

Mirror, Mirror On The Shelf

Text : **James 1: 19-27 ; Daniel 5: 20-27**

S#1.

S#2.

A. Though we have not undertaken a verse by verse study, we are taking lessons from texts in the book of James.

1. James was the first book of the New Testament to be written.
2. It was written by our Lord's half-brother, James sometime before 49 A.D..
3. Often called the Proverbs of the New Testament. (*Actually more continuity than ...*)
4. It has more of the teachings of Jesus than any other book, c.f., sermon on the Mount.
5. This book was probably addresses to members of the Jerusalem church that fled.

B. We have seen that James tells the brethren :

1. Though James was the brother of Jesus, he humbly identified himself as His servant.
2. To have the proper attitude toward their persecutions so their faith will grow.
3. Trials can produce positive fruit in one's live if his attitude is proper.
4. God promised to help us understand and overcome our trials.
5. Life is brief so we should be grateful and live ready for it to end.
6. Satan uses the desires of our flesh to tempt us, but God never tempts.
7. We must consider God's will in all our plans and endeavors. (*not reign our own life*)
8. James warns us about allowing ourselves to be deceived and about self-deception.
9. One can only be born again by allowing the word to produce faith in his heart.

S#3.

C. With this lesson we'll consider the necessity of conforming to God's standard.

James 1: 22-25 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers **S#4.** who delude themselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **24** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

D. We will consider the following :

S#5.

1. It is assumed that everyone will look in God's mirror. (*Written to Christians*)
2. Reading or hearing God's word is like looking in a mirror.
3. Looking in a mirror is only of value if one responds to what he sees.
4. The mirror of God must foster permanent changes.

I. Our text assumes the hearing of the word in some form.**S#6.**

A. **James 1: 22** – But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

S#7.

B. This book is written to Christians.

1. Vs. **1** – To the twelve tribes that are dispersed abroad
2. Vs. **2** – Consider it all joy, my brethren, when ...
3. Vs. **16** – ... deceived, my beloved brethren.

C. By nature followers of Christ (God) long to learn more about Him.

S#8.

1. **Psa. 119: 20** – My soul is crushed with longing after Your ordinances at all times.
2. In order to follow Jesus we must hear His words.
 - a. **John 10: 27** – My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;
 - b. The only place one can hear the voice of Jesus is in His revealed words.

D. Christians are draw to God's word as the source of spiritual life.

1. **Matt. 4: 4** – ... It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'
2. Jesus gives to us that bread of life which emanates from Him.

John 6: 35 – Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

S#9.

**** The word is of no value until it is taken off the shelf and consumed.**

S#10.**II. James compares reading or hearing the word to looking in a mirror.****S#11.**

A. **James 1: 23-24** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **24** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was

S#12.

B. Mirrors have been around since before men started recording history.

S#13.

1. Mirrors have been unearthed by archeologists dating far back in ancient times.
 - a. The claim they are at least 6000 years old. (*wheel is only 3500 years old*)
 - b. They are made of polished volcanic rock called "obsidian."
 - c. Mirrors made of polished metal have been dated back 2000 years B.C.
2. In the first century, James would have seen glass mirrors with lead backing.

C. Looking in a mirror is only productive if one responds to what he sees. S#14.

1. For some looking in a mirror is simply an exercise in vanity.
 - a. J.J. could not pass a mirror without checking his appearance.
 - b. Jimmy would stand in front of a mirror and verbally admire himself.
2. Most of us are dismayed by what we see in the mirror first thing each morning.
 - a. I make an attempt at combing my hair before I look in the mirror. (*self-image*)
 - b. We want to make ourselves “presentable” before allowing others to see us.
 - c. We make jokes about women, but men also spend time in front of the mirror.
3. The utility of a mirror is that it enables us to correct our defects.
 - a. We can make sure the dirt is washed off our face.
 - b. When the wind is blowing, we can re-comb our hair.
 - c. Women can make sure their war paint adequately camouflages shortfalls.

D. A mirror reveals the reality of one’s appearance, but does not repair it. S#15.

1. One must have the confidence that what they see in the mirror is accurate.
 - a. Carnivals often have a hall of mirrors that distort one’s appearance.
 - b. Rear view mirrors very often distort the distance of cars behind.
2. We don’t always see what we hope to see in the mirror.
 - a. My late wife hated our friend’s bathroom mirror because it showed every flaw.
 - b. *When washing my hands after a meeting, I saw that I had not combed my hair.*
3. No matter how long we stare at a mirror, the image we see remains the same.

III. Like a mirror, the word is only of value if one acts upon what he sees in it. S#16.**A. Once one sees that his hair is windblown, he can comb it.**

1. The mirror doesn’t fix the problem, but it is necessary to clarify the problem.
2. By watching in the mirror one is able to comb his or hair in a proper way.

B. God’s word is the mirror which reveals our soul. S#17.

1. By nature, most of us view ourselves as being good people.
 - a. When we don’t feel we are good people, we have difficulty dealing with guilt.
 - b. Psychologists condemn religion for making people feel guilty.
 - c. They do not understand that Christianity enables one to live free of guilt.

2. We cannot depend on our own opinion of ourselves because we deceive ourselves.

Jer. 17:9-10 The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; S#18.
Who can understand it?

3. God commands us to keep on examining ourselves. **S#19.**

- a. **II Cor. 13: 5** – Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!
Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you — unless indeed you fail the test?

- b. **How** can we examine ourselves ?

C. The Christian must constantly be measuring himself against God's standard.

1. People have a strong tendency to compare themselves to other people.
 - a. There is always someone who is bad enough to make us look good.
 - b. **III.** – *Football team all slowed down equally doing wind-sprints to appear running.*
 - c. **Cultural** standards are just like that football team; “As long as we're the same...”
2. The Apostle admonishes us that doing this is foolishness.

II Cor. 10: 12 – For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

D. God is continually comparing us to His standard. **S#20.**

1. Remember the words God communicated to King Belshazzar :
Dan. 5: 27 – **TEKEL** — you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient.
2. The standard by which God will evaluate us is His revealed word.
John 12: 48 – He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. **S#21.**
3. God is monitoring our motives as well as our actions. **S#22.**

I Cor. 4: 5 – Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

E. Knowledge cannot be substituted for fruitfulness. **S#23.**

1. We learn from the word to be equipped for doing the will of God.
 - a. **II Tim. 3: 16-17** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
 - b. The purpose of studying the word is to prepare one “for every good work.”

2. Jesus reveals everything we need to know because only those who obey are saved

a. **Matt. 7: 21** – Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. **S#24.**

b. This involves two things : 1) Knowing God's will 2) Surrendering your will

3. **ILL**— *My uncle knew how to fix things, but could not do it.*

IV. The mirror of the word must be used to make permanent change. **S#25.**

A. Failure to make changes after reading the word is dangerous.

1. If we do not internalize and practice what we hear / read, we forget it.

a. **James 1: 24** – for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was **S#26.**

b. Survey said, "Hearers remembers 30% for six hours, but only 5% for 6 days."

2. We become hardened to a message we hear repeatedly and do not practice.

a. **II Cor. 3: 14** – But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.

b. We become like children tuning out mama. **S#27.**

B. The word is of no value until it becomes part of our lives and our world view.

1. Jesus does not consider us as followers unless we are practicing what He teaches.

a. **John 15: 14** – You are My friends if you do what I command you. **S#28.**

b. **Luk 6: 46** – Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? (*bldg house*)

2. The blessing comes only after we are practicing it

Luke 11: 28 – But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it." **S#29.**

C. You and I will be held to a much stricter standard because we abundant access.

Luke 12: 48b – From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more. **S#30.**

D. You and I have God's mirror ever before us. (Athenian just wanted to be entertained)

1. How are we responding to it ? **Are we doers of the word or just hearers ?**

2. If the word of God is not having an effect on your life **BE ALARMED !** **S#31.**

INVITATION : Read 4.5 pages every day and apply something to you life.

S#32. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**James 1: 12-25**

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; **20** for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. **21** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. **22** But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **24** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Daniel 5: 20-27

20 But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne and his glory was taken away from him. **21** "He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like that of beasts, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes. **22** "Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, **23** but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified. **24** "Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out.

25 "Now this is the inscription that was written out: ' MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.' **26** "This is the interpretation of the message: 'MENE' — God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. **27** " 'TEKEL' — you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. **28** " 'PERES' — your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.