James discusses the importance of listening as well as being a doer of the Word. If we are honest with ourselves, we do more talking than listening. There is so much to talk about in person and/or via social media. We want our opinions to be heard. Others ideas or thoughts are often drowned out by our voices. It can make others feel ignored and disrespected. James is saying to us, “Be quick to listen, slow to speak” (v. 1:19). We have to listen more and talk less.

James also addresses the issue of anger (vs. 1:19-20). The anger felt due to sinful acts or injustice is okay because others are being hurt. But when our feelings get hurt, we fail to win an argument, or we feel ignored. There is no need to grow angry. We have to free ourselves of bad attitudes and all types of wicked behaviors. If we humbly receive the message of salvation found in scripture that we have heard, our lives can be saved (v. 1:21).

“But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves” (v. 1:22). If we come to church and study

the Bible, our lives should reflect what the Bible states. We have to obey God's Word completely. God's law points out sin in us and gives us the opportunity to ask God's forgiveness (v. 1:25). We are saved by God's grace. Salvation frees us from sin's control. We can be what God created us for.

Our religious acts, such as praying in public, or helping the needy, mean nothing unless we have control over our tongues (v. 1:26). If we are still using curse words, often angry without cause, call people bad names, etc., we are not honoring God. It makes our actions worthless. The religious acts acceptable by God are those in which we help the powerless, e.g. orphans, widows, and people in need (v. 1:27). We are not to expect anything in return. Moreover, our speech has to be loving and encouraging, and our lives must be free from the sins of the world.

LIFE APPLICATION

List three ways we can be doers of the word and not just hearers:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Draw a picture or cartoon demonstrating how we can control our tongues in others' presence on following page.

SUMMARY

God desires for us to be hearers and doers of the Word. People read and talk about doing good, but find it difficult to help the needy in society. Our faith should compel us to seek out opportunities for acts of service that benefit others in need. Discuss with your class a community project that would benefit those in the most need in your community, church, or schools. Then ask the pastor and Missionary Society to assist with the planning.

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for this day. We ask your help in controlling our tongues. Help us to talk less and listen more. Open opportunities for us to put the Word into action by assisting others, such as the homeless, hungry, disabled, elderly, imprisoned, and neglected. Amen.

Closing Hymn: "Take My Life, and Let It Be" (#292 - *AME Church Hymnal*)