

Faith Without Works is Useless

An Expository “Journey” Through the **Epistle of James** 8- Humbly Receiving the Word Implanted Unto Obedience

April 25, 2021

James 1:19-25

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;

20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

To the Glory of God

Now there are several phrases that all mean the same thing.

- How we act
- The fruit we bear
- How we live our lives
- How we conduct ourselves in this Life

... these phrases are simply different ways of understanding the same thing- our “Behavior”.

And through the Centuries- Mankind has spent an enormous amount of money and an enormous amount of time trying to figure out WHY people do what they do. And the lost world has developed various “Sciences” that seek to

understand Human Behavior- like Psychiatry; Psychology; and Sociology. And even though the various “Schools” of these Sciences *fundamentally* disagree with each other- they all seem to be in perfect Unity about one thing:

The Bible is wrong about what it teaches about Human Behavior

All of the various “Schools” of Psychology and Psychiatry and Socialism *fundamentally* disagree with each other about two things:

1. What is wrong with people
2. How to fix them

Another way of saying this- is to say that there is NO Consensus between the Sciences of Human Behavior about the reason they all exist in the first place- other than to agree that the Bible is hopelessly naive about what it clearly and repeatedly teaches. And that means that all of those greatly respected Sciences that seek to understand Human Behavior have something in common with each other: They all miss the main Point.

Where you must begin, when trying to understand why people do what they do- is that our Behavior doesn't just pop up out of the ground. No, our Behavior- the way we live our lives- is predicated on two other things:

1. Who we are
2. What we believe.

1. Who We Are

“Who we are” goes much deeper than “what we do”. “Who we are” has to do with our Nature- not our actions. And the inspired, inerrant; infallible Word of the living God teaches that every single human being- born after the Fall of Adam- has a “fallen” Nature; a “rebellious” Nature; and a “sinful” Nature. And the Bible goes on to teach that this fallen, sinful, and rebellious Nature loves two things:

1. Self
2. Sin

... and everything lost people do- is predicated on those two Loves. And loving Self and Sin comes very *easy* to the fallen Nature- it doesn't have to be taught. The “DNA” of the Nature of all people born after the Fall is to genuinely love Sin and Self. In **John 3:19**, Jesus said,

This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

... and please notice that Jesus did NOT say that lost people “Do” the Darkness- but that they LOVE the Darkness. And that means that all humans- as soon as they are able- will *naturally and normally* begin to love themselves and to love the Darkness (Sin).

But what is NOT normal and what is NOT natural to the fallen, sinful, and rebellious Nature is to love God; or to love the things of the Spirit of God. Loving God is completely *abnormal* to the fallen Nature. Here is what the Apostle Paul taught about this from **1Corinthians 2:14**:

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Now notice that the Apostle taught that the “Natural Man” or the “Fallen; sinful; rebellious; lost Person “does not” do something.

... a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God ...

The lost person- the people with fallen Natures- “does not” ACCEPT. Now the word, “ACCEPT” comes from a Greek word (*dechomai*; Strongs #1209) that means: *to receive something deliberately; to embrace; or to welcome heartedly*. So, what is it that the fallen Nature of lost people does not receive deliberately; or embrace; or welcome heartedly?

... the things of the Spirit of God

Now what are the “things of the Spirit of God”? Things like Salvation and the “Product” of the Holy Spirit- the Scriptures. But *why* don’t lost people welcome heartedly; and receive deliberately; or embrace either Salvation or the Scriptures?

... for [because] they are foolishness to him

Now the word, “foolishness” does NOT refer to something light-hearted or silly like the “foolishness” of a clown. No, this word comes from a Greek word (*moeria*; Strongs #3472) that means: *absurd; senseless; or insanity*.

So, because the lost person (who has the fallen Nature) naturally and normally sees Salvation and the Scriptures as being totally absurd or senseless or insane- he *voluntarily* chooses- as an act of his Will- to NOT receive; embrace or welcome them.

And that would be bad enough- but it gets worse. Look what the Apostle wrote at the end of the verse:

... and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Now this Problem does NOT involve an Act of his Will. This is about not having the Power or the Ability to understand either Salvation or the Scriptures. Why? Because everything having to do with the Spirit of God must be “appraised” or “valued” or assigned Worth- *spiritually*- meaning: with the Help of God the Spirit. And because they are lost and fallen- they do not have the Spirit of God in them.

And so, they *do not* love God- because they *can't*. And they *cannot* love God- because, in their fallen State- they don't *want* to. And this is NOT what they “do”- this is “who they are”.

2. What We Believe

“What we believe”- has to do with who or what we love; who or what we trust in and embrace; and who or what we confess. But the effects of being “fallen” are so devastating and so pervasive- we can't simply “choose” to begin to love God. We can't exercise our Will-power and “make a Decision” to believe. We can't suddenly just begin to embrace Jesus. No, our fallen State prevents that.

And so, if anyone- in that fallen Condition- is going to love God; and trust in Jesus; and embrace the Gospel; and believe and be saved- God has to do something in them and to them and for them- *sovereignly* to “bring about” or “cause” them to believe the Gospel; and *enable* them to love God; and to *permit* them to embrace Jesus; and to *grant to them* both the Desire and the Ability to trust in the Scriptures. And this is what Dr. Luke recorded that the Apostle Peter said in **The Acts 5:29-32:**

**29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.
30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross.
31 He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**

32 And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

Here, we see that God is the One, Who “grants” both Repentance and Forgiveness. Now the word, “grant” comes from a Greek word (*didoemi*; Strongs #1325) that means: *bestow or give*. And this word has to do with being the CAUSE or the ORIGINATION of something else. So, because we are fallen- we need God to be the Cause of several things that we need in order to be saved:

- Belief
- Hope
- Trust
- Love for God
- Embracing the Gospel as true

But these things are more than simply what saves us in the beginning. They are also the Attributes that determine how we are going to function in this Life. Because it is *impossible* to live or act- long term- in *contradiction* to what you truly believe; and to what you truly love; and what you have trusted in; and what you hope in; and what you have genuinely embraced. So, every human on earth *always* acts in *accord* with what they believe.

And that means that the long standing; pervasive; public; blatant; and ongoing Activities of an individual- reveal not only what that person is *doing*- but what he *believes*. And what a person *believes* determines WHO that person *is*.

For example, as we navigate through Life- every human on earth is confronted with Disappointments. Friends, Family, even Work associates- periodically don't act the way they should. And, many times, we are disappointed at the way that these people act; or how they treat us. And, there are times, that close friends or family members turn on us and treat us terribly- and we taste the bitter cup of Betrayal.

And that hurts. It hurts very badly. And the Temptation, at that moment- is to act the way the lost world acts- when they are betrayed. Yet the Bible is not silent about Betrayal. Nor is it silent about our Pain and our Suffering and our Hurts. And the Bible tells us how to respond when we are happy; or when we are sad. It tells us how to live our lives in wonderful times and when we suffer as a Christian.

Now in the second Sermon in our verse-by-verse “Journey” through **James**- I told you that the various Statements by the half-brother of Jesus are actually

different “Tests” or “Proofs” that show us what being saved looks like. And **James** has 15 of these “Tests” or “Proofs”:

1. The Test of Perseverance in Suffering (1:2-12)
2. The Test of Confronting Temptation (1:13-18)
3. The Test of Speaking and Doing According to Scripture (1:19-25)
4. The Test of “True” Religion (1:26&27)
5. The Test of Impartial Love (2:1-13)
6. The Test of Godly Works (2:14-26)
7. The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)
8. The Test of Godly Wisdom (3:13-18)
9. The Test of Worldliness (4:1-12)
10. The Test of Boasting (4:13-17)
11. The Test of Wealth (5:1-6)
12. The Test of Enduring Patience (5:7-11)
13. The Test of Making Oaths (5:12)
14. The Test of Prayer (5:13-18)
15. The Test of Pursuing the Brethren (5:19&20)

.. and all of these Tests show us how to live our lives- in a way that glorifies God. Now in the Passage that Brother Jeff just read to us- the half-brother of Jesus and the first Pastor of the Church at Jerusalem presents a *third* Test of a true, genuine believer:

The Test of Speaking and Doing According to Scripture

The *first* Test was how believers should respond to Trials (1:2-12). The *second* Test was how genuine believers should respond to Temptation (1:13-18). And this *third* Test is how people, who have genuinely experienced the Miracle of the New Birth should *respond* to the Truth revealed in the Word of God (1:19-25).

Now another way of looking at this is to say that verses 22-25 show us what verse 21 looks like. In other words, in verse 21- James said,

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

... and verses 22-25 illustrate what receiving the implanted Word in Humility looks like.

So, if we actually do “receive with Humility the Word of God that has already been implanted in us” (by a sovereign Act of God)- James says we will respond to that “receiving” by then DOING what the Word tells us to do. Yet there are other ways for us to “receive the implanted Word.”

For example, if we receive the already implanted Word- *suspiciously*- we will *hear* the Word (as it is continually preached and taught) and we will *say* that we believe it. But our minds and hearts will NOT be *convicted* by the Word; our lives will NOT be *transformed* by the Word; and we will *continue* to live as though we never heard the Word at all- because we have NOT become convinced that the Scriptures are true- *especially* when the Bible contradicts what our own mind or our own experiences tell us. And James says that this is NOT receiving the already implanted Word- in Humility.

And if we receive the already implanted Word- *partially*- we will *hear* the Word (as it is continually preached and taught) and we will *say* that we believe it. But our minds and hearts will NOT be *convicted* by the Word; our lives will NOT be *transformed* by the Word; and we will *continue* to live as though we never heard the Word at all- because we still want to reserve the right to pick and choose which parts of the Word we want to obey. And James says this is NOT receiving the already implanted Word- in Humility.

And if we receive the already implanted Word- with *cocky Self-assurance*- we will *hear* the Word (as it is continually preached and taught) and we will *say* that we believe it. But our minds and hearts will NOT be *convicted* by the Word; our lives will NOT be *transformed* by the Word; and we will *continue* to live as though we never heard the Word at all- because we went about to obey the Word in our own Strength and with our own Ambition- using our own Will-power. And the net result will be that we will grow in our Pride and Arrogance and Self-Righteousness in our own supposed “Spirituality” and we will become a Pharisee. And that will NOT bring any Glory to God at all. And James says this is NOT receiving the already implanted Word- in Humility.

And there is really only one way we may KNOW that we have received the already implanted Word in Humility. We *respond* to that “receiving” by:

... prove[ing] yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

... so, we hear the already implanted Word (as it is continually preached and taught) and we say we believe it. And we then *prove* that we DO believe the Word of God and we *prove* that we HAVE received the already implanted Word- in Humility- by struggling- against the lusts of our flesh (by the Power of the Holy Spirit) to be humbly and joyfully submitted to the Authority of Scripture in our daily lives- all to the Glory of God.

Now at this point- I need to remind all of us that our effort to obey the Word of God or “DO” the Word- will NOT be without fault. So, yes- we will obey. But our Obedience will be a WEAK Obedience; a FRAIL Obedience; a CLUMSY Obedience; and an INCONSISTENT Obedience. So, we will obey- we will DO the Word. But our Obedience will NOT be Perfect or Flawless or Sinless. But as we *continue* to obey- our Obedience will get better. And the Awkwardness and Clumsiness and Frailty and Weakness and Inconsistency of our Obedience will gradually fade. And those Characteristics will be replaced with a Joy and a Familiarity and a Comfortableness and a Consistency with what the Bible says and how to go about to obey.

But there will be times when our Obedience will go through phases of being a Duty and an Obligation- rather than a Joy. So, because of our Flesh- we will have to struggle, at times, to Obey. And because of this fallen world *System* in which we live; and because of the devil, who roams to and fro throughout the earth- seeking whom he can devour- we may temporarily lose sight of WHY we are called to obey; and HOW we, as believers, are to obey. And those times are part of what it means to grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ.

But even though our Obedience will be imperfect- God will be honored- because we will learn HOW to put all these pieces together; and HOW to trust in Jesus; and HOW to depend on God; and HOW to “Do the Word” to God’s Glory; and HOW to receive the already implanted Word- in Humility.

Another way of understanding this Passage is to know that James is teaching here that, “Talk is cheap”. *Anybody* can say they believe the Bible. And *anybody* can say they are receiving the already implanted Word in Humility. But James teaches here that the only people, who actually are receiving the already implanted Word in Humility- are those who *prove* that is true- by actually DOING what the Bible says to do.

So, it is this godly Humility that fuels our efforts at *altering* the way we live our lives; and *modifying* our behavior; and *submitting* ourselves to the Authority of Scripture- to the Point where how we live- is in accord with what the Bible reveals.

And that means that it is Human Pride; and Arrogance; and Self-righteousness that *rebels against*; and that *resists* this humble Submission; and Altering; and Modification.

Now, anytime the Issue of Obedience comes up- it becomes obvious that many, who are part of the modern Church- either don't understand WHY the Bible speaks so frequently about it; or they see no connection between Salvation and Obedience. Far too many within the modern, visible church- see Obedience to God's Word after being Justified- as something that is entirely optional. Now they will agree that Obedience is certainly better than Disobedience. But they place little or no eternal Importance in God's people striving to DO the Word and not simply hear it. But as you read and study the Bible- you begin to see very quickly that God's people obeying God's Word is a huge part of why God saves us in the first place. For example, God the Holy Spirit "moved" on the Apostle Paul to write a very familiar Passage in **Romans 10:9** that says,

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

... and this verse is quoted frequently to illustrate that Salvation comes by way of believing and confessing- rather than through performing religious Duties; or by partaking of Communion; or by being Baptized; or by any other humanly engineered Activity.

But now look carefully at the very next verse that says:

Romans 10:10

for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Now the Reality is that verse 10 *proves* verse 9. In other words, verse 10 shows WHY a lost person is saved by believing and confessing and NOT by doing "Good Deeds" or by performing religious Duties. Verse 10 begins with the word, "For"- meaning "Because".

So, HOW are lost people saved by confessing Jesus is God and by believing that God raised Jesus from the dead? Two reasons. BECAUSE...

1. **with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness**
2. **with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.**

... so, the Result of Confessing correctly *and continually* that Jesus is fully God- is Salvation. How? The Power to save is NOT in merely repeating words about the Jesus' full Deity- but rather in us *trusting* in Jesus' full Deity- for what that Faith in Jesus' Deity will do for us. You see, because Jesus is fully God- He is able (and willing) to forgive our Sin. So, as we continually confess; and hope; and trust; and

believe in Jesus' Deity- we are saved. Because Salvation comes by way of us continually allowing Faith to reach out and embrace the God/Man- Jesus.

But Paul also said that the Result of truly believing (and hoping and embracing and trusting) in the literal, physical, and bodily Resurrection of Jesus from the dead- is us agreeing with God that EVERYTHING Jesus was; and EVERYTHING Jesus said; and EVERYTHING Jesus did- was in *perfect* Accord with the Will of God. It is verifying that ALL that Jesus was and did- was done in *perfect* Submission to God the Father's Word; and it was carried out by being *perfectly* led by God the Holy Spirit. Because *that* is the Testimony of the Resurrection. You see, the Resurrection of Jesus was God's unmistakable Sign that He was fully pleased (and was fully honored) with EVERYTHING Jesus was and EVERYTHING Jesus did. And Faith in WHO Jesus is and WHAT Jesus did- is what saves us.

But notice that Paul said that the Result of believing correctly about WHO Jesus is and WHAT Jesus alone has done is... Righteousness! Paul said,

... with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness

... in other words, trusting in Jesus and in His finished Work by Faith alone- results in Righteousness being connected to us- from two different angles:

1. Justification is about the spotless Righteousness of Jesus being imputed to us- by Faith alone
2. Having the new Nature (through the Miracle of the new Birth) and being Justified- creates in us the persistent Desire to honor God- by striving to obey the Bible

Now most of us understand the importance of Righteousness. In order for anyone to enter into Heaven and be with God forever- that individual MUST be just as Righteous as God Himself is Righteous. And every false and Man-made religion teaches that we have to "do something" to develop our own, personal, intrinsic Righteousness to the point where it is perfect and spotless. And the only real difference between the various false Religions- is in what they teach we have to "Do".

But Christianity teaches that human beings simply can't do enough to develop their own, personal, intrinsic Righteousness to the point where it is perfect and spotless. And so, we are "made" Righteous- through the imputation of Jesus' Righteousness (that He earned by living a sinless Life) that we personally receive- through the Agency of Faith alone.

So, the Righteousness that allows us to enter into Heaven- is NOT our Righteousness. It is NEVER our Righteousness. It is a *foreign* Righteousness; an *external* Righteousness; an *alien* Righteousness; and a *forensic* Righteousness- that has been draped over us- by a sovereign Act of God- called, “Imputation”.

Okay- but what is NOT commonly taught or believed anymore is that after we are saved- we are *commanded* to strive to obey God and His Word.

2Thessalonians 3:13&14

But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.

Hebrews 13:20&21

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

1Peter 1:1&2

To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

James 4:17

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

... which are simply different ways to illustrate how we are to live our lives- *after* we have received the Miracle of the New Birth.

But the very *best* Statement about the Command to obey God after Salvation came from the Lips of our Savior, Who said,

John 14:15&24a

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. He who does not love Me does not keep My words...

... and here- Jesus connects our Love for Jesus to keeping God’s Commandments- which is simply a different way of understanding Obedience. And when we *obey*

God's Commandments- we are "Righteous." When we *disobey* God's Commandments- we are Unrighteous. And that tells us that "Righteousness" is simply another way of understanding "Obedience".

So, there are two different kinds of "Righteousness":

1. The imputed Righteousness of Jesus
2. Our own personal Righteousness

It is the *imputed* Righteousness of Jesus that allows us to go to Heaven. And this *external* Righteousness is graciously given to us- by a sovereign Act of God- during the part of Salvation called, "Justification". It is this Righteousness that makes us immediately "fit for Heaven". And this Righteousness is made real to us- through the Agency of Faith alone.

But we also have our own, *personal* Righteousness. And while our personal Righteousness will NEVER be perfect enough to allow us entrance into Heaven- we DO "develop" our own Righteousness. And we develop our own Righteousness by and through striving to obey God and His Word. And so, as we strive to obey God and His Word- our own, personal Righteousness gets better and better. And *this* is the way that saved people prove their Love for Jesus and honor God. Look at what Jesus taught about this from **John 15:1-11**:

1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

Now keep in mind that there are several phrases in the Bible that are simply different ways of understanding the same thing:

- Bearing Fruit
- Keeping God's Commandments
- Loving Jesus
- Serving God
- Following Jesus
- Being Obedient
- Doing the Word

... and all of these phrases have to do with us being Righteous.

Now look again at what Jesus said in verse 2:

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

So, every single person (branch) that is truly "in" Jesus (real convert) or that *appears* to be "in" Jesus (false convert) will experience one of two things:

1. They will be pruned (cut up)
2. They will be removed (cut off)

The branches that are truly "in" Jesus- bear fruit. They display godly characteristics. They love, serve, and follow Jesus. They strive to obey God and His Word. They develop their own personal Righteousness. Or in the words of James- they receive the already implanted Word in Humility and respond to that received Word by DOING the Word- obeying the Word- not merely hearing it.

The false converts, however, will eventually all be cut off from the Vine. Jesus said,

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away... If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

... and let us agree that this is NOT Heaven.

But *why* did God cut these false converts off? Because they bear no fruit. They DON'T strive to obey. They DON'T love, serve, or follow Jesus. They aren't developing their own Righteousness. They may hear the Word- but they DON'T do it. So, this proves that they did NOT receive the implanted Word in Humility. And that proves that these people were never saved to begin with.

Now that *could* mean they aren't chosen by God for Salvation. But it could also mean that they ARE chosen- but they simply have not received the already implanted Word in Humility- yet. And they know that- because they are not DOING the Word. *This* illustrates how important it is to God that we obey Him after we are saved. But how do we know this? Because Jesus said,

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

Now keep in mind that Jesus didn't say that false converts simply *don't* bear fruit. No, Jesus said they CAN'T. Why? Because the only way that *anybody* can bear fruit; the only way that *anybody* can love, serve, and follow Jesus. The only way that *anybody* can genuinely strive to obey Jesus and develop his own personal Righteousness is by "abiding" in Jesus. And lost people simply can't do that.

So, what Jesus is teaching here is that fruit bearing; or loving, serving, and following Jesus; or striving to obey God and His Word after Salvation; or developing our own personal Righteousness- is part and parcel to what it means to be saved. The Apostle John said,

1John 3:10

By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Now John did NOT say, "Anyone who has not been MADE Righteous by Jesus through Imputation is not of God" (Imputed Righteousness)- but, "**Anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God.**" And that is speaking about our own personal Righteousness. And the lack of "practicing Righteousness"; or the lack of "fruit bearing" or the lack of "Doing the Word" is why God cuts off the false converts. They care nothing about Obedience. Okay, but why does God prune the genuine converts? Jesus said,

... He [God] prunes it [the fruit-bearing branches] so that it may bear more fruit

But *why* does God do that?

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

So, two things here:

1. God is glorified when we bear MUCH fruit
2. Bearing MUCH fruit proves our Salvation
3. Pruning helps us to bear MUCH fruit

So, part of what it means to be saved- is that God has put in us- the Desire to live our lives to the Glory of God. All saved people, genuinely desire to please the Lord and bring Him Glory. And that is why Jesus says here that us bearing MUCH fruit glorifies God and proves that our Conversion was genuine.

So, this isn't about us obeying God if and when it is convenient. Or when we feel like it. Or if we choose to. Or on Sunday morning in Church. No, bearing MUCH fruit; loving, serving, and following Jesus; striving to obey God and His Word; developing our own, personal Righteousness; or DOING the Word- is WHY God saved us! It is the BEST way we can glorify God. It magnifies the Worth and Value of Jesus *more* and *better* than anything else. And that is why Jesus said,

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Who we have become in Jesus, through the Miracle of the New Birth and What we believe and trust in and hope in- should shine *through us* into the Darkness of this world. Okay, but *how* does “Who we are” and “What we believe” shine through us? By us bearing fruit. By us obeying God. By us DOING the Word. By us loving and serving and following Jesus. And by us receiving the Already implanted Word- in Humility.

But it isn't enough for us to simply strive to do this. Because there is one more level to all of this. In verse 11 Jesus said,

These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

So, we should obey God- *joyfully*. We should *delight* in our striving to develop our own, personal Righteousness. We should *celebrate* that our Salvation

has enabled and empowered us to love, serve, and follow Jesus. We should *rejoice* that our Salvation give us the privilege of glorifying God through our much fruit-bearing. Nothing should make us *happier* than not merely hearing God's precious Word- but actually DOING it!

Finally, look again at what James wrote in verses 22-25:

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

So, we prove beyond any doubt that we have received the already implanted Word in Humility- by “doing” the Word- by striving to obey it- by “practicing” Righteousness- and NOT merely *hearing* it or *saying* we believe it.

Now back in New Testament days- mirrors were typically made of highly polished brass or bronze. And those mirrors were very primitive compared to glass ones (which were not developed until the 14th Century). Those mirrors gave a dim and distorted reflection of the person using them. But by carefully turning the mirror and finding the best light- a person could eventually see a fairly accurate image of his face. And this is what James had in mind. By careful and patient observation of his efforts to “Do” the Word- a person can eventually discover what he actually looks like (Who he is).

But when he stops looking at himself and walks off- not caring whether he is being obedient to God- the person like that immediately forgets what he has just seen. And it is this “Forgetfulness” that is the point of James’ analogy. Whether, because of distraction, or not being pleased with what he saw, or simply because of a poor memory- all the careful looking suddenly becomes wasted. Whatever the original purpose was for looking at himself- is quickly forgotten.

A person who looks at God's Word, even if it is carefully and accurately done, and yet does not apply the Truths he has discovered to his own life, is like someone who immediately forgets what he has just seen in a mirror- except that the consequences are eternal.

He sees his Sin portrayed for the horrible Evil that it is- and he also sees God's gracious Provision in Christ for a Remedy- yet he goes on his way as if he had never been exposed to those Realities. But now look again at verse 25:

But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

The person, who, by God's Grace, looks intently at the Word of God (the perfect Law- the Law of Liberty) is NOT trying to get away with *anything*. He truly *wants* to know if he is right with God. He doesn't *want* to displease the Lord. He *desires* to obey. He is genuinely trying to love, serve, and follow Jesus. He cries out to God- to bear MUCH fruit. He is dead-earnest about developing his own, personal Righteousness- so that God will be glorified.

And James says here that this person doesn't merely look intently at the Word- he then "abides by it". He applies the Word to his own life- gladly. And James says that not only is a person like this NOT a forgetful hearer- but an effectual DOER- he then goes on to say,

... this man will be blessed in what he does.

O to be blessed by God! And thanks be to God that He has given us insight into just how we may be blessed. Dear friends, we must become DOERS of the Word and NOT merely those who *hear* and *say* we believe what God has said! And Jesus said if we will be people like this- we will bear MUCH fruit. And God will be glorified; and we will prove that we are genuine Disciples of Jesus- and our Joy will be full!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

