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.

JAMES 1:19-27 (KJV)
19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:
20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.
21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.
22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:
24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.
25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.
26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.
27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unsplotted from the world.
KEY TERMS

- **Law** – A force or influence impelling to action.
- **Sordidness** – Filth, moral defilement.
- **Save** – Deliver into safety.
- **Rank Growth** – Abundance.
- **Anger** – Full of, swarming with unsettled opposition.
- **Wickedness** – Malice, ill-will, desire to injure.
- **Implanted** – Placed in, which enables something to develop.

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is filled with many laws, rules, and commandments that believers are to follow. There are commandments about how we are to care for our homes and the resources with which God has entrusted us. There are instructions about work life, taxes, tithes, etc. and information about spreading the gospel and praise and worship. The greatest commandment of all after loving God with all our being is to care for others, especially the lowest among us. This is how people will identify us as believers — by the love we share with and show to others. If we are honest, we do not always follow this command as we should.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

James began this chapter by encouraging us to press through the trials we face, for they are necessary in developing our whole being. Not only do our trials make us whole, they help us to reach our full capacity in order to be effective in the kingdom.

So, it is no surprise that James ends the chapter by telling us how we are to handle difficult situations: we are to be ready to hear what is being said. By listening intently, we leave very little room for snappy or quick responses. It also keeps us from swelling with anger. This positions us to use what we’ve learned to bring freedom and salvation to others, which we are commanded to do.
Lesson 10  

We are not only to listen to God’s Word, but also follow the Word’s commands.

**SANKOFA**

“Does the practice of our religion reflect the God we serve?” – Ken Pell

1954 was the year Brown v. Board of Education was finalized. The case was named after Rev. Oliver Brown, an AME pastor. The United States rendered laws establishing segregation in public schools unconstitutional. It was concluded that the separate schools were not equal, and states needed to be intentional and deliberate about ending the separation. However, southern states were not pleased with the ruling and ignored the judgment of the Supreme Court. Some white southerners boycotted their schools which were forced to segregate, while others lined up in droves and boycotted black southerners who dared oblige the ruling of the court.

In New Orleans, Louisiana, and Little Rock, Arkansas, despite the straightforward and non-negotiable command, white southerners opted not to be doers. They proclaimed to be Christian, but their actions and words presented an uglier, hateful side. As a result, the villainous behavior of those against segregation rang loudly. Pictures and audios of their evil towards black students are forever part of their history. Their unrighteousness and refusal to uphold the command tempted them to keep black students in the bondage of unequal educational settings. But, with the help of the National Guard and federal government, the students were liberated, and the schools integrated.

“There’s a lot of people who talk about doing good, and a lot of people who argue about what’s good and what’s not good, but there are other folks who just put their lives on the line for what is right.” – Robert Coles, *The Moral Life of Children*
It is taught that being a hearer and not a doer is like someone looking into a mirror, but not able to picture their face once (s)he is away from the mirror.

James 1:23-24 is often interpreted as a statement of physicality. It is taught that being a hearer and not a doer is like someone looking into a mirror, but not able to picture their face once (s)he is away from the mirror. But, that is not the total truth. Verse 24 ends with the phrase “forget what they were like.” It does not say look like. It says were like, bringing attention to the person’s manner or quality of being.

This phrase goes beyond the
The right Word pricks our heart, motivates us to change, and inspires us to be better.
have responded to these as actions that do not match God’s Word. Are there other examples in current events that demonstrate how believers’ actions do not match God’s Word? Share and discuss.

**CLOSING DEVOTIONS**

“What does being a doer look like?”

Over the next few days, take the time to look through today’s text and identify all the ways we are to be doers. Write your list below. Take time each morning (or evening) and ask yourself: Am I a doer in this way? How so?

Ask God to reveal to you which areas of your doing need to be stronger, and if it is your desire, pray that God strengthens your action in these areas.

Remember, “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.” James 1:25

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**HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

**August 3 – August 9**

**Monday**
Leviticus 19:13-18 (Impartial Relationships with One Another)

**Tuesday**
2 Thessalonians 1:3-5, 11-12 (Praised for Steadfast Faith in Persecution)

**Wednesday**
Luke 6:20-26 (The Poor Blessed; the Rich Criticized)

**Thursday**
1 Peter 3:13-19 (Suffering for Doing the Right Thing)

**Friday**
1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (God’s Choice—the Foolish, Weak, Lowly)

**Saturday**
James 2:1-7 (Treat the Rich and Poor Impartially)

**Sunday**
James 1:19-27 (The Wise Hear and Do Good)