

JAMES

A Faith That Works

Study 5

Introduction

The Christian and the Word (Part 2)

James 1:22-26

- A. New Birth By the Word
- B. Implanting and Receiving the Word
- C. **Living out God's Word**

James 1:22-26

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

1) Objective question. What is the purpose of a mirror?

- A. To see ourselves
- B. To see our defects
- C. To see our perfection
- D. For self-evaluation

2) Comprehension question. Based on the video lecture, what are the similarities and differences between an ancient mirror and the Word of God? Compare and contrast the two.

Similarities

	Ancient mirror	Word of God
What do they reflect?	Ourselves as an image of God	
What is their purpose?	Self-evaluation	

Differences

	Ancient mirror	Word of God
Clarity	Not very clear	Much clearer
Duration	Momentary	Constant reminder
Effectiveness	Lack of real effect	Effective

3) Objective question. In what way is the “law of liberty” perfect?

- A. It can make us perfect
- B. Completed – achieved its aim
- C. Interpreted and fulfilled by the Lord Jesus
- D. It is a perfect physical mirror

4) Objective question. What does the word liberty mean in the “law of liberty”?

- A. It brings freedom for us to sin
- B. It brings freedom for us from sin
- C. The freedom gained through following the law and the life that comes from living it
- D. The freedom gained through Jesus’ fulfilment of the law and the new life that comes from Him

5) Comprehension question. When looking at a mirror, we can underestimate or overestimate ourselves. What are the results of ending up on one side or the other?

	Underestimation	Overestimation
Attitude towards self	Low self-esteem	Overconfidence
Attitude towards good works	Gives up easily	Tries with own strength

6) Discussion question. What is the difference between hearing and doing?

Hearing - perceive what is said by someone else

Doing - perform an action

7) Discussion question. If a person hears instruction/advice but does not follow it, he/she is stubborn. Give an example of a Bible character who heard but refused to do.

Jonah – God commanded him to preach in Nineveh but he did not go initially.

Pharaoh – God commanded him to release the Hebrew slaves but he refused to let them go.

Saul – God commanded him to utterly destroy the Amalekites in 1 Sam 15 but he spared Agag and his cattle.

8) Discussion question. What is the difference between receiving the truth and living the truth?

9) Reflection question. When faced with God’s Word, we have a choice to either act on what has been reflected or to ignore it. We know what is the right thing to do but what stops you from actually doing it?

10) Objective question. Based on the video lecture, how should we look into the Word and persevere? Select the most appropriate answers.

- A. Look at the mirror
- B. Look at yourself in the mirror
- C. Focus on what we can understand about what God wants done and do them
- D. Focus on only what we cannot understand and try to understand them better
- E. Remember that God’s Word is addressed to us
- F. Remember that God’s Word is addressed to others
- G. We must actively serve God to hear God’s Word
- H. We must silently wait before God to hear God’s Word

Matthew 21:28-31a

“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it

and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?"

They said to Him, "The first."

11) a) Discussion question. Based on Matthew 21:28-31a above, which son was a hearer and a doer also?

b) Reflection question. Which son do we resonate with more and why?

Takeaway

- We should not just be hearers of God's Word - we need to do
- We should reflect and evaluate ourselves when reading God's Word
- Focus on what we can understand about what God wants done and do them
- Remember that God's Word is addressed to us
- We must silently wait before God to hear His Word

Case Study

Case 1 – Lack of Self-Reflection

Ang Uh Weh has been a very zealous Christian since her youth, always attending every church camp and growing up to lead an LG group.

She has an excellent understanding of the Bible and is able to rightly divide the word of truth. However, she does so only because she wants to know more than everyone else so that she can be the "subject matter expert" (SME) for all things related to the Word of God.

She is also gifted with discernment and able to point out what other believers' weaknesses are and whether or not they are following the Scriptures.

There are times where she does things with dubious motives like taking church funds to buy her own groceries, and then cites 1 Cor. 9. [In 1 Cor. 9:14b, "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel". This effectively means that those who work in service for the Lord

should also be rewarded for their effort.]

Unfortunately, she is harsh with her own words to others, slow to hear, quick to speak, and quick to anger. When pointed out about it by her LG members, she becomes defensive and claims that she is being biblical in her righteous anger.

1. Based on James 1:23-26, what is Ang Uh Weh's main problem?

She is able to discern the flaws of others but not her own. This is because Ang Uh Weh is unaware of her own vulnerabilities as shown in the Scriptures.

2. To Ang Uh Weh, is the Word of God a sword or a mirror?

Ang Uh Weh mainly uses the Bible to measure other believers instead of herself. Primarily it is "weaponized" to be used against others and also to defend herself.

Ang Uh Weh seems to take the Word of God out of context for her own benefit, instead of reading it to be more Christlike towards God.

Essentially, the Word of God becomes a means to **justify her actions**, rather than a means to **evaluate herself**.

3. Discussion question. How should Ang Uh Weh approach the Word of God? Consider the following aspects:

a. Reflection (Self vs Others)

She needs to approach it with self-reflection. She reflects on the Word of God in the context of other people but not herself.

We need to remember that the Word of God is primarily addressed to us personally.

b. Expectation

She needs to approach it with expectation to hear from God through silently waiting before Him. She busies herself with serving but not in silent anticipation during her quiet time.

c. Purpose/Motive

She reads the Bible to know more for the sake of knowledge in an intellectual way, rather than to know God better. Essentially, she is looking at the mirror, not looking at herself in the mirror.

4. Discussion question. If you were an LG group member, how would you respond to Ang Uh Weh?