



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Sunday, August 28 – September 3 (B) – James 1:17-27

Focus: *Doers of the Word*

word of life

“But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.” (James 1:22 NRSV)

Read James 1:17-27

The lectionary uses excerpts from the Letter of James for the next five consecutive weeks. Addressed to the twelve tribes of Israel (descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob) scattered throughout Syria, Asia Minor and Europe, this book of the Bible is filled with practical advice for Christians. Thus, the writer begins with words of encouragement for Christians to keep the faith, praying and rejoicing at all times. Tests and trials help Christians mature and grow in wisdom. (See James 1:2-16)

1. *What do you know about the Letter of James?*
2. *How easy or difficult is it to follow Jesus in daily life?*

The author encourages and expects God’s word to be rooted and nurtured in the life of the Christian. This “implanted word” in our hearts is intended to produce fruit. (James 1:21 NRSV) “Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation of shadow due to change. . . so that we would become a kind of first fruits of [God’s] creatures.” (James 1:17-18 NRSV)

3. *How does God’s word get “implanted” in followers of Christ?*
4. *What does it mean to be the first fruits of God?*

For James, it is all about doing the word, living the faith, and walking the walk of Christianity. Faith in Christ produces concrete ethical responses and a changed life—every day. Despite trials and difficulties, Christians are to practice self-control.

His advice on listening, speaking and dealing with anger is good counsel: “. . . let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger. . .” (James 1:19 NRSV) Our words can cause division and can be hurtful. Consequently, we are encouraged to bridle our tongues. (See James 1:26 NRSV)

5. *What would it be like if everyone would be quick to listen?*
6. *What are the implications of being slow to speak?*
7. *What are the advantages of being slow to anger?*
8. *How might we “bridle our tongues”?*

We are to be “doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.” (James 1:22 NRSV) Pure religion includes hearing, believing, and acting. The results include a) self-control, b) concern for those in need and c) resistance of evil. Pure religion produces fruit of the implanted word growing to maturity. Christians hear the word, but also hear the cries of the hungry, distressed, and lonely. Hearers of the word become doers of the word.

9. *How do you define pure religion?*
10. *What does it mean to be a “doer of the word”?*
11. *Give examples of hearing the concerns of those in need and responding.*
12. *What makes it difficult to respond to those in need?*

Word among us

Cousins sat around the table, reminiscing over the good times growing up. As usual, their conversation drifted to memories of their beloved grandpa, a quiet giant of a man. They all agreed he had a special way about him and always tried to make others feel special as well.

He didn't talk about his faith, but they knew his faith in Christ was the core of his being. It's why he delivered vegetables from his garden to a family who was hungry, helped his neighbor after a fire burned her house, and the list goes on. He wasn't one to show up on Sunday morning worship and then forget what he heard. He tried to live his faith daily.

He was not a talker, but in the best sense, he was a doer of the word.

1. *Describe characteristics of someone who is a doer of the word.*
2. *Who do you know who is a "doer of the word"?*

We can learn a great deal what it means to be a Christian when we watch others who take seriously living out their faith on a daily basis—those who walk the walk. What a blessing to see others trying to apply the teachings of Jesus to their daily life. That includes the basics—talking and listening. We are to be "quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger." (James 1:19 NRSV)

3. *Which if any of these three actions do you find easy?*
4. *How do we learn to be "quick to listen"?*
5. *What makes it challenging to be "slow to speak and slow to anger"?*

This letter of James reminds us to not leave the teachings of Jesus in the church pew, but to actively engage God's word in the way we live life. James uses a phrase "the implanted word". It is like a seed planted deep in our heart and spirit. Encouraged and nurtured by the Holy Spirit, hopefully the implanted seed grows and bears fruit.

6. *What does it feel like to have God's word implanted in us?*
7. *What would life be like if we never heard God's word?*

faith practice in daily life

Live among God's faithful people

We are invited to hear, believe and act. That includes becoming a hearer and doer of God's word.

Hearing the word and doing the word are intended to be one action—undivided in daily practice. The best way we learn to "do the word" is to live among God's faithful people. But Christians do not live in isolation, but we are encouraged to move beyond the safety and comfort of our churches to a world hungry to be fed with the love of Christ.

8. *What can we learn from interacting with a Christian community?*

Prayer

God, by grace alone we become hearers and doers of your word. Open our ears to your word and to our neighbor in need. Amen.

last word

Meditate this week what it means to be
a doer of the word.

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