

Wisdom for A New Year – A Study in the book of James
James 1:19-27- For Best Results Follow The Instructions
February 2 & 3 2008

1. If you want to grow spiritually...

be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. James chapter 1, verses 19-20 (930)

- Great advice for relationships!
- James is primarily talking about my ability to hear God's voice.
- Anger closes our mind and heart to God's truth.
- Unresolved anger will hinder your ability to hear God.
- Simple instructions can be the most powerful.

Q. Is the pace of your life slow enough to hear the voice of God? What priorities must change for you to listen better?

2. Living a Godly life is a choice!

So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. James chapter 1, verse 21 (930)

- Sin clogs my spiritual ears.
- Get on the offensive when dealing with your sin.
- We can't grow unless we see our sin for what it is...
- While I am indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit it's my choice if I allow Him to do His work.
- God's word never leaves me.
- I have to own the responsibility of my spiritual growth.

For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are.

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12 (922)

“Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise.”

Colossians chapter 3, verse 16 (904)

3. Listening without obeying causes confusion.

But just don't listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise you are only fooling yourselves. For if you just listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.

James chapter 1, verse 22-24 (930)

- ❖ “But just don't listen” or “just don't audit the course” BE A DOER!!
- ❖ Listening minus obedience causes the circumstances of life to unravel.
- ❖ God's word reveals who I am, who God is and what he's doing.
- ❖ God has a plan for your life. Do you know it?

But if look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

James chapter 1, verse 25 (930)

God's blessing is within reach!

4. Real faith means loving God and loving people!

If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are just fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us.

James chapter 1, verses 26-27 (930)

- ✓ Our verbal actions speak louder than our religious activity.
- ✓ "pure and lasting religion" - care for those in need & live in purity.
- ✓ *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35*
- ✓ *Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." Matthew 22:37.*

Some questions for further thought and study:

1. Ask those close to you if you are quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry.
2. Look in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) to see how Jesus interacted with people.
3. Read Ephesians chapter 4 to discover more about how our anger can control us.
4. What does it mean to "be angry and not sin"?
5. Is there someone your angry at that you need to speak to?
6. How does God use the Bible in my life? Read Hebrews 4:12
7. Read Romans chapter 1 to determine how rejecting God's truth is dangerous.
8. What is the one attitude that angers God? - Hint Romans 2:5
9. How do you measure your spiritual growth? Through knowledge or the way James describes "real religion"
10. How does Jesus evaluate real faith? Read Matthew chapter 25.

Next week: Real Religion – James 2:14-26