



INTRODUCTION

Welcoming the Word into your heart involves work, just as having company into your home does. James gives us a three step process to being good hosts in welcoming the Word.

THE _____ FOR WELCOMING THE WORD (1:19-21)

Listen up!, James demands. He doesn't want us to miss what he is about to say. He is giving some family rules of conduct ("my beloved brethren"). These are details for preparing to welcome the Word.

- A. We must ready our _____ (vv.19-20)
- B. We must remove any _____ (v.21)
- C. We must receive with _____ (v.21)

Application: When the Word hits close to home, we most naturally respond with defensiveness, indignation, even anger. However, when God's Word confronts us in our sin, we must not get angry with the truth. So we make preparation to welcome the Word into our hearts by opening our ears, zipping our lips, and suppressing the urge to strike back.

THE _____ FOR WELCOMING THE WORD (1:22-25)

James is going to demonstrate two ways of handling God's Word. He presents a contrast between one who hears and acts with one who simply hears.

- A. The _____ participant is passive (vv.22-24)
 - Listens ⇨ Looks ⇨ _____ ⇨ _____
- B. The _____ participant is active (v.25)
 - Listens ⇨ Looks ⇨ _____ ⇨ _____

Application: Even in the midst of our hectic schedule and lives, we need to make time stop and study the Word. Allow the word to penetrate your heart and be absorbed into your mind. Think deeply, obey willingly, respond positively, and practice constantly the Word. You have not really listened to the Word if you have not obeyed the Word. The bottom line is that the Word evokes action, and if there is not action from the Word, then clearly there has been no acceptance of the Word.

THE _____ OF WELCOMING THE WORD (1:25-27)

True Christian faith will have outward expression. Just as a healthy apple tree can be identified through the fruit it produces, a healthy Christians will be productive also. James points to three "fruits" as evidence of the believer who is a doer of the Word.

A. It produces _____ (v.25)

B. It produces _____ (v.25-26)

Application: When there is no divorce between God's words and our words, that's real Christianity. Does your 9-to-5 talk-time square with your early morning quiet time? Does your Monday through Saturday speaking conform with the Sunday preaching? When we are moved by the needs of others and it leads us to action, that's authentic Christianity. Genuine faith touches people's lives. When our works benefit those around us in tangible, observable ways, we are living out our faith.

C. It produces _____ (v.26)

Application: Instead of allowing the lies of secularism to dirty our testimony, we must let the truth of God's Word wash us clean, making us stand out in the world around us. The contrast should be obvious. When our upright lifestyles contrast sharply with the crooked norms of our surrounding culture, that's real Christianity. Sympathy with suffering and separation from sin demonstrate the operation of living faith in the heart.

CONCLUSION

The Word of God is crucial to man's quest for understanding himself and his world. James has explained that all men live in a world where outward circumstances are often difficult, and where inward pressures lead fallen men in paths contrary to God. Only if help comes from outside himself can man solve his problems of outward trouble and inner evil. That help is found in God alone. He has given us His Son to save us, His Spirit to sanctify us, and His Word to guide us. Genuine faith will rightly relate to the Word. Real faith welcomes the Word.



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