

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

# How to Deal with God's Word

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James 1:16-27

<sup>1</sup> How to deal with God's Word is the task before us today. The New Testament part of our Bible describes the term "word" two ways. The first way is to describe the Word as the person of Lord Jesus Christ. It's one of the terms used for the Lord's deity, the primary expression of God in human terms.

The second description of the term "word" in the New Testament is the written Word; the scriptures. This is the one I want to talk about here. <sup>2</sup>

In James, chapter 1, verses 16 through 27 we read, **Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.** <sup>1</sup> <sub>3</sub>

**My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the**

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<sup>1</sup> James 1:16-18.

righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. <sup>2</sup>

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Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does. <sup>3</sup> <sub>5</sub>

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look

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<sup>2</sup> James 1:19-21.

<sup>3</sup> James 1:22-25.



after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. <sup>4</sup>

This passage of scripture answers three questions; what is the Word, how do you receive it, and how do you demonstrate it in your life? <sup>6</sup>

## I. What is the Word?

Verses 16 and 17 tell us **it is good**. <sup>7</sup> **Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. Every gift from God is good and beneficial to us.** <sup>8</sup>

The word **perfect** <sup>5</sup> in the original language, means complete, mature. <sup>9</sup>

God doesn't change or vary His purposes for us either. The word **change** <sup>6</sup> and **shift** <sup>7</sup> are astronomical

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<sup>4</sup> James 1:26-27.

<sup>5</sup> τέλειος.

<sup>6</sup> παραλλαγή.

<sup>7</sup> ροπή.

terms for planets and stars changing their positions in the sky. Even though God is the Creator of the **heavenly lights**, the stars and the planets; He doesn't change like they do! <sup>10</sup>

Verse 18 says the Word of God **conceives you**. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created. The phrase **give us birth**, <sup>8</sup> means conceiving, the father's role in the birth process. The Word of God, the gospel message preached to you, plays the father's role in spiritual conception. <sup>11</sup>

First Peter, chapter 1, verses 23 through 25, puts it this way, For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you. <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> ἀποκυέω.

As a reborn creature, verse 18 continues, you are now the **first fruits**. This word is a technical term for the offerings taken to the Temple in Jerusalem to be sacrificed; the first and the best from the crop or the herd.

What this is saying is that you are now the offering presented to God. You are God's personal possession!

So, that's what the Word of God is. <sup>13</sup>

## II. How Do You Receive It?

How do you receive it? <sup>14</sup>

Verse 19, **My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen . . . You are to **receive the Word eagerly**; "be quick to listen"!**

People don't listen very well in our society. We are pre-occupied with our own concerns.

There's the story of the little boy at the supper table one evening who shouted at the top of his lungs,



**“Pass the potatoes!” Everyone else at the table was startled. His dad immediately told him to go to his room for misbehaving.**

**Later that evening, as the adults were sitting around after supper, the father disclosed that he bought a tape recorder that afternoon and had it secretly recording all of the conversation during the evening meal. As everyone listened to the recording, they heard a lot of laughter and excited adult conversation. Then they heard a tiny voice requesting, “May I please have some potatoes?” The request was ignored. A few minutes later the little voice was heard again, “Please, somebody, will you let me have some potatoes?” Again the request was ignored. The adult chatter continued a few more minutes before the great shout, “pass the potatoes!”**

**God wants you to be quick to listen! You get so wrapped up in your own life and concerns that God’s Word for you just slips by unnoticed! Wake up! Pay attention! This scripture is God speaking! 15**

Lord Jesus said you need to receive the kingdom of heaven like a little child would. **Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. “And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.** <sup>9</sup> Little children are eager to learn. Little children are humble. <sup>16</sup> He wants you to be like sheep listening intently to their shepherd! <sup>10</sup> <sup>17</sup>

Next, verse 21, **Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Receive the Word in humility.** <sup>18</sup>

**Humility** <sup>11</sup> means gentleness, meekness, restraint or openness. <sup>19</sup>

The Word of God is **planted in your heart** by God when you hear it presented. <sup>20</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew 18:4-5.

<sup>10</sup> John 10:4 - When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

<sup>11</sup> πραΰτης.



Lord Jesus told the story about a farmer who spread seeds across his plowed field. <sup>12</sup> Inadvertently, some of the seed landed on various types of unplowed ground. He stated that the seed only took root and sprouted from the ground that had been prepared for it. The rest of the seed didn't take root. it just died.

Jesus explained that it was the condition of the ground that determined whether the seed sprouted or not, not the condition of the seed.

When the Word of God is presented, what is the condition of your heart? Is it prepared to receive the implanted word, or will the word cease to penetrate your ears and mind? <sup>21</sup> The Word of God will save you by conceiving you into a born-again creature if you are ready to receive it! <sup>22</sup>

Now, in verse 25, **But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does.** <sup>23</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Matthew 13:1-8 & 18-23.

The word **intently** <sup>13</sup> means to, literally, stoop down to look at. It means, then, to put effort into your looking! You notice you have dirt on your face only after looking intently in the mirror. <sup>24</sup>

You need to **do God's Word**! A person remembers only about 20% of what he hears; 40% of what he hears and sees; but nearly 80% of what he actually does! Doing cements that concept into your memory. This is why, in the military, “hands on” training is stressed as much as possible! You also need to **continue doing it** until it becomes a part of you! <sup>25</sup>

It is imperative that you **live out the Word of God**; not just listen to it! James, chapter 4, verse 17 continues, **Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.**

**That's how you receive God's Word.** <sup>26</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> παρακύπτω.

### III. How Do You Demonstrate It?

How do you demonstrate it? <sup>27</sup>

This scripture tells us we can do it.

**Be cautious when you speak it.** Verses 19 and 20 and then, verse 26, **My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires . . . If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.** <sup>28</sup>

The Book of Proverbs keeps hammering this home.

Proverbs, chapter 10, verse 19, **When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.**

<sup>29</sup>

Proverbs, chapter 13, verse 3, **He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.** <sup>30</sup>



Proverbs, chapter 17, verse 28, Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue. <sup>31</sup>

Proverbs, chapter 29, verse 20, Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him. <sup>32</sup>

**Be slow to anger.** Verse 19 and 20, **My dear brothers,** take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Legalistic and judgmental attitudes don't produce the results God wants!

I have a church background I now believe was a legalistic one. I continually received judgmental attitudes about everyone who did not agree with my church's official doctrines; understandings of what the Bible said. Then, one time I heard one of my church leaders confide, "I'm just tired of being angry!" I felt that way too! <sup>33</sup>

**Keep a tight reign** <sup>14</sup> on your tongue; verse 26. <sup>15</sup> That phrase is a word picture. It means to lead a horse by a bridle. Zip up that tongue of yours! <sup>34</sup>

The next way to demonstrate the Word in your life is to seek to **help people in need**. Verse 27, **Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress . . .**

<sup>35</sup>

Help women. In ancient days women had very few civil rights. When a women's husband died, she was often destitute with no money or protection. <sup>36</sup>

Help orphans. Children had no rights! An orphan was often homeless and had to resort to begging in the streets. It was like the movie "Aladdin", the street wise kid "had to steal to eat." <sup>37</sup>

Again, in verse 27, **Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this . . . keep oneself**

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<sup>14</sup> χαλιναγωγέω.

<sup>15</sup> James 1:26 - If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

from being polluted by the world. **Make a clean break with the world!** <sup>38</sup>

You can't make going to church a substitute for obeying God! <sup>39</sup> Micah, chapter 6, verses 6 through 8 says, **With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.** <sup>40</sup> Then, the Lord nailed it home when He said, **But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'** <sup>16</sup> <sup>41</sup>

Then, remember back in verse 21, it said, **Therefore, get rid of all moral filth** and the evil that is so prevalent

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew 9:13.



**and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. You've got to get rid of the moral filth!** <sup>42</sup>

**Get rid of** <sup>17</sup> in the original language, meant to strip, undress, take off your clothes. <sup>43</sup>

**Moral filth** <sup>18</sup> meant the dirt in your clothes and the wax in your ears. It means, make a clean break with your former life! Get the wax out of your ears so you can really listen to the Word of God! <sup>44</sup>

**The pure fact of the matter is the world is looking at your walk, not your talk!**

**If you want to make an impact on the world for Lord Jesus, put God's Word into your life!**

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<sup>17</sup> ἀποτίθημι.

<sup>18</sup> ῥυπαρία.