

James 1:22-25

Chase Green

Verse 22: “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” The most cruel of deceptions is the one that befalls a Christian who is a ready hearer of the Word, but not a doer of it. It is most cruel because said hearer assumes he is saved by mere ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of Truth, not realizing that, in order to be saved, he must be willing to FOLLOW THROUGH with obedience to the Truth.

Acknowledging the veracity of God’s Word is wonderful. It’s vital. But if I acknowledge Truth without actually letting Truth SHAPE MY LIFE, it does me little good. Yes, I must hear the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), but the kind of hearing that saves is the kind of hearing that results in a RESPONSE — obedience to the Gospel and continued faithfulness. If I smile and nod upon hearing the Word of God, but do little beyond that, not allowing it to shape my life, I’m deceived, and in just as bad of shape as the one who outright REJECTS the Word!

Verses 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: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.” Isn’t it sad that many Christians seem to think that they can attend worship services, sing a song or two, bow their heads during prayer, try not to nod off during the sermon, partake of the emblems during communion, and give a few dollars in the collection plate, then be on their merry way, having checked all of that off their list for the week, not to have a single spiritual thought or spiritual action take place until the following Sunday when they then again repeat the process?

Christianity is not a “one-day-a-week sacrifice and the rest of the week we can do as we please” religion. Christianity is a lifestyle! The Christian with the above-described nonchalant attitude toward worship has that kind of attitude as a symptom of a bigger problem — he’s looking at Christianity as a part-time vocation. He’s taking bits and pieces of Christianity like vitamins, when his Christianity should be at the forefront of his spiritual “diet!” He’s looking in His Christian “mirror,” haphazardly approaching his spiritual preparation, then walks away completely disheveled, life in shambles, because he’s only practicing Christianity one day (or perhaps two) a week. His Christianity is a farce, and he’s deceiving himself.

Verse 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.” This describes a true, FAITHFUL Christian. No, he’s not perfect. He does fall short from time to time, but this person is LIVING OUT his religion. (James 5:15b-16 shows how confession and prayer [repentance implied] can heal such a Christian who has fallen short).

This Christian doesn’t look into the mirror of deceit of verses 23-24. Rather, he looks to the Law of God of which he is under today, the perfect Law of Liberty (the faith/the gospel/the new covenant), and he CONTINUES in it! He’s not a forgetful hearer; he’s a DOER! In other words, he’s an ACTIVE Christian, not one day or two days a week, but 24/7, 365 days a year (no sick days or holidays or vacations off)!