



## midweek ministry @ Ballyloughan


worshipping, growing, caring, serving, engaging

James: A down-to-earth faith  
3 - How to get the most from the Bible (1:19-27)  
Notes for 24<sup>th</sup> October Teaching Night

- What three searching, practical tests does James give of how we know whether we're really putting God's Word into practice?
- Think through how these verses might change the way you approach Bible reading? Are there any practical steps you can take to help you remember it and put it into practice? What is Jesus warning for those who are just content to listen (Matthew 7: 24-29)?

 SERVING. In our country Bibles are everywhere – the problem we have is using them and allowing them to change our lives. For many in the world however, the problem is that they would love to have access to God's Word, but don't. The Bible Society is an organisation that seeks to place Bibles in the hands of those who don't have access to one. They have produced 'The Ultimate Alternative Gift catalogue' giving suggestions of gifts that we could make to place God's Word in the hands of people who don't have access to it. Details are available in your group tonight, or at [www.biblesociety.org.uk/alternative](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/alternative) gifts. For example, perhaps your group could raise £30 to provide Bibles for 10 young people in Ghana who deeply hunger for a copy of God's Word?

 ENGAGING. In two weeks time we will be holding our table quiz in aid of Action Cancer. Invitations have been available for you to distribute to friends. Remember, we're using this as an opportunity to bring along friends who don't attend church. Tonight each group is receiving a request for help with catering: food to provide, as well as one person to help with preparation and serving, and one person to help with clearing up. Please take time to pray for this event, for those whom you'll bring. There will be no 'epilogue' as such – we're just trying to build bridges with people.

 CARING. Spend time hearing how each other's weeks and lives are going and taking note of any particular prayer needs. God's Word gives us great guidance as to how we can pray for one another. For example, many of Paul's prayers go way beyond praying about health issues, while those are important. Read Colossians 1 vs 9-14. Paul prays there that the Christians would have: renewed minds (v9), fruitful and pleasing lives (v10) (i.e. that they wouldn't just know the word but do it), inner strength (v11), thankful hearts (v12). Why not use this as a basis for praying for each other.

Bibles are everywhere. The Bible is a book of blessing – it promises strength, hope, wisdom, power and purpose. But just because you have a Bible doesn't mean that you're going to get the benefit from it. Being blessed by the Bible is not automatic. James gives us three steps on how to get the most from the Bible...

### I. I MUST \_\_\_\_\_ GOD'S WORD.

*"...accept the word planted in you, which can save you."* v21

If we are going to get the most out of God's Word, if we are to grow as followers of Christ, if we're to avoid being stuck in infancy as Christians, if we are to become stronger and deeper and more mature as Christ's people, then we must go on receiving, welcoming God's Word into our lives. James uses the illustration of God's Word being 'planted' in our lives like a seed. The important thing for a seed is that it has the right conditions in which to grow. It is the same with God's Word – we need to have receptive conditions, prepared hearts in which it can grow. He mentions 3 barriers to God's Word being properly received into our lives...

#### a. The barrier of \_\_\_\_\_.

*"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."* v19

#### b. The barrier of \_\_\_\_\_.

*"get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word..."* v21

#### c. The barrier of \_\_\_\_\_.

*"humbly accept the word planted in you..."* v21

### II. I MUST \_\_\_\_\_ ON GOD'S WORD.

*"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 immediately goes away and forgets what he looks like."* v23

For a mirror to do us any good we've got to reflect on what we see there. Two ways to reflect on God's Word...

**a. \_\_\_\_\_ into it.**

*"the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom..." v25*

S – is there a sin to confess?

P – is there a promise to claim?

A – is there an attitude to change?

C – is there a command to obey?

E – is there an example to follow?

P – is there a prayer to pray?

E – is there an error to avoid?

T – is there a truth to believe?

S – is there something to thank God for?

**b. \_\_\_\_\_ on it.**

*"But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this..." v25*

*"Blessed is the man...whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates (or chews the cud) day and night..." Psalm 1*

**III. I MUST \_\_\_\_\_ TO GOD'S WORD.**

*"Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." v22*

*"the man who doesn't forget what he has heard, but does it – he will be blessed in what he does." v25*

*"now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." John 13v17*

James concludes with three practical examples of putting God's Word into practice – these are the main headings for what he'll talk about later in his letter...

a. **a** \_\_\_\_\_. *"If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless." v26*

b. **a** \_\_\_\_\_. *"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..." v27*

c. **a** \_\_\_\_\_. *"keep oneself from being polluted by the world." v27*

Follow-on Material for 17<sup>th</sup> October

Please do not feel that you have to stick rigidly to this material!



**WORSHIPPING.** Feel free to use your own ideas to worship God together as a group! One thing we did say last week is that God's Word contains various prayers and songs of worship to God. For example: Moses and Miriam's song in Exodus 15; Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2; David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29: 10-13; the Psalms; the Lord's prayer; the praise songs of heaven (Revelation 4 & 5). Perhaps those who wish to could take even just a verse from any of these prayers and pray them in their own words.



**GROWING**

- How many Bibles do you have in your home?!

Read James 1: 19-27

- What barriers does James indicate there are to us properly receiving God's Word into our lives? Give practical examples of how each of these barriers might affect us?
- What other 'barriers' may we have in our lives that prevent us from effectively receiving God's Word? How can such barriers be overcome?
- James says that we should be 'quick to listen.' Why is listening such an important skill for Christians?
- How can we be in danger of treating the Bible just like we would take a cursory glance in a mirror?
- Bible reading will very quickly become lifeless and routine if we don't really let God's Word penetrate our lives. But what if you start to take it seriously? v25
- Why do you think James uses the phrase 'the perfect law that gives freedom' to describe the Bible? How do some people view the teaching of the Bible?