

The Word of Truth

James 1:19-26

Online Sermon:

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Does your form of religion get you closer to God? Are the externals of your faith such as going to church regularly, almsgiving, prayer, fasting, reading God's word, and singing a true reflection of what is in your soul? Anyone can put on a mask of religious pretentiousness and proudly sit in the seat of



self-assessed holiness and fool the masses but when it comes to God who knows your every word, thought, and deed there truly is no place to hide.

In today's passage James tell us the glorious news that God chose to give us birth through the word of

truth! We have before us a beautiful love letter from God that is like a mirror showing many aspects of His holiness and how far off, we miss the mark of being more like Him! And yet if we are going to be honest with ourselves, we must confess that

we rarely read God's word outside of church and even when we do, often we are merely looking to amass Scripture so that we might convince other members of the church that our religious mask is indeed genuine! But to be holy as God is holy His word must be like a double-edged sword that is not only invited to judge the thoughts and attitudes of the heart but also to be practiced by us the firstfruits of all God created! Rarely do we listen to God's word but instead try to speak our truth into it so that we might receive justification for the sins that we so thoroughly enjoy! Surely the religion that God accepts as pure and faultless requires far more from the redeemed than platitudes of pretend righteousness that at best can only offer ashes of hypocrisy upon His holy altar! In today's passage in James 1:19-26 we are going to learn that for religion to be pure and faultless it be based on listening and obeying the word which means keeping a tight reign on one's tongue, taking care of the widows and orphans and to keep from being polluted by the world.

Birth Through the Word of Truth

“He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created” (18)

When James states “God chose” he does not mean “election”¹ but with the same free will that God demonstrated in the creation story of Genesis out of His grace God chose to

¹ Grant R. Osborne, *James: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 44.

give humanity the means by which one could be born into His family and kingdom!² This good and perfect gift did not come from “human desire which leads to sin and death”³ (1:15) but from God’s desire to “take His word and write it upon our hearts!”⁴ His act of grace demonstrates the essence of His



character,⁵ one who “does not change like shifting shadows” (1:17) but always filled with love, grace, and mercy. For James the new birth is accomplished through the “word of truth.” God spoke and all

creation exists,⁶ but the written word is the instrument by which the Gospel and salvation are revealed.⁷ Paul states that “faith comes from hearing the message” (Romans 10:17) and

Peter says that “you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23). It is in the grand narrative of the word of God that we learn “how God lovingly brought us back to Him by sacrificing His Son on the cross so we could experience forgiveness of sin and new life.”⁸ The new birth James refers to is the same one that John expresses as “birth from above” (John 1:12-13, 3:3), and Paul calls a Spirit-Created new life (Galatians 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 36, 45).⁹ James finishes verse eighteen by stating that the purpose of this new birth is that “we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created” (18c).¹⁰ In the OT firstfruits “described the initial portion of the crop that was set apart for God (Exodus 23:16–19; Numbers 18:13)¹¹ In the NT firstfruits is a term often used to refer to Christians (2 Thess. 2:13; Rev. 14:4; and also Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15)¹² In view of both of these definitions James is stating that those who experience the new birth through belief in the Gospel message are to be consecrated

² Scot McKnight, [The Letter of James](#), The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 128–129.

³ Scot McKnight, [The Letter of James](#), The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 129.

⁴ David Platt, [Exalting Jesus in James](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:16–18.

⁵ Peter H. Davids, [James](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 38.

⁶ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 45.

⁷ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 57.

⁸ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 44–45.

⁹ Scot McKnight, [The Letter of James](#), The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 130.

¹⁰ John Dickson, [James: The Wisdom of the Brother of Jesus](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2020), 25.

¹¹ John Dickson, [James: The Wisdom of the Brother of Jesus](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2020), 25.

¹² Douglas J. Moo, [The Letter of James](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2000), 79.

unto God and as such are to be lights or a foretaste of His transformative grace now and a “preview of the coming harvest”¹³ when God “makes all things new in all creation.”¹⁴ Considering the grace and mercy you have received, have you truly set yourself apart for God and are you as the firstfruit of all He created reading the word by which you were saved and obeying the laws God has written on your heart?

Accepting the Word

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.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” (19-21)

While it appears that these verses are not directly “related to what came before or what comes after”¹⁵ them I

¹³ John Dickson, *James: The Wisdom of the Brother of Jesus*, ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2020), 25.

¹⁴ David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in James* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:16–18.

¹⁵ Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 95.

¹⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 37A, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 199.

¹⁷ David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in James* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:19–25.

believe James is making a “coherent argument”¹⁶ that as firstfruits having been created by the word in verse eighteen,¹⁷ believers are expected to be set apart for God by loving each other and obeying His word! James begins by giving a “wisdom proverb relating to anger and the misuse of the tongue that was



often seen in ancient Jewish writings.”¹⁸ To emulate God who describes Himself as “gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness” (Exodus 34:6)¹⁹ the firstfruits must be

“quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (19). James is addressing the tendency to “naturally form opinions and to announce verdicts on every situation and person.”²⁰ The book of Proverbs states that “too much talk leads to sin” but those who “hold their tongues tend to be wise” (10:19, 29:11).²¹

¹⁸ Grant R. Osborne, *James: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 49.

¹⁹ Mariam Kamell-Kovalishyn and Josiah McDermott, “James,” in *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, ed. J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020), 1257.

²⁰ R. Kent Hughes, *James: Faith That Works*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 66.

²¹ R. Kent Hughes, *James: Faith That Works*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 66.

We must be willing to “walk a mile” in another person’s shoes so that we might better understand their situation, thoughts, fears, dreams, and goals before trying to speak truth into their lives. When we speak without first listening then our “unreasoned, quick, and angry outbursts” will lead to hurt feelings and destroyed relationships!²²

To be righteous in God’s sight not only do our words need to be guarded but also our attitudes. Jesus warns, “anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment” (Matthew 5:22)²³ and later in chapter three James warns, “with the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be” (3:9-10). Human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires from His firstfruits because it is the “by-product of a self-centered life”²⁴ that does not put others first and does not demonstrate we are servants to

²² Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 50.

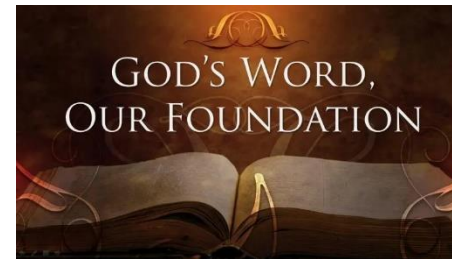
²³ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 67.

²⁴ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 51.

²⁵ David Platt, [Exalting Jesus in James](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:19–21.

all within the body of Christ (Philippians 2:3; Matthew 20:26-28)!

Being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry does not just relate to how we communicate in a loving manner with our fellow believers but also relates to reading, sharing and obeying God’s word. We are to humbly approach God’s word which means learning to listen to what He has to say.²⁵ Living in a culture that is self-absorbed, busy, and dependent on visual



media to keep one’s attention,²⁶ our devotions if they occur at all, tend to be “Lord speak to me!

You have sixty seconds!”²⁷ If the firstfruits are to invite God to plant furrows of righteousness in their hearts then when reading His word their attitudes must be like Samuel, “speak, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:10).²⁸ Also, James warns us to avoid the tendency to “speak into” God’s word an interpretation that justifies our sinful ways²⁹ and when we cannot do so becoming angry with God for giving us a such a profound counter-cultural way to live our lives! We will never be right in

²⁶ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 64.

²⁷ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 64.

²⁸ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 65.

²⁹ David Platt, [Exalting Jesus in James](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:19–21.

God's sight with "human foolishness" for God's ways are always right and higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). Since "iron sharpens iron" (Proverbs 27:17) within the body of Christ we must also be careful to remain humble, and always willing to have a "listening, teachable spirit!"³⁰

"James knew that often people do not really listen to the Word as it is taught, they foolishly speak out without thinking, one gets angry, another gets angry, and the church is no longer a lighthouse but a towering inferno!"³¹

Do not be defensive but open to the word of God when presented by others and if one disagrees then in forbearance, with kindness, humility, and respect collectively pray for the Spirit to not only reveal the right interpretation but also that all might accept it!

Not only does God's word give life but also is meant to transform one's life.³² To be the kind of firstfruits God expects

³⁰ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 66.

³¹ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 66.

³² John Dickson, [James: The Wisdom of the Brother of Jesus](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2020), 29.

³³ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 52.

one must "get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent" (21a) in our lives. "Filth" for James points not to just washing but taking off the set of clothes³³ that characterized our "pre-Christian behavior," i.e., the old sinful nature (Rom. 13:12;



Eph. 4:22, 25; Col. 3:8; Heb. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:1).³⁴

While the use of the word "therefore" directly ties³⁵ the filth to the "unwillingness to listen, a sinful tongue, and unrighteous anger"³⁶ of verse 19-20, it would also relate to doing anything

that contradicts God's word of truth in general.³⁷ For example Apostle Peter states we have "spent enough time doing what the pagans chose" and therefore are to get rid of "all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander" (1 Peter 2:1, 4:3). To remove the old garments and put on the new ones like Joshua in

³⁴ Douglas J. Moo, [James: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 16, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 84.

³⁵ Douglas J. Moo, [James: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 16, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 83.

³⁶ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 68.

³⁷ Peter H. Davids, [James](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 40.

Zechariah 3:3-4,³⁸ we must not only be sorry for having sinned but also repent and ask the Lord to help us to no longer love or commit the sin that is so prevalent in our lives!³⁹ To accomplish this James states we must be quick to listen to God’s word, slow to try to speak into God’s word, and never become angry with the commands God has given to us! When James states we are to “humbly accept the word implanted in us” (21b) this is likely a reference to Jeremiah who stated God would write His laws on our hearts (31:31-34) and Ezekiel who said God would place His Spirit in us (36).⁴⁰

With great humility and through divine aid we are to “cast off sin and receive the word in complete reliance on God”⁴¹ with the promise that when we obey the word implanted in us it “will take root and bear much fruit”⁴² for the kingdom of God.

While obeying God’s word does not save us it is proof that our roots are deep and strong,⁴³ firmly implanted in the word by which we have received eternal life! Do you read God’s word

³⁸ Douglas J. Moo, [James: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 16, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 84.

³⁹ George M. Stulac, [James](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), Jas 1:21.

⁴⁰ David Platt, [Exalting Jesus in James](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:19–21.

⁴¹ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 52.

with the intent of being transformed into His likeness and when your read of a sin you are committing do you repent, or do you speak into His word things from your sinful nature to justify the sin you so dearly love? And has the word implanted in you resulted in a new way of living in all areas of your life?

Living the Word

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do” (22-25)

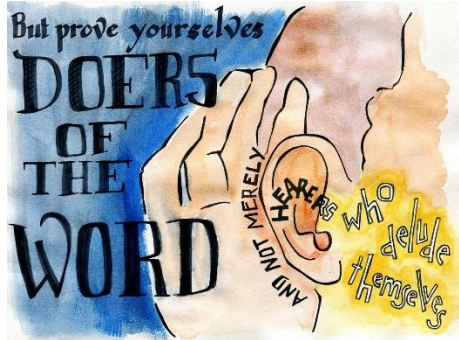
Accepting the word that is implanted in a person requires him/her to not just listen but doing what it says.⁴⁴ To accept Jesus and then live contrary to what He says is to deceive oneself

⁴² Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 52.

⁴³ David P. Nystrom, [James](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 93.

⁴⁴ John Dickson, [James: The Wisdom of the Brother of Jesus](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2020), 30.

(1 John 2:4).⁴⁵ Just because God has written his laws upon our hearts does not automatically lead to holiness⁴⁶ any more than merely reading a menu means you are no longer hungry and in need of food!⁴⁷ Until we allow His word to “confront,



challenge, convict and change our thoughts, words and deeds”⁴⁸ we fall prey to thinking our way to live is sufficient to please a holy God,⁴⁹ which amounts to nothing more than self-delusion (Ezekiel 33:30-32).⁵⁰

While Jesus loves us unconditionally, friendship and belonging in His family is proven through obedience (John 15:14; 1 John 2:4).⁵¹ To emphasize how important it is to listen and obey James tells us a “short parable describing the kind of person who looks intently into the word without doing anything about it.”⁵² James says to listen and not obey God’s word is “like someone

who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like” (24). Mirrors in James day were made of polished metal, usually bronze or silver if one was rich.⁵³ How foolish it would be to look into a mirror when one does not care nor intends to do anything about the imperfections one sees!⁵⁴

The word implanted in us for James is like a mirror into one’s soul in which one sees the “reflection of a totally holy, transcendent, awesome God”⁵⁵ who reveals to us our sin to be repented and righteousness to be embraced! To listen to God’s word and see the “true depths of our sin”⁵⁶ is not enough, we need to be transformed!

⁴⁵ David Platt, [Exalting Jesus in James](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:22.

⁴⁶ Douglas J. Moo, [The Letter of James](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2000), 89.

⁴⁷ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 76.

⁴⁸ David Platt, [Exalting Jesus in James](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:22.

⁴⁹ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 54.

⁵⁰ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Jas 1:22.

⁵¹ David Platt, [Exalting Jesus in James](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:22.

⁵² Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 55.

⁵³ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 55.

⁵⁴ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 55.

⁵⁵ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 75.

⁵⁶ R. Kent Hughes, [James: Faith That Works](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 73.

Instead of only listening to God’s word and being deceived, we are to “look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continue in it,” through our obedience (25)! For James the perfect law is the word of truth, “the Christian gospel fulfilling the Torah message of salvation or deliverance of sin.”⁵⁷ It is by obeying the word that one is “liberated from the power of sin and self,”⁵⁸ but also the means of being blessed by God not only here and now but also in the rewards one will eternally receive!⁵⁹ So, let me ask a very personal question: are you listening to God’s word with the intent to be transformed into His likeness or are you merely trying to check a “done good” box that is nothing more than a box of deception because it produces no change in your life?

Being Pure and Faultless

“²⁶Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look

after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (26-27).

James concludes by defining religion that God the Father accepts as pure and faultless as having three primary activities: “care in speech, concern for the helpless in society, and the avoidance of worldly attitudes and values.”⁶⁰ The term “religion” stresses the “cultic”⁶¹ or external aspects of worship such as “church attendance, almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.”⁶² James reminds us that the external actions are “empty or meaningless,”⁶³ and dare I say hypocritical, unless they come from an “internal character that pleases God.”⁶⁴ The first mark of pure and faultless religion is to keep a tight reign on one’s tongue. Like



⁵⁷ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 56.

⁵⁸ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 56.

⁵⁹ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 57–58.

⁶⁰ Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation](#), vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 97.

⁶¹ Darian R. Lockett and Craig A. Evans, “James,” in *John’s Gospel, Hebrews–Revelation*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition., The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary (Colorado Springs, CO; Paris, ON; Eastbourne: David C Cook, 2005), 271.

⁶² A.T. Robertson, [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Jas 1:26.

⁶³ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 60.

⁶⁴ Grant R. Osborne, [James: Verse by Verse](#), Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 61.

the word of truth being a mirror of one's soul, the tongue is a perfect barometer to reflect what is in a person's heart!⁶⁵ Jesus warned the Pharisees that the mouth only speaks what the heart is full of (Matthew 12:34-37).⁶⁶ Since all of us still wrestle with our sinful natures, James says that like a horse we are to put a bit in our mouths to ensure no unwholesome talk, falsehood, or gossip come out of our mouths (Ephesians 4:25-29).⁶⁷ While today's culture encourages speaking anything you think,⁶⁸ unless only those things that honor and glorify God comes from our mouths then our words will be a "witness of faith that is worthless!"⁶⁹ The second mark of pure and faultless religion is to look after the orphans and widows. In ancient times those who had no family to care for them⁷⁰ had "few rights, very little power, no status and, without any social welfare system in the Roman empire, they were frequently impoverished."⁷¹ God as the "defender, sustainer, strength and provider for such people,"⁷² wants His firstfruits to "see" their needs and respond by sharing not only their material possessions but also their time so that their love might not be with just "words or speech but with actions and in truth" (1

⁶⁵ David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in James* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:26.

⁶⁶ David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in James* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:26.

⁶⁷ R. Kent Hughes, *James: Faith That Works*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 81.

⁶⁸ David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in James* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:26.

⁶⁹ John Dickson, *James: The Wisdom of the Brother of Jesus*, ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2020), 32.

⁷⁰ Grant R. Osborne, *James: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 60.

John 3:17-18).⁷³ And finally the mark of pure and faultless religion goes back to verses 22 to 25, keep yourself from being polluted by the world by listening and obeying the word of truth!

In today's passage James reminds us that internal purity must be balanced with good deeds⁷⁴ and for deeds to be good they must be grounded in the truth in which they reside as pure and faultless!

Let me leave you with one final question: is your religion acceptable to God through the listening, obeying, and practicing His word ... if not your worship is but "mere ashes upon the altar!"⁷⁵

⁷¹ John Dickson, *James: The Wisdom of the Brother of Jesus*, ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2020), 33.

⁷² David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in James* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), Jas 1:27.

⁷³ R. Kent Hughes, *James: Faith That Works*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 84.

⁷⁴ Grant R. Osborne, *James: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 61.

⁷⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *James: Faith That Works*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 83.