

James 1:19-21

Only one book transform us – The Holy Scriptures – **2 Timothy 3:16, 17**

- The Bible is *profitable for teaching* that is, it tells us what to believe
- It's also good *for reproof* that tells us where we are wrong
- *Correction* that tells us where we are right, literally it stands us up on our feet
- The Bible is profitable *for training in righteousness* that is, it tells us how to do what is right
- It's profitable for *correction* that tells us how to get right with God
- And for training *in righteousness* that tells us how stay right

Paul told Timothy to “*train himself in the word for the purpose of godliness*” (**1 Timothy 4:7**). The word for “train” is “*gumnazo*” which means to exercise for a long time and / or to work strenuously.

That creates an entirely different image for the average Christian who would rather hear from God in a text message, sermonette, or some quick video.

1. Come prepared to actively listen (Vs. 19)

- Verse 18 “... *the word of truth that brought us to life*”
- Verse 19 “*be quick to hear*”
- Verse 21 “receive the word with humility”
- Verse 22 “be doers of the word and not a hearer only”
- James is talking about listening eagerly to the word of God

“You’re facing difficult trials . . . you’re facing dangerous temptations—the point is, who are you listening to? Maybe the reason you aren’t passing the test or overcoming the temptation is because God’s word is the last place you go.” [Tony Evans]

“The media saturation of our society has a dulling, deadening effect on us; we are bombarded by visual stimulation, which conditions and diminishes our ability to listen ... western society today has become an eye-oriented rather than an ear-orientated culture. This tendency to depend upon the eye has grown, and our ability to listen has atrophied from disuse.” [Ken Ramey]

2. Remain silent

From the text the adjectives, “*quick*” and “*slow*” do not describe our action but our attitude. In this context, the reference to being slow to speak means you are slow to talk back.

“Frankly, you may not like what God’s word is saying. You might want to argue with God’s word—if not audibly, in your hearts and minds.” [Warren W. Wiersbe]

In the context of verse 19 spiritual maturity is demonstrated and gained when instead of talking back to the Word of God, we keep quiet.

3. Have teachable spirit

The implied digression – begins with not listening. It proceeds to talking back and then finally, it explodes in anger and effectively shuts down the process of maturing. The context is anger with God because of what His word demands.

Verse 20, “*the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*” James is saying, “Anger with God does not bring about right living before God, rather it hijacks the process.”

Telling people the truth often turns them against you. James starts out in **verse 19** so kindly with, “... *my dearly loved brethren...*” Paul who asked the Galatian believers, “*Have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?*” (**Galatians 4:16**)

* James’ point ... an angry spirit is never a teachable spirit.

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4. Clean our lives

The Apostle Paul uses the same idea of putting aside sin as if it were taking off dirty, putrid clothing. He wrote to the Ephesians, *“In reference to your former manner of life, lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new self, which in God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” (Ephesians 4:22-24)*

“Put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self...” (Colossians 3:8-9)

The word translated “filthiness” is “*rhuparia*” (ρυπαρια), a word used for both dirty clothing and moral defilement.

“The word James uses here for “wickedness” is a word that denotes moral evil and corruption which may never be expressed outwardly, but may reside in the heart as one of many hidden sins that only the Lord and the individual are aware of.” [Spiros Zodhiates]

The word in verse 21 translated, “all” means “all that remains of wickedness.” In other words, deal with the abundance, the excess, the prevalence. That doesn’t mean you’re going to get rid of it all and achieve perfection because it is a battle throughout our life.

It does mean that we are willing to deal with all the excess that remains in us and around us. James is saying that spiritual maturity means you are growing more and more intolerant of both external sins of the flesh, and internal hidden sins of the heart.

One of the marks of maturing in the Lord is that you are growing more and more troubled over sins that may have not bothered you before, but it does now. * **1 John 3:8-9** informs us that a true Christian cannot continue in a sinful pattern.

“There are certain things which God does not choose to do for us. We are supposed to exercise every bit of our will and determination—and find the cooperating power of the Holy Spirit once we do—to put away the filth and the wickedness from our lives.” [Spiros Zodhiates]

5. Maintain a heart humble

Receive the implanted word. How do we receive something that’s already implanted within us? The planting of the seed has already taken place. The living word of truth, like a seed, has been buried in the soil of our believing heart at conversion. So receive it, which means welcome it, nurture it, water it, tend to it, and take care of it.

James here wants us whenever troubled, to listen to the Word, our divine tutor, for passages of thanksgiving and praise. When we are troubled to dig here for words of comfort, encouragement and strength. In times of confusion to search for wisdom and direction. When tempted to search out God’s standards of purity and righteousness and for power to resist temptation.

The Word becomes the source of deliverance from temptations and trials. It becomes our most welcome friend, not only because of what it preserves and protects us from, but also because of what it delivers us to, an intimate, loving communion with our heavenly Lord.” [John MacArthur]

Application:

What actions in my life demonstrate that I actively listen to God’s Word and not find argument against it? What words describe my resolve to be silent, hear, and meditate on God’s Word? What in my life would show I am teachable?