

Greater Pleasant Branch Baptist Church

Connect Learn Grow

Wednesday Bible Study- Theme: Pathways to Spirituality

Review of the Book of James

Lesson # 8- March 17, 2021- Prepared by: Pastor Artee Williams

2021 Bible Study Motto “ Simply put, we must practice the spiritual disciplines,that form pathways to the heart of God and transform us into godly people.Training- not trying is the key.” The Complete Book of Discipleship by Bill Hull

I. Subject: Hearing alone is insufficient- James 1: 19-21

II. Big Idea

In this section of chapter 1, James connects verses 19- 27 with verse 18 regarding the “ word of truth “. The word “ Wherefore “ serves to connect these verses and James seeks therefore ,to show the connection of the power of the word to not only bring salvation but also to bring believers to spiritual maturity/spirituality.

James insisted that his readers should conduct themselves by the spiritual principles and standards detailed in verses 19-27. The word that brings salvation is the same word that provides the biblical standard for believers to grow in Christlikeness.

In verses 19-21 James commands and instructs believers to demonstrate by their conduct the change in their character.

III. Key Thought

The word of God is not just for information but for transformation.

IV. Key definitions, commands, spiritual principles and spiritual disciplines

1. Let- Is an imperative verb, communicating a “ Command” . Let means to take place, to happen, to let be or to exist.
2. Swift to hear- Is an adjective that conveys the idea of fast or hastily. James is commanding believers who have received the “ word of truth” for salvation to also eagerly receive , understand and obey the message of the word for sanctification and spiritual maturity.
3. Slow to speak- Slow is an adjective that in this case places emphasis not on being slow while speaking, but to be slow in beginning to speak. The appeal to be slow to speak demands silence until a believer has understood and applied the message.James is demanding self restraint unless our reaction to the message be hasty or ill-informed.

4. Slow to wrath- refers to anger, indignation, or retribution. It also means hostile or bitter feelings. Believers cannot receive, understand or obey God's word if they remain distracted with resentment, hatred or vengeful attitudes.
5. To summarize, verse 19 is teaching that a wise believer is one who obeys the "word of truth", and carefully develops responses and answers with cautious words.
6. In verse 20, James used the word "For" to help introduce the reason behind what he taught in verse 19 about an attitude of wrath, anger, bitter feelings, hostility;etc
7. In so many words James is teaching that the anger prohibited by verse 19 is not so much a destructive temper as simmering hostility and mean-spirited feelings.
8. So we have to understand that anger is a waste of energy for believers, it can produce division and be motivated by selfish ambition. Angry words and deeds cannot produce purity and peace- see James 3:17 and Proverbs 29:22.
8. The word "worketh" in verse 20 means to do or accomplish, and conveys the spiritual principle that the wrath of man can never be an acceptable tool for advancing or accomplishing the righteousness of God.
9. James is very clear that some of his fellow believers were quick to teach/speak but slow to learn and obey the word of God. So teaching that is not based on understanding and application is just information that cannot lead to transformation.
10. Can it be that a believer becomes angry because of what the word of God exposes in his own heart ?
11. In verse 21 James calls for believers to have a different response from the one mentioned in verse 20. James details a three part "Command" for believers to: (1) Remove sin from their lives, (2) Receive with humility the word of God and (3) Reward- obtain the reward for removing sin, receiving the word of God in humility which is that component of salvation that leads to transformation of the believers character into the character of Christ. Transformation of the believers character is the "Reward" for hearing, receiving, understanding and obeying the word of God.
12. James teaches that since the word of God is like a "Seed", it has to be placed in good "Soil", that is a heart ready to receive it, a heart in which sin has been removed and in which the word of God can be engrafted or implanted.
13. James concludes that receiving the word means to welcome the word and allow it to take hold in your heart with a "sense of urgency" to apply it to your life.

V. Application

1. Identify and describe spiritual principles and spiritual disciplines in James 1:19-21.
2. Why does controlling what and how we speak give evidence of obedience to God's word?
3. Why should believers eagerly and urgently obey God' word ?
4. In what way will you apply this lesson to your heart and life ?