



www.WORDFORLIFESAYS.com

Sunday School Lesson

TOPIC:

“Doers of the Word”

James 1:19-27

VERSE DISCOVERY: James 1:19-27 (KJV, Public Domain)

Prepare

- On a board, write the words **Hearer** on one side, and **Doer** on the other. Draw a line down the middle of the two. Ask students to give you ideas on what can be used to describe each word.

Under the two columns in all caps write the word OBEY as big as your board will let you. To obey is to hear instructions and then follow through. Explain what it would be like to just hear without doing. That is not obeying. Ultimately, God is looking for our faith to be worked out in our lives through obedience and that means we have to not only listen to what He says, but we have to put into action what God says.

- One option for a lesson lead-in is to talk about or show a fun online cute video about animal training. Talk about the ups and downs of training and the rewards when training is successful.

Our lesson tells us, “He being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed,” (James 1:25). There is always a reward in doing what God asks us to, and not just hearing about it. When we are **Doers of the Word**, we are living a life that is pleasing to God. We put a smile on God’s face when we obey.

Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 6-11

Many people place a lot of stock in talking up a good game. But, for a genuine person of faith, it is not about the talk. For them, it is about the walk. They know that what you do, and how you live out your faith, matters more.

Once, I wrote a devotional article covering this very topic, which says:

“What people witness in your life resounds more than the words that are coming out of your mouth. Evidence of belief; proof of faith is the visual representation that most want. Many mistake others as not wanting what we have or not wanting the faith, yet they haven’t seen enough of it in action to provoke them to seek after what we say we have.”

So, the old phrase still rings true today: "Seeing is believing." To a world lost, who have no hope, they look for a ring of hope they can grab onto to prevent them from drowning in the deep abyss of the darkness of this world. They want a way out. Many don't want to sink deeper into despair, deeper into the unknown where there is no light to guide the way. They want to see what you say you see. They want to feel what you say you feel. They want what you say you have but do they see it currently active in you to propel them from wanting it to actually seeking for it?

Your faith speaks louder than your words. Paul told the church at Thessalonica, "Your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing." 1 Thessalonians 1:8. If necessary, I believe Paul would have testified on their behalf, he would have spoken up for them to assure others of their faith. But, their faith was so active, their faith was so alive and in operation that he didn't feel a need to speak at all. Their faith did the talking for them. Their faith is what people noticed, not the words they spoke from their mouths.

A lot of people do a lot of talking these days and sometimes it's hard to decipher truth from fiction. Jesus gave us a key that lines right up with what Paul wrote in his letter. Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits," Matthew 7:16. If one comes upon a tree that has apples growing upon it then they are to assume it is an apple tree. The same is true with a life of faith. What they see coming out of you, or as Paul referred to as "gone out" is what matters the most. You can say that you are an orange tree but if I see apples then I will classify you like an apple tree. If you say that you have great faith but all I see is the opposite than I will not view you as having great faith. I will mark you by what I see.

Your faith matters in this world. More importantly, your faith on display matters to those around you so much that one should not have to speak up or testify for you, all they should be able to do is look at your faith in action and mark you as a person of faith." (©WordforLifeSays.com/Your Faith Speaks More than Your Words!)

A doer of God's Word recognizes the need to let their lives go beyond the talk, but they are determined that whatever the Word says, that I will do. Their life of devotion and faithfulness will speak on their behalf. Their love for God will be manifested in what they do (John 14:15).

Activities

- Actions speak louder than words. No truer is this than when it comes to our relationship with God and the calling He is leading each of us to fulfill. We all want to do a good job for God and often need help along the way. Use the **Adult Journal Page** to record your responses to the writing prompts and keep them for future reference to review. When you feel like you are in a "doing" rut, remind yourself of your desire to get things done for God and His available

help when you feel stuck. Younger students can use the **Kid's Journal Page** to write how they can be a personal of action for God.

- Younger students can draw a picture of what it means to be a Doer of God's Word in the **Draw the Scene** section found on site.
- Taken from the **Draw the Scene** section from above, younger students, after they have drawn and colored their picture, can cut out the square portion of the sheet and cut it into several pieces to use as a mini-puzzle. If you choose this option for an activity, as always it is best to print out the page using cardstock or to glue regular paper to construction paper for stability.
- Younger students can also design **Paper Bag Puppets** featuring themselves. After completion, have them attach "I will be a doer of God's Word" with the verse prompt to the back of their puppets.
- **Declaration Buttons:** Using the buttons link and picture from above, students can make their own buttons to wear, declaring to be Doers of God's Word. Color, decorate, and tape or glue a safety pin to the back. **Bonus:** using the same materials, punch a hole in the top and string through with yarn to design a necklace.
- **Aquarium Activities:** From the statement pulled from the lesson, saying, "God's Word is not an aquarium just to be looked at. We are called to be doers of the Word," you can find any fish, aquarium, or other similar crafts and activities to incorporate it into this lesson. Or, make a construction paper fishbowl with this lesson quote in it. An easy activity sheet is provided on site to be used as-is or you can cut the fishbowl out as a template for a craft.
- Alternate activity sheets available for those who just want to work with printed materials such as **Word Search, Crossword, etc.**

Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."* James 1:22**
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 12)
- **Fishbowl Toss Review Game:** Buy a cheap fishbowl or make one out of virtually anything and some little balls or toy fish. Armed with a list of questions, if a student can answer the question correctly (also use True or False and Fill in the Blank questions), then they get a point for their team and a chance to shoot the ball or fish into the fishbowl. If the ball or fish goes into the bowl, then they get another point for their team. This review game can be as

simple or as challenging as you want and can easily be adapted for many ages and levels of learning.

Life

“Hear and do.” What is a “do” word that God has been pulling at your heart to perform. Take the initiative this week, step out in faith, and do it. Make it a personal point to not allow procrastination and excuses to rob you from fulfilling all that God has called you to do and be.

TOPIC:

“Doers of the Word”

James 1:19-27

VERSE DISCOVERY: James 1:19-27 (KJV, Public Domain)

The word “do” is a word of action. It begs for the spirit of complacency to be put off and done away with.

“Do” wants you to go after it, not just to observe it, but to put it to work. To allow it to become a part of you. To allow it to be represented in you.

“Do” wants to see things accomplished. “Do” wants to act when others only want to hear and speculate. And, when it comes to the Word of God, nothing less than “do” is acceptable. Because “do” puts into practice what it reads and hears. Those who are doers are not satisfied with anything less than God’s active Word being active in their own life.

James, in his book, really talks a lot about Christian living. His book opens our understanding of what it really means to live out God’s Word in our lives through deliberate action and not just complacent listening.

DO – BE MINDFUL OF OTHERS

James 1:19-20 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

Being mindful of others affect how we respond and communicate with individuals on a personal level. It is the works and the Word of God we want to be manifested in our lives and not our own selfish ambitions, anger, or agendas.

In these verses and the ones following, James lays out guidelines and precepts for human communication and purposeful thoughtfulness in our response to others. By using the words “**every man**” he implies that these are good guidelines for any and everyone to follow when dealing with one another.

NOTES:

First, **“be swift to hear.”** I must admit in the age where texting and social media is the prevalent form of communication, really learning to sit down and hear someone out is a passing characteristic trait. This being **“swift to hear”** is not for one who is running to hear gossip about others. Rather, it is the ability to stay oneself in a conversation where another can unload a burden, where another can trust you to be their confidant in the time of trouble, or where you can invest in hearing the whole of the matter, digesting it completely before offering your two cents on the subject at hand.

Thusly, we are commanded to **“be slow to speak.”** If you have ever been in one of those conversations where the other person is always jumping in and cutting you off, you know how it can be a real put-off. Proverbs 21:23 reminds us, “Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.” Many of the misunderstandings that occur between people are because the right words were not spoken at the right time, rather the wrong words were spoken at the wrong time (see James 3 for more on this tongue of trouble).

Then, this verse admonishes us to be **“slow to wrath.”** Proverbs 14:29 tells us, “He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.” The one with a quick temper shows his/her lack of self-control. Oh, how easy it is to let loose and lash out. But what great strength is shown in the one who does not.

One part of the fruit of the Spirit is “temperance” (Gal. 5:23), which means self-control. In other words, the passions of the flesh that provoke one to rise in anger are not to have the final rule or say. We, as Christians, are to allow the working of the Spirit to have free course as opposed to that of the fleshly desire. That is why Paul said, “I keep my body, and bring it into subjection...” (1 Cor. 9:27a). He, as well as we, are running this Christian race and often that requires putting the things we feel under the obedience of Christ who Himself was our living example (see Is. 53:7).

“For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” **“Man”** operates with fleshly inclinations. What that means is man is not infinitely wise and all-knowing as our heavenly Father is who said, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD,” (Is. 55:8). Man, judges according to his finite knowledge and abilities, especially in times of anger where his judgment could be clouded and impaired by raging emotions.

NOTES:

This often causes man to lash out on his own without first prayerfully considering the consequences and recourses of his actions, thereby not producing the **“righteousness of God.”** That is why the Apostle Paul admonishes us, “Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath,” (Eph. 4:26). Proverbs 16:32 tells us, “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” He who can control his emotions in this manner through inner strength is stronger than the one who can conquer a city with his outer strength.

James 1:21 “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”

“Lay apart.” Take it off! These things are not only destructive to oneself, but they are also destructive to others when unleashed. These things can hold an individual back from being all that God has called them to be. Hindrances that get in the way of one fulfilling God’s Word in their lives. James said to lay it apart – take it off because it is not profitable to **“save your souls.”**

Rather, **“receive with meekness the engrafted word.”** **“Receive”** means to bring into oneself. This is what we want to lay ownership to and put on: **“the engrafted word.”** The Word is an essential component in the spiritually mature life. It upholds us (Ps. 119:116). Through the Word, faith is increased (Rom. 10:17). The Word is our weapon to fight with (Eph. 6:17). The Word lights the pathway for us (Ps. 119:105). The Christian cannot live without the Word. God freely gives it to us “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” (2 Tim. 3:16), that when we **“receive”** it with **“meekness”** we will know how to operate like Him and not according to our fleshly wrath and ways.

Do - PUT ACTIONS BEHIND WHAT YOU HEAR

James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

“But be ye doers of the word.” A **“doer”** is a person marked by activity and action. It is a person who is not complacent (refer back to the introduction), content with just sitting on the

NOTES:

sidelines. This person believes in getting in there, rolling their sleeves up, and working the Word to its fullest capacity.

God's Word is not an aquarium. In an aquarium, we view the fish from the outside. We do not go in and interact with them. We just watch them swimming along and think about how beautiful and peaceful they are. God's Word is beautiful and peaceful, but it is also meant to be lived out; it is meant to be interacted with, and it is meant to be active in the life of every believer. One is not just to be an observer or a "hearer" but a "doer."

They that only hear are "deceiving your own selves." Many pack churches out on Sunday's to fulfill their "weekly obligation" of attending church without having a personal relationship with the Word; without contemplating and applying its truths to their own lives. This may make one appear spiritually rich on the outside, but on the inside, they have cheated themselves out of its rich rewards. This is deceptive to self.

James 1:23-25 "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: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 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."

There, in the morning rush to get out of the door, a dash to the mirror to make sure every hair is in place and the face is in order. Walking away, another dash to the mirror to verify once again that everything looked okay. Again, in the car, adjust the mirror once again to reaffirm what one looks like, and so on; readjusting and running back to the mirror so that outwardly things may appear right.

One who does not have an active relationship with the Word does not have it as a constant measuring stick to live by. Think of a leveling tool that is used in construction to make sure everything lines up evenly and according to plan. Without that level, walls could end up slanted and out of place causing the entire structure to be unstable. Just taking a quick glance or eyeing it will not give a good representation. You need the tool to be sure.

The Word is that tool that keeps us in line so that we will not "forget what manner of man he was." He who is a "doer" of the Word has an active relationship with the Word and keeps coming back to it to align his or herself aright. This is the one who looks intently and intentionally

NOTES:

into the Word, here referred to as **“the perfect law of liberty”** and sees it for the truth marker that it is.

“This man shall be blessed in his deed.” Luke 11:28 says, “Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it;” a promise that is spoken over and over again in the Bible (see also Deut. 4:40; John 13:17 and Rom. 2:13). God’s blessings are poured out on the **“doers,”** not just the **“hearers.”** The **“doer”** is the one who despite his/her feelings does the will of the Father (see Jesus’ parable in Mt. 21:28-31). Jesus was a **“doer!”** In agony, He declared, “Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done,” (Lk. 22:42).

DO – MATCH YOUR ACTIONS WITH YOUR PROFESSION OF FAITH

James 1:26-27 “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

Here is a reiteration of where the lesson began with instructions on being swift to hear and slow to speak. One can seem holy and pious on the outside but if that little inside member known as the **“tongue”** is not brought under control, **“this man’s religion is vain.”**

If the Word is not active in his life causing him to operate in love and concern for his fellow brethren, rather seeks to tear others down, his religion is not fruitful. It is not producing the things that will draw men to Christ, instead, it is repelling. The Word is meant to go beyond just believing it. It is meant to be put into operation and lived.

James, in essence, was saying, if you really want to know if the Word is at work in one’s life, watch what they do. **“Pure religion and undefiled”** fulfill the command of God in their lives. **“Pure religion”** is not seen in just talk, but in fruitful actions. It shows in their care of others like: **“to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.”** It goes beyond just being a hearer and displays actual evidence of being a doer. It is also shown in how they line themselves up to the Word **“to keep himself unspotted from the world.”** The proof is in the pudding, so to speak. A **“doer”** shows what they believe, whereas a **“hearer”** is only a complacent bystander.

NOTES:

There are enough hearers, observers, and viewers of the faith. God needs some action heroes that will allow the Word to work in their lives. God needs more **“doers!”**

NOTES:

TOPIC:

“Doers of the Word”

James 1:19-27

Please Answer the Review Questions Below

1. **T** or **F**. According to James, it is the wisest course of action for us to be quick to hear and slow to speak. (James 1:19)
2. “Lay apart all filthiness... and receive with meekness the engrafted _____.” (James 1:21)
A. Hope **B.** Word **C.** Life **D.** None
3. How does one “**deceive**” themselves if they are hearers only without doing the what the Word commands? (James 1:22)

4. The lesson states that one should be “**slow to wrath**” (James 1:19). What fruit of the Spirit supports this idea and why? (Galatians 5:23)

5. One is “**blessed in his deed**” when he is a _____. (James 1:25)
A. Doer **B.** Hearer **C.** Forgetter **D.** None

6. **T** or **F**. God is concerned about us living out the faith we profess through actions that show care and concern for others in need. (James 1:27)

7. In what area of your life does the “**doing**” part of your faith need a tune-up? How has this lesson encouraged you to move forward into that “**doing**”?

