

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Stop Kidding Yourself

James 1:19-27

Part Four

What is the theme of James? Tests of Living Faith! This epistle was written so that we might know whether or not we are saved. What is the first test that we find in the book of James? “The Response to Trials test.” This test is found in **James 1:2-18**. We have now begun to consider the second test of living faith and that is the “Response to the Word test.” This test is found in **James 1:19-27**.

The proper response to the Word, first of all involves a “proper reception.” And a proper reception means we will need to receive the Word of God in such a way that it becomes implanted. Our reception must not be superficial but deeply personal. Not every heart is prepared to receive the Word in this way. For the word to be properly received so that it becomes implanted and bears fruit, we must have a submissive heart. A person with a submissive heart will be seeking to be obedient to the commands of Scripture and certainly they will be seeking to be obedient to the three commands that we find in **V. 19**, **“This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.”**

What is the meaning of each of these three commands? The key to answering this question is recognizing that the immediate context is not talking about our relationships with people in general but rather more specifically our relationship with the Word of God. It is the Word of God that we are told in **V. 18** brought us forth and it is that same word **“implanted which is able to save our souls”** in **V. 21**. We therefore need to understand each of these commands in light of our response to the Word of God. What is the meaning of the first command?

“Quick to hear” The person who is “quick to hear” will be actively seeking to understand as much of the Scriptures as possible through his own efforts and he will also be putting himself in a position to come under the teaching of others. A person who is “quick to hear” has an appetite for the word. What is the meaning of the second command?

“Slow to speak” The person who is “slow to speak” will be careful to prepare himself morally and biblically before speaking. Ezra is a good example of such a person. In **Ezra 7:10** we read, **“For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel.”** What is the meaning of the third command in **V. 19**?

“and slow to anger.”..... The person who is “slow to anger” will take the time to discern whether the anger that he may choose to express is from the flesh or from the Spirit. He will not be rash or impulsive knowing as **V. 20** tells us **“that the anger of man will not achieve the righteousness of God.”**

A person who practices these three commands can be described as a person who has a “submissive heart.” But we need more than a submissive heart if we are going to receive the Word properly. We must also have a PURE HEART.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

A PURE HEART

Let us read **V. 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.**” Notice the word “**therefore.**” James is simply by using the word “**therefore**” calling for a different response in **V. 21** than the response alluded to in **V. 20**. In **V. 21** James is saying, “**Therefore make sure that you don’t express that kind of anger.**” And while we are on the subject, James goes on to say, don’t do anything else that’s evil as well.”

Let us look at **V. 21** again, “**Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness.**” The Greek expression “**putting aside**” gives us the picture of garments being stripped off. In **Acts 7:58** it is used in the literal sense, but in the New Testament the term is generally used metaphorically of stripping off those things which are evil.

Romans 13:12 “**the night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside (strip off) the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.**”

Eph. 4:22 “**that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside (strip off) the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.**”

Col. 3:8 “**But now you also, put them all aside (strip them all off): anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.**”

We need to be about this work of putting off or stripping off evil and what we find in various places in the New Testament we find here in James as well. The passage says, “**therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness.**” Hopefully you are continually coming under conviction about new areas of sinfulness in your life; confessing them and forsaking them. Some professing believers seem very indifferent toward this process of identifying sin, confessing and forsaking sin. But this should be a source of joy in our lives. It should be a joyful thing to be taking off, putting off, stripping off what James calls “filthy” garments.

What is the meaning of “**filthiness?**” “Filthiness” speaks of wax in the ear (The Greek word is RHUPOS, from which comes the word RHUPARIA which strictly speaking is used of wax in the ear). Why not another word? There could be many other Greek words used to speak of filth. Why was this one chosen? I believe it was chosen because sin, such as the anger of man, prevents the Word of truth, which is the focus of this context, from reaching our hearts, very much like ear wax can prevent sound from reaching the ear drum.

What is the meaning of “**all that remains of wickedness?**” The expression translated all that “**remains of wickedness**” (PERISSEIAN KAKIAS) literally reads “abundance of evil.” The NAS translates it here in such a way that it would give the impression that we are to deal with the residue or the remainder of sin in our lives. But I prefer the NIV translation which translates it, “**the evil that is so prevalent.**”

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

The phrase “**the evil that is so prevalent**” communicates to us very clearly that this work of putting off or stripping off “**filthiness**” and “**wickedness**” is no small endeavor. The depths of our sin is enormous. Some people will find what I am saying distasteful. Some people might believe that what I am saying is psychologically destructive, but I would hope that each of us would understand that this is absolutely not so. In fact, the truth is that the more aware we are of the depth of our wickedness and the more aware we are of the awesomeness of God’s holiness, the more astounded we are by the magnitude of God’s love that He manifested toward us at the cross.

When I first became a Christian I thought that I was a sinner but not all that bad. I also knew that God was holy, but I don’t think I fully appreciated what that meant. Because of this rather limited view of my sinfulness and God’s holiness, the cross of Christ which was God’s expression of love for me was not so terribly overwhelming. This perspective has changed significantly over the years. Now I understand much better the gulf that the cross of Christ had to bridge. It was not here to here (ILLUSTRATE WITH HANDS)). But rather the gulf that the cross of Christ had to bridge was from here.... (ILLUSTRATE USING THE WALLS OF THE AUDITORIUM). When I now think of Christ’s work on the cross on my behalf, it is overwhelming to me. It motivates me to want to live my life pleasing to Him.

In **2 Cor. 5:14-15** it says, “**For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; (15) and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.**” I have no problem wanting to strip off or put off my filthy and wicked garments. I want to do this. It is a joyful thing. But more than a joyful thing, it is a loving thing. I have to do this.

Notice the emphasis on “**all.**” God is never satisfied with partial purity, partial goodness, partial righteousness. There is a temptation that comes to every Christian and that is to minimize the sinfulness of sin in their own life. We are prone to talk about big and little sins, thinking that the big sins are what matters while the little ones - a white lie, an angry word, an offensive remark are basically all right. There is no sin, no matter how small, that we should not root out of our lives. This includes the fleshly response of anger to biblical instruction. If we apply ourselves to this task of putting off those things which are evil, then we could in a very real sense say that our heart is PURE.

If we are going to receive the Word properly, we need to receive the Word with a submissive heart which is manifested by being obedient to the three commands found in **VV. 19-20**. We will also need to receive the Word with a pure heart, which is emphasized in the first part of **V. 21**. Finally, we need to receive the Word with a HUMBLE HEART and we find this in the very last part of **V. 21**.

A HUMBLE HEART

Let us again read this section of Scripture: “**Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness (or better “All the evil that is so prevalent”) in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.**”

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

The putting off of sin is a necessary step to take before we can **“in humility receive the word.”** **1Peter 2:1-amp;2** makes the very same point, **“Therefore putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, (2) like newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to righteousness.”**

My wife’s father wrote on the inside cover of a Bible that was given to Lynn these words, “This book will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this book.” If you are a professing believer and you find yourself not desiring to read the Word, I can tell you categorically that you have a sin problem. If you are a professing believer and though you are reading the Word but you are finding it dull and uninviting and this has been your experience over a period of time no matter where you are reading in the Scriptures and no matter how rested you are, I can tell you categorically that you have a sin problem.

We have been commanded like newborn babes to long for the sincere milk of the Word, and if you are not experiencing this but rather are neglecting the Word or coming to it only grudgingly, then you should know that you have a sin problem. When genuine born again believers are putting aside filthiness and wickedness in their lives, they will long for the Word and they will in humility receive the Word.

What does it mean to receive the word **“in humility?”** The word translated humility (PRAUTES) means “mild and gentle friendliness” (Kittle). This attitude is being contrasted to the sinful expression of the anger of man alluded to in **V. 20**. James is calling these professing believers who have put off **“all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness”** to receive the word **“in humility”** or in other words with **“mild and gentle friendliness.”** What prepares us to receive the Word in this way? It is the putting off of sin.

If we receive the Word of God with a “SUBMISSIVE HEART,” meaning that we are quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; if we receive the Word of God with a “PURE HEART,” meaning we are putting off all filthiness and that remains of wickedness.” and if we receive the Word of God with a HUMBLE HEART, receiving the word with mild and gentle friendliness in contrast with a spirit of hostility that would characterize the anger of man, the Word will become implanted in our lives. AND HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT THE WORD CONTINUES TO BECOME IMPLANTED?

Look again at **V. 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.”** What does **“which is able to save your souls”** mean? The verb “to save” (SOSAI) is an aorist active infinitive. The present tense would have pictured the process of the Word delivering believers from the destructive consequences of sin, but the aorist in this context simply views the process as an accomplished whole. In other words, if we in humility continue to receive the word implanted, we can be assured of our ultimate salvation, the accomplishment of the whole. We can be confident that our soul will in fact be saved.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Should those who are here this morning who have at some point in their lives in humility received the gospel of Jesus Christ so that it become implanted in their hearts, be concerned that they will not continue in humility to receive the word of truth so that it becomes implanted? No, this is the very point of this passage. Those who have been brought forth by the Word of truth which we saw in **V. 18** will continue to respond to the Word in the same way that they initially received it and this reception will continually reinforce to them that they can be assured of their ultimate salvation when they see Jesus face to face.

Why is it so important that the Word continues to become implanted? It is a testimony to us that we in fact have a living and saving faith. We cannot be satisfied with just casually interacting with the Word. If we say that we in fact have embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way that it became implanted, we must continue to embrace the Word in the very same way throughout our Christian experience. If we in fact see this, then we can be confident that our soul will in fact be saved.

CONCLUSION

We are considering the tests of “living faith.” The first test was the “Response to Trials test.” The second test is the “Response to the Word test.” A proper response to the Word begins with a proper reception. And a proper reception involves preparing our heart to receive the Word. This means that we need to have a **SUBMISSIVE HEART, A PURE HEART, AND A HUMBLE HEART**. And if we have prepared our hearts in this way ,the Word when it is received, will become implanted.

LORD, GIVE ME A SUBMISSIVE HEART

A HEART THAT IS HUNGRY TO FEED UPON YOUR WORD
A HEART THAT TREATS YOUR WORD WITH CARE
BIBLICALLY AND MORALLY PREPARING MYSELF BEFORE I SPEAK
A HEART THAT WILL NOT BE PROVOKED TO ANGER
EVEN WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE MOST DIFFICULT OF DEMANDS

LORD, GIVE ME A PURE HEART

A HEART THAT I HAVE CAREFULLY PREPARED TO RECEIVE YOUR WORD
THROUGH THE PUTTING AWAY OF ALL FILTHINESS AND WICKEDNESS.

LORD, GIVE ME A HUMBLE HEART

A HEART THAT IS ABLE TO RECEIVE THE WORD PROCLAIMED
WITH A MILD AND GENTLE FRIENDLINESS

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

LORD , I PRAY THAT I WILL DO THIS JOYFULLY
KNOWING THAT THROUGH THE IMPLANTED WORD

MY SOUL HAS BEEN SAVED FROM THE PENALTY OF SIN
MY SOUL IS BEING SAVED FROM THE POWER OF SIN
AND ONE DAY WHEN I AM WITH YOU FACE TO FACE
MY SOUL WILL BE SAVED EVEN FROM THE VERY PRESENCE OF SIN.