

## James – Doing the Work of God Js. 1:21-27

### Introduction:

This is one of the most important topics that we can deal with in our daily lives. We are required by God to do good works. We live in a “religious” society that says “faith alone” will save you. However, this is as far from the truth as one can get. It is vitally important to understand that we, as Christians, must go about doing good. In no way are we saying that we can earn heaven; but without doing good works we cannot go to heaven.

One thing that we notice from these passages is that it is not “faith against works;” but rather it is “faith with works.”

### I. The first person is the one who hears the word of God, but is not a doer of that word (1:21-24).

- A. James says that the person who only hears the word of God and does not do it deceives himself.
  - 1. We deceive ourselves because we believe a lie.
    - a. It is simply not true that hearing the word of God will save us.
    - b. It takes some kind of action, or work, that we will talk about later in this lesson.
    - c. Anyone who thinks they can hear the word of God and not obey its commands is deceived.
  - 2. It is by hearing that word of God that we develop our faith.
    - a. **Rom. 10:17** - So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
    - b. **Js. 1:21** – James encourages us to “receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”
      - 1) In order to receive that implanted word we must first hear the word of God.
      - 2) We must also believe it to be true.
  - 3. In order to have that hope of eternal life, we must hear the word of God.
  - 4. The problem comes not in the hearing, but in putting what we hear into action.
  - 5. Notice again what James says (**1:22**).
- B. To illustrate this point, James tells us of a man who looks at his face in a mirror (**1:23-24**).
  - 1. He observes himself (indicating that he sees things that may need improving).
  - 2. Yet he “immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”
  - 3. If we are hearers only of the word, and do not put those things into practice, we are just like this man.
- C. Hearing the word of God is important.

1. However, while it is important, it is also important to do what God says.
  2. “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only.”
- D. The first person that James talks about is the one who hears the word of God, but does not do the word of God.

## II. The second person is the one who hears and does the word of God (1:25-27).

- A. James tells us to be a doer of the work (1:25).
1. In the context, James gives us two things to do.
    - a. Control our tongue (1:26).
    - b. Visit widows and orphans (1:27).
  2. According to James (who wrote by the inspiration of God), we must be doers of the work.
    - a. There is something for us to do as Christians.
    - b. Remember, James wrote to teach us how to live our daily lives.
    - c. We should constantly be doing the work of God.
- B. Notice how our actions must go along with our faith (Js. 2:14-26).
1. James gives us the illustration of a brother or sister who needs things for this life (2:15-16).
    - a. Obviously, it is not good enough to tell them to be warm and filled and then not do anything for them.
    - b. In fact, James indicates to us, by the rhetorical question, that it does not profit them at all.
  2. John even takes this a step further.
    - a. **I Jn 3:17-18** - But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? { 18 } My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.
    - b. John says that if we do not help our brother who is in need, the love of God cannot abide in us.
  3. We demonstrate our faith by our works (2:18).
    - a. Far too many times we put faith against works.
    - b. However, they are not in competition against each other, but they compliment each other.
- C. God has always expected His laws to be obeyed.
1. James tells us of two individuals that obeyed God.
    - a. Abraham (2:21-24)
    - b. Rahab (2:25-26)
  2. God always wanted Israel to obey Him.
    - a. **Deut. 4:14** - And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.
    - b. **Deut. 6:3** - Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you--' a land flowing with milk and honey.'

3. God expects us to obey His laws today.
    - a. **Lk. 8:21** - But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."
    - b. **Lk. 11:27-28** - And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" {28} But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"
    - c. **Rev. 22:14** - Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.
  4. When it comes to salvation, only those who have done the will of God will inherit heaven.
    - a. **Mt. 7:21** – “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”
    - b. **Rom. 2:5-10** - But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, {6} who "will render to each one according to his deeds": {7} eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; {8} but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness - indignation and wrath, {9} tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; {10} but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
- D. It is not that we can be saved only by doing good to others; or that we can accumulate enough “credits” to earn heaven.
1. However, according to James (and God), we must do good works in order to obey the commands of God.
  2. Remember what James says later in his book: **Js. 4:17** - Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

### **Conclusion:**

Today, what kind of person are you? Are you a hearer only; or are you also a doer of the word?

In no way are we trying to say that we can earn heaven.

Heaven is a gift based upon our obedience to God’s commands.

It is not something that we earn, but rather it is something that we receive.

Also, in no way are we saying that we can forget faith and only do good.

Faith is important.

Without faith we cannot enter into heaven.

However, without doing good, we cannot enter into heaven.

Jesus taught the very same idea in Lk. 6:46-49.

**Luke 6:46-49** - "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? {47} "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: {48} "He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. {49} "But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."