

# The Mirror of the Word

## I. Being a Doer of the Word

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Witnessing is not limited to what you say; it is your lifestyle. How can our *words* magnify God if our *lifestyle* does not? Those people whose words do not match their behavior are considered hypocrites. (Matthew 23:13-29) Whatever we do in *word* or *deed*, we are to *do* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Colossians 3:17)

*Being a doer of the Word* is what James is talking about in his epistle. He is tired of his congregation coming to church week after week, receiving the Word of God, and doing nothing with it. He hears them talk about the Lord one minute and gossip about people the next.

### James 3:11-12

*Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?*

*Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.*

James is probably one of the greatest pastoral epistles in the Bible. His book is the only one written by the pastor. Paul writes all the others to the pastors or to other apostles or churches. This distinction makes the Book of James very applicable to us today.

In the first chapter, James talks about the stability of the Word and the power of the Spirit in our lives. He talks about faith and not being tossed around by every wind of doctrine or the waves of life. All of this leads to living a lifestyle of holiness. When the seed of God's Word is planted inside you, it should produce fruit in your life.

There are stages of development in the Christian life. We start by being born again and receiving God's Word. First Peter 2:2 refers to new believers as newborn babes who desire the sincere milk of the Word. As they start to grow, they become strong so they can witness before the world. In addition to witnessing, they need to learn how to live a life of holiness before the Lord. I often see people who have come to church for years, take in God's Word, and not live it before the world. The world needs

to see the Word of God in action as we display its truth and power in our lives.

## **James 1:21**

*Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

The greatest battle in the Christian life takes place in the soul, as our mind and emotions seek to pull us in a direction contrary to the Word of God. Therefore, our emotions need to line up with the Word of God. We need to pull every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5) We do that by opening ourselves to receiving the Word of God with meekness. That engrafted or implanted Word has the ability to save our souls from the pressures of life.

## **James 1:22**

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

We are to receive God's Word and change our thinking. Once our thinking has changed, then we need to become doers of the Word. This is where works becomes an issue, and James emphasizes the importance of works in the Christian life throughout the rest of the book.

Many believe the Book of James does not belong in the Bible. He discusses the heroes of faith in chapter two including Abraham and Rahab. In both cases, they were justified by works, and people have said that contradicts Romans where Paul says we are justified by faith. (*Romans 3:28*) However, the issue of justification by faith is not the issue of the Book of James. James assumes we know we have been born again by faith. He assumes we know we have received the righteousness of God without works, but we cannot dismiss the significance of works for our works become the greatest witness we have to the world around us.

Wouldn't you rather *see* a testimony than *hear* a testimony? The world thinks the same way. They *hear* evangelists on television and the radio and they are waiting for us to be that example before them. They are waiting for us to be that living witness known and read of all men. (2 Corinthians 3:2) They want to be able to examine and scrutinize our lives and still see Jesus Christ in every word and every action.

If you are only hearing the Word but never doing the Word, you are deluding yourself. It is not established in your heart. The ultimate purpose of the Word of God is not to inspire you to come to church or to receive prosperity or healing. The ultimate purpose of the Word of God is to transform your life in such a way that other people will be born again through your witness. The Great Commission does not command us to go into all the world and get money or health. Although health and provision are wonderful side benefits for those who believe and receive God's blessings, the Great Commission instructs us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creatures by living it out before them, and make disciples of all nations.

## **II. The Word of God As a Mirror**

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### **James 1:23-25**

*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:*

*For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

*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.*

Are you looking for a greater blessing in the Christian life? You have probably been blessed at one time or another by receiving revelation from God's Word or by hearing an exciting sermon. Or, you may have been blessed when you believed God for finances and the finances came. Those are all wonderful blessings, but they are not the greatest blessing. The greatest blessing is when you see someone else's life changed through your testimony! James is saying that you haven't even seen blessings until you become a doer of the Word of God and see people's lives changed. Your ultimate goal should be to affect people in a positive way by your life and your testimony.

The Word of God is like a mirror — it shows you what you are *and* what you can become. Romans 8 tells us part of God's plan is that we should be conformed in the very image of the Lord Jesus Christ. God accepts us as we are, but He doesn't leave us as we are. God is so pleased with Jesus that He wants to stamp out a little Jesus everywhere He goes. The end result is God wants us to look like and act like Jesus in every facet of our

life. You may have a long way to go, but you have also come a long way since you have been born again. Every day we look into this mirror of God's Word and, as we grow and continue in the Word of God, we look a little more like the image of the One we want to be like.

Many Jews believed on Jesus as Lord and Savior as He was preaching to them in John 8. He told them in verse 36 that if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed. However, you can know the truth, but if you don't walk in it, it will not make you free.

## **1 Corinthians 13:12 (NAS)**

*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.*

The dim mirror is the Word of God. The dimness of it is that we don't totally understand ourselves yet. There are revelations of the Word of God yet to be understood. We look into the Word and we see things more clearly today than we did a year or two ago, but there are still things in the Word of God to be understood.

We will stand face-to-face before God until the day we stand in heaven. No matter how long we live on earth, our understanding will not be complete until we get to heaven. Then, we will understand everything and become just like Jesus. However, each day we gain a little more insight into His Word and become a little more like Jesus.

Mirrors of the ancient world were different from our mirrors today. Their mirrors consisted of polished copper or polished brass. As a result, those mirrors always reflected a distorted view. The more polished a mirror was, the better its reflection, but even at their best, such mirrors were not like our mirrors of today.

## **2 Corinthians 3:18**

*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

An open face is an unveiled face reflecting the glory of Jesus Christ. The Greek word for *changed* is *metamorphoo*, which means *to transform*. It is where we get our word *metamorphosis*. We are changed, or metamorphosed, every day into the same image as Jesus, being changed

from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord until we ultimately reach the full glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. How do we do this? By studying, meditating, and continuing in the Word of God.

This was the secret of the success of the early church: they *continued*. (Acts 2:42) In John 8:31, Jesus told them, "*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.*"

### **III. Continually Looking in the Mirror of the Word**

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James is frustrated with his people because they treat the Bible like a natural mirror by being a hearer of the Word only and not a doer. We don't behold our natural face in the Word; we behold our natural face in a natural mirror. Therefore, we behold our spiritual image in our heart through the Word. The Word shows us what our real man looks like on the inside — the hidden man of the heart, the one that can be changed. Paul said the outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is renewed day-by-day. (2 Corinthians 4:16)

As in James' day, the Church of today treats the Bible as a natural mirror. We take it out only when we need it. Unless we're on some kind of ego trip, most of us don't look in a mirror all day. We look in it when we get ready in the morning. We fix ourselves up for the day and walk out the door. If there is a problem or someone makes a comment about our hair being a mess, the first thing we do is head straight for a mirror. But when everything is okay, we forsake the mirror and go on our way.

James is telling us that the Bible is not like that type of mirror. The Bible is the mirror you must continue in all day long. Not only are you to carry it all the time, you are to become a mirror to reflect the image of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world around you.

#### **James 1:23-25**

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*For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

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Over the past few years, the message of faith and of the Word of God is not as popular as it used to be. Many people don't follow after the Word like they used to and don't come to church as often as they used to. They are seeking after new things. Some may be seeking after greater moves of the Spirit and get so caught up in the hype of it all that they get bored with the Word of God.

### **Philippians 3:16**

*Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*

Paul is warning us and saying that the Word brought us to the level we are on so we shouldn't change in the middle of the stream. Whatever brought you to this level of maturity will continue to take you on into maturity. The Philippians were getting bored like many Christians today get bored with the Word of God. We have all been in that spot — looking for something new and exciting to the point that regular church services seem boring, studying the Word becomes boring, or the pastor's preaching is boring.

Across the body of Christ, we have many who take in the Word, but don't do anything with it; therefore, they lose their excitement. In Revelation, John spoke of the church of Ephesus losing their first love. Many Christians have lost their first love. How do we get it back? By witnessing. You will experience ultimate joy when someone accepts Jesus right in front of you. The joy of the Lord will flood you from head to toe. Don't walk around asking, "Should I or shouldn't I minister to that person?" Just do it! Be bold! If you see someone who is sick, they do not want to remain in that condition. You don't have to give them long scriptures and intricate doctrine, you simply have to lay hands on them and pray for them.

The Great Commission says to go into all the *world*. The *world* is not *Christians*; the *world* is *sinner*s. When Peter and John came upon the lame beggar at the Gate Beautiful, they didn't ask him if he was born again because healing is only for Christians. They grabbed him, pulled him up, and he began walking, leaping, dancing, and praising God. He then joined them as they went into the temple. I imagine that between the third and fourth leap, he probably received Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He was witnessed to not only by words but by actions and deeds.

James told the people they were using the Word like a natural mirror. They would pull it out only when they had a problem or when they were a little disarrayed. Then, when the problems lightened up, they put the Word away, just as you would put a mirror down after fixing your hair. James wanted them to *continue* in the Word.

The word *continue* means *to travel along beside*. It doesn't mean we are to carry our Bible with us everywhere we go, it means we are to take His Word and hide it in our hearts. Hiding His Word in our heart is the way we carry His Word with us everywhere we go. We are not just looking at a Bible; we *are* a Bible. We are not just reading scriptures; we *are* Scripture. This is what it means when it says we are that perfect law of liberty. Being a doer of the Word before the world is how we experience the joy and excitement of the Christian life!

#### **IV. Justified Before the World Through Works**

##### **James 2:21**

*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*

Although Abraham was justified before God by his faith, he was justified in front of the people when he was willing to offer Isaac on the mountain.

What about Rahab? When was she justified? She probably accepted the Lord years before the children of Israel got there, so when she saw them, she said, "I know your God is the God of heaven and of earth." (Joshua 2:11) She had already accepted the Lord, but the world *knew* Rahab was justified when she hid the spies — when the Word of God and the testimony in her became visible to the world, she became a witness to those around her.

God wants us to be witnesses to those around us. We were justified before Him when we got on our knees and accepted Him as Lord and Savior, but we are justified before men when we become the living, breathing testimony of the Word before them. Unfortunately, many Christians would have to hang their head in shame because the world doesn't even know they are saved. Their lives and conversation are no different from unbelievers around them.

Do you wonder what happened to your joy? Do you wish you could get it back? Try becoming a living witness before the whole world. Let that mirror on the inside of you be visible to those around you. Walk, talk, and act like Jesus Christ in everything you do. You have no excuse not to. None of us is perfect and none of us has “arrived” in the Christian life. However, each of us can take what we have received from the Lord and live it before the world.

It is great that you come to church, but does the world know you are a Christian? It's time for you to let the world know you are a believer. I'm not saying you have to go out and be stupid. Sometimes when people witness, they say stupid things. Paul warned the Corinthians about stupid people and putting ridicule upon the Gospel. But don't go to the other extreme of hiding your lamp under a bushel. It is time to yank the basket off and be the salt and light before the world.

James is saying the ultimate blessing in life is being a doer of the Word of God and living out the reality of it before everyone around you. God wants to bless your business if you will just open your mouth and your life and start being that Christian He wants you to be. Stop being embarrassed to speak of Jesus Christ.

A man once told me about a time people around him were cursing a blue streak, so he looked at them and began saying, “Amen. Hallelujah. Praise Jesus. I love Jesus. Hallelujah, glory to God.”

They asked him, “What are you doing?”

He said, “I just want equal time.”

The world is blatant about being sinners, why can't we be blatant about being a Christian? You may have to work around some obnoxious sinners. Why not act like a Christian and find out if the One in you is greater than the one in that sinner? (1 John 4:4) Put it to the test by living what is inside you. We are to receive the Word and the blessings it brings *and* take it to the world and show them that Jesus Christ is the Savior.

The Word has been hidden in our hearts. (Proverbs 2:1) The Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psalm 119:105), and it is powerful unto us. (Hebrews 4:12) It is time to pull the mirror of the Word out, keep it out, and become a doer of the Word and not a hearer only!