

Bible Studies for Life: November 13

Obey God's Word • James 1:19-27

By Laura Lee Leathers



Leathers

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Today's lesson takes us back to the book of James. It's time to take another test regarding our spiritual walk – obeying God's Word. As Christ's followers, how do we act upon what we know? The answer should be, "We display the truth and value of God's Word as we live it out" (LifeWay).

Because we love Jesus, we will obey. It's difficult. What we must remember is that this isn't something we're able to accomplish on our own. It requires relying upon the Holy Spirit, who lives within us and empowers us to be obedient. Take a moment to read John 14:15-24 and note what Jesus taught.

Respond to God's Word with humility (James 1:19-21 NKJV). As we discussed previously, note the tenderness of how James addresses his audience as beloved brethren. Out of love, he gives the following three commands: "swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath."

Are you eager to study God's Word? Is it a top priority in your life? Do you absorb and memorize the Word? To be quick to hear the Word means habitually running to it.

Slow to speak and wrath reminds the reader to be cautious. The word, "wrath," (v. 20) comes "from the Greek word that describes a deep, internal resentment and rejection, in this context, of God's Word" (James, Guidelines for a Happy Christian Life, John MacArthur).

James goes on to write that Believers are to "lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness," which means to put off

sin before the Word of God is received. Unconfessed sin blocks our ability to know the Scriptures.

“Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls,” takes us back to the prophet Jeremiah and the promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-33. What a beautiful promise: “I will put My teaching within them and write it on their hearts (v. 33).

Next, look at Ezekiel 36:24-27: “I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”

We are saved by receiving the Word, and the Word moves us to act and to be obedient.

Obey the commands of Scripture without delay (James 1:22-25).

You’ve probably heard the phrase, “Believers aren’t called to sit and soak but to serve,” or as James puts it, be a doer of the Word, not just a hearer – and if you aren’t a doer of the Word, you’ve made a miscalculation and are deceiving yourself.

The reference to a mirror in verse 23 describes mirrors made of bronze, silver, and sometimes gold. A person could adequately see themselves and what they looked like, but not perfectly.

Do you remember your parents reminding you to check your appearance in the mirror? Why did you need to return? Because something was wrong. You needed to go back to the mirror to deal with making a change or improvement.

How easily we forget what the Scriptures say. We must continually reflect upon the Word and apply the precepts to our lives.

Underline or circle verse 25. It’s a wonderful verse of encouragement. As we look into the revealed, inerrant, sufficient “perfect law of liberty,” the Spirit enables. We

move from being a forgetful hearer to a doer of the Word – application.

Our encouragement comes from the joy and peace in knowing we have been obedient – blessing and reward.

Our faith is worthless if our words and actions do not line up (James 1:26-27). One final caution: if you don't bridle your tongue, you are deceiving your own heart and your religion is useless.

Next, "pure and undefiled religion" is measured by compassionate love and is demonstrated through ministry to orphans and widows. This is mentioned many times throughout the Bible.

In closing, here is a summation of this passage from *The Guidelines for a Happy Christian Life*:

"Genuine believers receive Christ and continue in Him. They hear His Word and do it. They know His commandments, and they keep them. They do not claim to know God yet deny Him with their deeds. The validation of salvation is a life of obedience. It is the only possible proof that a person really knows Jesus Christ. If one does not obey Christ as a pattern of life, then professing to know Him is an empty verbal exercise."

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