

# Doing, Not Just Hearing

James 1:21-25



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**FOCAL Read Responsively James 1:21-25** Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. [22] But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. [23] For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: [24] For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. [25] But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

While Sherry and I were on vacation Delta lost our luggage. Though it was annoying, it was only a minor inconvenience. That night Delta delivered our luggage - praise the Lord - to our hotel room! Another more serious thing happened with the airlines while we were away. I found out that two pilots from Northwest Airlines flight NW188 lost contact with the Control Tower for about 90 minutes. This wasn't caused by a radio malfunction - it was pure pilot error. Both men were so busy playing on their laptop computers that they ignored *everything* - even their radio - as controllers frantically tried to contact them.

Though everyone is human and prone to mistakes this was no small error. Without Air Traffic Control contact these men could have crossed another aircraft's flight pattern. People could have died. Thankfully this wasn't the case. But it could have happened. The pilots have both lost their license as a result of their foolishness, and cannot fly an aircraft for at least a year.

Last month 1000 churches closed their doors in America. They were not destroyed from without. No human law forbade their meeting, and no local ordinance imprisoned their pastor. These local churches died from within. They lost contact with their Lord, and were distracted by the things of this world instead of serving the Living God.

The Lord expects those who are His to heed His Word and to turn from the distractions and pretty baubles of this world. We are *born again* not by our works, not by our rituals, but by our faith in Jesus Christ. We put our total trust in the person of the Lord Jesus, and

**Ephesians 2:8-9** ... by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God:*  
**[9] Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

Salvation is entirely an act of God. The Lord saves those who believe on Him.

**Romans 10:9-13** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **[10]** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. **[11]** For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. **[12]** For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. **[13]** For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

As Adrian Rogers once said, “Salvation is not a plan,

**it is a Man”**. We are saved by focusing on what the Lord Jesus Christ – for God's glory – did for us on that Cross of Calvary. But salvation, dear friend, goes beyond the tomb. Jesus *died for our sins, but rose again to live through us*.

The Christian is not saved to coast into Heaven, the Christian is saved to *be a Child of Heaven*. **Our Heavenly Aircraft Controller is God the Holy Spirit**. It is His intention to feed you through the Word of God **for Jesus sake**. **For Jesus sake** you are kings and priests before God. **For Jesus sake** you are adopted sons of God. **For Jesus sake** your sins are forgiven. **For Jesus sake** you are indwelt by the Spirit of the Living God. **For Jesus sake** God has prepared for you a mansion, and He Who holds the keys of death and hell has guaranteed that you shall one day be with Him. **For Jesus sake** you are made a part of the Body of Christ, the Church, the greatest and most powerful organization that the world has ever seen. **For Jesus sake** you have been given the Gospel of Christ, and **for Jesus sake** you must focus on the Lord and His glory as you preach that precious Gospel.

**God's people and God's Church has a mandate to live for Jesus, to labor for Jesus, to long for Jesus, and to last for Jesus**. We are not called to be one with the world, but we are called to rise above this world while reaching out to this world through the glorious Gospel of salvation. To be effective for God you must (1) lay aside all distractions that hinder you in your walk with God. You must (2) willingly receive your direction from God's Holy Spirit through prayer and His Written Word. Finally, you must (3) do what your Heavenly Air Traffic

Controller tells you to do. If you don't you could hurt yourself or others. Israel lost her possession of the Promised Land when she refused to listen to and *do the things* God said. The Lord's Church – just like Israel – is expected to not only **be a hearer, but also a doer of God's Word.**

### **1. You Must Lay Aside All Distractions That Hinder You In Your Walk With God**

**ILLUSTRATE** When the Christian and the Church are all focused in the *Godward direction*, then and only then can we serve our Living God. We are here because the Lord Jesus Christ loved us and continues to love us. We are purchased by His Blood, and redeemed by His resurrected presence. It's all about JESUS.

Everybody be serious, and work with me here. I'll say my name, and at the same time each of you say your OWN name. .... Let's do that again. Now let me ask you, how does that sound? Sounds like babel, doesn't it? Now say with me "JESUS". Once more, "Jesus". No longer does it sound like babel - it sounds beautiful! When we focus CHRISTward we're flying in the right direction. Look at our text:

**FOCAL James 1:21a** Wherefore **lay apart** all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness ...

The believer is to first **take off** something. He says "**lay apart**", which is the *Aorist Middle Participle* of APOTITHEMI (apotiqhmi **pronounced** *ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee*). This word means to "**put away, cast off, or lay apart**". We see this same word used in:

**Romans 13:12** The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore **cast off** the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ...

If you are born again by faith in Christ you are commanded to **cast off as filthy** and **unworthy** those evil things the world does. You are able to do this because God the Holy Spirit indwells – and empowers – every believer.

The things you are to cast off are not necessarily sins. We are to cast off the rags of the old life – called **the old man** in the Scripture:

**Ephesians 4:22-24** That ye **put off concerning the former {way of life} the old man**, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; [23] And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; [24] And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

**ILLUSTRATE SKUNK SPRAY** The **old man** has no place in the Christian nor in the Church life. We are to **put on Christ**. I've never been sprayed by a skunk, but I'm told that it's an awful thing. If you are sprayed by a skunk you want to *get out of those clothes* as soon as possible, and upon cleaning yourselves get into a clean set of clothes. No one who was skunk sprayed would shower, bathe, get rid of that terrible smell, and then slip the same clothes back on. No, dear friend, you would **cast off** those things, even burning them rather than getting contaminated once again.

**The Christian way of life is not a sprint - it is a marathon.**

The writer of Hebrews puts it this way:

**Hebrews 12:1** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight**, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Again we see the word **APOTITHEMI**, meaning to **cast away**. **Cast away every weight AND the sin that so easily trips you up**. Put away anything that hinders your walk with God. Sometimes people come to me and ask me if *this* is a sin, or *that* is a sin. Dear friends, the Bible says that *anything* that stands between you and your Lord is to be **cast off as filthy**. The Lord goes on to say

**FOCAL James 1:21a** Wherefore **cast off as filthy or unworthy all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness ...**

The word translated **filthiness** is the Greek HRUPARIA (ruparia pronounced *hroo-par-ee'-ah*), meaning "something that will make you filthy if you touch it".

The ancient Jews were not allowed to touch a leper or a dead body, for to do either would make you *unclean*. The words translated "**superfluity of naughtiness**" has been translated as "**all that remains of wickedness**"<sup>NAS</sup>; "**evil excess**"<sup>NET</sup>; "**the evil that is so prevalent**"<sup>NIV</sup>; "**rank**

**growth of wickedness**"<sup>RSV</sup>; and "**wickedness which is abounding**"<sup>WUEST</sup>. These words refer to both *external as well as internal* evil (Greek KAKIA) in the Christian. When you were saved the Lord covered your sins with the Blood of Jesus Christ.

**Ephesians 4:32 ... God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

The Holy Spirit of God entered your life. You were *born again*. However, dear Believer, two things are unchanged. The world is still **filthy with sin**, and you still have **sin within you**.

God tells the believer to **avoid touching the filthiness of the world**, lest you become defiled by it. As an old black preacher once said, "**If you play in the toilet, you are going to catch something**". If you are born again you are *in the world but not of the world*.

**1 John 2:15-17** Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. **If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. [17] And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.**

Turn from the *external sources of sin*, dear Believer, and run with patience the race that is set before you. But the King James "**superfluity of naughtiness**" - the second thing you are to cast off - is the *sin that remains after conversion to Christ*. We are not sinless once we are

saved, but we are *blameless* and *empowered*. Put away *all that remains* of sin within you so that you can **receive the ingrafted Word**.

One other interesting thing about the word translated "**superfluity**" is that the Greeks used the word PERISSEIA (perisseia pronounced *per-is-si'-ah*) to refer to *excessive earwax*. If you have *excessive earwax* it can literally block your hearing.

The Lord is telling us to **lay aside the sin that is in your life, for it blocks your ability to hear the Word of God**. Examine yourselves. If you have sins that need to be cast off, cast them off. God cannot grow you to the next level of discipleship until you put away that *residual sin* in your lives! If you have things that are not *necessarily* sin, but these things are impeding your service for God, put these things away also. If it *blocks the hearing* of God's Word it should not be in the believer's life.

## **2. You Must Willingly Receive Your Direction From God's Holy Spirit Through Prayer & His Written Word**

**FOCAL James 1:21b** .... and receive with **meekness** the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Word Study: PRAUTES \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ EMPHUTOS

The word translated "**meekness**" is PRAUTES (prauthj pronounced *prah-oo'-tace*), which means "an attitude or disposition to humility, a receptive spirit". Not only does sin in your life keep you from receiving God's instruction, but a *hard hearted* or "I already know that" arrogance of spirit also binds you from the Word of God. In this text the Scripture is called "**the ingrafted Word**". The Greek for **ingrafted** is EMPHUTOS (emfutoj pronounced *em'-foo-tos*), which is a gardening term meaning to "implant or ingraft". The gardener has two means of raising produce. He can prepare the ground and *drop seed into it*, or else he can take a seedling and *ingraft or transplant that seedling into the prepared ground*. Either way the Gardener puts something in the prepared ground, and then waters it so that it will grow.

**ILLUSTRATE** God tells His people to *prepare the garden of their lives* so that He can plant His Word into their lives. When I was a young boy granddaddy used to keep a garden. He would plow and till that garden, stirring up and aerating the soil, then I would come behind and pull all the trash out of the garden. Once the soil was prepared and clean granddaddy would plant either seeds or seedlings in the clean soil. We never planted in the hard or rocky soil, but always prepared the soil before planting.

The function of God the Holy Spirit in your life is to *convict of sin*. Jesus said:

**John 16:8** And when {the Holy Spirit} is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

The Spirit not only convicts of sin, but He guides God's people in the Truth of His Word. The Spirit *prepares the soil of the life*, but we are to **cast away the sinful, and receptively receive what He says**. Jesus said:

**John 16:13-14** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. [14] He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

This **ingrafted Word** is able to save your souls. This Word can keep you from crashing and burning in this world. Your life is enriched – and protected – when you heed God!

It is the Word of God that you had to trust to be saved. You were born again the day that you believed Jesus Christ died for your sins, and rose again for your justification.

**1 Peter 1:23-25** Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. [24] For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: [25] But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

You were **born again by believing the incorruptible**

**Word of the Lord, which liveth and abideth forever.**  
You were saved by His Word - and you *keep on being saved* by His Word.

There are many believers who - having been saved from the pollution of this world - like Israel they keep looking back to Egypt. Though Israel was God's Chosen Nation their sinful disposition to want to go back to Egypt eventually caused them to lose the Promised Land. The Christian can also lose - not his salvation - but the Promised Land of Peace with God.

**ILLUSTRATE Kite, Train, Plane** There are many believers who think that - now that they are saved - they are freed from sin so that they can *freely sin*. This is not what the Scripture teaches. A kite flies high because it is restrained by a string. Cut the string and the kite - utterly free - crashes into the earth. A train runs fast and string because it is fixed to rails. Cut it loose from the rails and the train loses momentum, crashes into others, and ultimately destroys itself. The Christian is restrained by the Spirit of God and by the Word of God. While we willingly receive that engrafted Word we will grow and go for the Lord. We will fly far above the devil's world because the String of God's Word is held by God's Almighty hand.

### **3. God Wants You To Creatively Do His Word**

**FOCAL James 1:22** But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

The Bible tells us that when we *hear* the Word without *doing* the Word then we **have deceived our own selves**.

The Word for "**doer**" in our text is the Greek POIETES (poihtj pronounced *poy-ay-tace'*), which means "**to be a performer or a poet**". This word is found *six times in the Bible*, four of which are in the Book of James (**here, and in 1:23, 25; and 4:11**). We who belong to the Lord are called to *creatively do - poetically do - what He has said*. We are called to be people of imagination and of vision. How can I explain this? Think about a poem for a moment. Listen to these words and see if you recognize them:

**There is a Name I love to hear,  
I love to sing its worth;  
It sounds like music in my ear,  
The sweetest Name on earth.**

**It Tells me of a Savior's love,  
Who died to set me free.  
It tells me of His precious Blood;  
The sinner's perfect plea.**

Do you recognize it? Sing the refrain with me ....

**O, how I love Jesus,  
O, how I love Jesus,  
O, how I love Jesus,  
Because He first loved me!**

In a poem the words work together to *convey a common thought*. In our poem the idea conveyed is "I Love Jesus because He first loved me". If I were to change the words so they don't rhyme, or move the sequence of the words, then the idea would not be conveyed.

The intent of God is that the believer *in Christ* work together with other believers to reach the world *for Christ*.

We have a wonderful Gospel of salvation to present to *whosoever will*. Just as the words of a poem *pull together* toward the common theme, we who are God's Children pull together for His glory.

**1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.**

Love is an action word. We are to be **doers of the Word**, to actively reach out in the Name of Christ to the lost world around us.

**FOCAL James 1:22 But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.**

Word Study: PARALOGIDZOMAI \_\_\_\_\_

When we are **hearers only**, then we **deceive ourselves**. The word "**deceiving**" is the Present Middle Participle of PARALOGIDZOMAI (paralogizomai pronounced *par-al-og-id'-zom-ah-ee*). This word is an accounting term that refers to *knowing the right answer, but willingly putting the wrong numbers down in the ledger*. You are literally **cheating yourself**. It is the greatest joy in the world to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. When you don't serve the Lord Jesus Christ you are **robbing yourself of joy**. Your inactivity is robbing the Body of

Christ of blessing. So many think "I'm not hurting anybody but myself". No, that's not true. You are hurting yourself, your Church, and your Nation.

The Apostle describes this condition by saying:

**FOCAL James 1:23-24** For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: [24] For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

Those who are **hearers** and not **poetic doers of God's Word** are likened to a person who looks in a mirror and then forgets - or ignores - what he looks like.

**ILLUSTRATE Mirror** When I wake up the first thing I do is go into the restroom and do a "David inventory". I look in the mirror to see what's sticking up, what's fallen off, and what needs to be corrected. You can laugh if you want, but I'm reasonably sure each and every one of you do a similar "self inspection" before you go out into the world.

If you were to wake up early in the morning, and go and look in the mirror and *immediately forgetting what you look like*, go out into the world, you would probably scare a lot of people half to death. You don't need to go out to work, school, or the store looking like a homeless person. Most people try to look their best before going out. James is saying "If you only *hear* and don't *do* the Word, then you are just like that crazy man who goes out without correcting what he sees in the mirror. Those of you who *hear* and do not *do* are deceiving yourselves.

You will never lead anyone to Christ if you do not use Christ's Word. You will never be used of God to save the lost if you do not *do His Word*. Your Church will never be a light for God in this present dark world if its members are not *working together while doing His Word*. All you're doing is scaring people away from Christ!

**ILLUSTRATE Wicked Witch & Snow White** There are Churches all across our country that are scaring people away from Christ. They have doctrine, they hear doctrine, but they never *do what the Word says*. Like the wicked witch in the story of **Snow White** you look in the mirror:

**Mirror, mirror, on the wall,  
Who's the fairest one of all?**

and ignore what the mirror plainly shows. The mirror is never wrong. God's Word is *never wrong*. What it says we must do. What does the Scripture say?

**1 John 2:3-4** And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. [4] He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

If you do not *do* what the Word commands then you *may not be saved*. Jesus said "**why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and not DO the things I tell you to do?**" (Luke 6:46). We who believe are expected to DO.

**FOCAL James 1:25** But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work,

**this man shall be blessed in his deed.**

The word "**looketh into**" is a Greek word (**PARAKUPTO**) first used in connection with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus had been brutally crucified while the disciples stood helplessly by and watched. He was removed from that terrible Cross, and quickly prepared for burial. As His broken body was laid to rest in a borrow tomb a large stone was rolled into the mouth of the tomb. A guard was placed around that tomb, and for all intents and purposes Jesus was gone forever.

Three days later the disciples returned to the tomb to see if they could finish embalming Christ's Body. To their surprise the tomb was empty, and Christ was gone. As the word of His disappearance spread to all the disciples excitement mounted. We read:

**John 20:4-5 ... they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulcher. [5] And he **stooping down**, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.**

**John 20:11 But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she **stooped down**, and looked into the sepulcher,**

The phrase "**stooping down**" is the Greek text as is found in "**looketh into**" in **James 1:25**. In excitement both Peter and Mary **stooped down and gazed intently into the tomb**. You who are born again by faith in Christ are commanded to **stoop down and gaze intently into that which the Lord has given you**. You are recipients

of the **perfect Law of Liberty**. You are born again, indwelt of God, adopt children of Almighty God by the shed Blood of Jesus Christ. You are not only **doers of the Word**, you are also **doers of the Word**. God commands us to be His hands and His feet on this earth. We are to be like Christ, to love like Christ, to respond to the Word of God in real, living, practical ways.

Some people get mad at the preacher for what he says. "I'm not going back to that Church, that preacher hurt my feelings". It's not the preacher's fault - the mirror reflects what it reflects. If God's Word convicts you, then *gaze intently into that mirror and work with God to fix yourselves*.

Some people make no impact on the world around them because they look exactly like the world. Some, when they die or leave the Church, make absolutely no difference. No one has to replace them for they did nothing for the cause of Christ. Be a DOER of the Word, and a DOER of the Work. This is where your blessing is. If you do, then when you leave the Church by death or reassignment you will leave a HOLE that must be filled.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.

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Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:9-13

**1. You Must Lay Aside All Distractions That Hinder You In Your Walk With God**

James 1:21a; Romans 13:12; Ephesians 4:22-24; Hebrews 12:1; James 1:21a; Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 2:15-17

- If you are born again by faith in Christ you are commanded to **cast off as filthy** and **unworthy** those evil things the world does. \_\_\_\_\_

- **The Christian way of life is not a sprint - it is a** \_\_\_\_\_

- One other interesting thing about the word translated

"superfluity" is that the Greeks used the word PERISSEIA (perisseia pronounced *per-is-si'-ah*) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. You Must Willingly Receive Your Direction From God's Holy Spirit Through Prayer & His Written Word**

James 1:21b; John 16:8; John 16:13-14; 1 Peter 1:23-25

- Word Study: PRAUTES \_\_\_\_\_  
\_ EMPHUTOS \_\_\_\_\_

**3. God Wants You To Creatively Do His Word**

James 1:22; 1 John 3:18; James 1:23-24; 1 John 2:3-4; Luke 6:46; James 1:25; John 20:4-5; John 20:11

- Word Study: PARALOGIDZOMAI \_\_\_\_\_

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

