

How to Deal with God's Word

James 1:16-27

I. What is the Word?

A. v16-17 - It is good.

1. Every gift from God is good & beneficial to us.
2. The word is **perfect** (τέλειος) = complete, mature.
3. God doesn't change or vary His purposes for us.
 - a. **Change** (παραλλαγή) & **shift** (τροπή) are astronomical terms for planets & stars changing their positions in the sky.
 - b. Although God is the creator of the "heavenly lights" (the stars & planets), He doesn't change like they do!

B. v18 - It conceives you.

1. **Give us birth** (ἀποκυέω) = conceiving, the father's role in the birth process.
2. The word of God - the gospel preached to you - plays the father's role in spiritual conception.
3. I Pet 1:23-25 - For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.
4. As a reborn creature you are now the **firstfruits**.
 - a. A technical term for offerings taken to the Temple = the first & best from the crop.
 - b. You are now the offering presented to God - God's personal possession!

II. How Do You Receive It?

A. v19a - Receive the word eagerly - "be quick to listen".

1. People don't listen very well in our society. **ILL: "Pass the Potatoes"**.
2. Lord Jesus said to receive the kingdom of heaven like a little child (Matt 18:4-5).
 - a. Little children are eager to learn.
 - b. Little children are humble.
3. Lord Jesus said to be like sheep listening to their shepherd (Jn 10:4).

B. v21 - Receive the word in humility.

1. **Humility** (πραΰτης) = gentleness, meekness, restraint or openness.
2. The word of God is planted by God in your heart when you hear it preached.
3. **ILL: Parable of the Sower** (Matt 13:1-8, 18-23).
4. The word will save you by conceiving you into a born again creature.

C. v25 - Receive the word intently.

1. **Intently** (παρακύπτω) = to stoop down to look at - so to put some effort into looking.
 - a. You notice that you have dirt on your face only after looking intently in the mirror.
 - b. A person remembers only about 20% of what he hears; 40% of what he hears & sees; but nearly 80% of what he actually does!
 - c. Doing something cements that concept into your memory!
 - d. This is why the military stresses "hands on" training as much as possible.
2. **Jam 4:17 - Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.** It's imperative that you live out the word of God - not just listen to it.

III. How Do You Demonstrate It?

A. v19-20 & 26 - Be cautious when you speak it.

1. Proverbs warns about being slow to speak.

- a. 10:19 - When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.
- b. 13:3 - He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.
- c. 17:28 - Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.
- d; 29:20 - Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

2. v19-20 - Be slow to anger - legalistic & judgmental attitudes don't produce the results God wants!

- a. **ILL: The attitudes in my legalistic church.**
- b. Ketcherside: "I'm tired of being angry!"

3. v26 - **Keep a tight rein** (χαλιναγωγέω) on your tongue = to lead a horse by a bridle. Zip the tongue!

B. v27a - Help people in need.

1. Women.

- a. Had very few rights.
- b. When her husband died she was often destitute with no money or protection.

2. Orphans.

- a. A child had no rights.
- b. An orphan was often homeless & had to resort to begging in the streets.
- c. **ILL: Aladdin, the street wise kid "had to steal to eat".**

C. v27b - Make a clean break with the world.

1. You can't make going to church a substitute for obeying God.

a. Micah 6:6-8 - With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

b. Matt 9:13 - But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'

2. v21a - You've got to get rid of the moral filth!

- a. **Get rid of** (ἀποτίθημι) = take off your clothes.
- b. **Moral filth** (ρυπαρία) = the dirt in clothes & the wax in your ears.
- c. Get the wax out of your ears so you can really listen to the word!

The pure fact of the matter is - the world is looking at your walk, not your talk! If you want to make an impact on your world for Lord Jesus, put God's word into your life!