

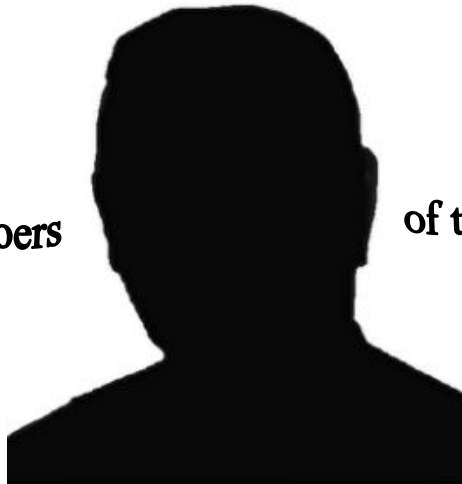
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Hearers Only

But be doers



of the Word

*.... I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith
that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3 NIV*

Reviewed by: Dr. L. Duncan

Hearers Only

James 1:22-25 (NKJV), *“But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word of God and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. **But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.**”*

Several years ago, my wife and I were asked to counsel a couple that were going through a very difficult, marriage threatening storm. After several counseling sessions, through the aide of the Holy Spirit, we found what we believed to be the root cause of their problems. After explaining to them what we thought to be the root cause of their problems, we gave them the course of action to uproot the source of their problems and save their marriage. However, they chose not to be doers with the direction we gave them but hearers only with our clear approach to solving their problems. Needless to say, this couple eventually got divorced and I believe it was largely because they chose to be hearers only regarding the clear direction we gave them to save their marriage.

Many Christians are much like this couple when it comes to God’s Word. That is to say, they hear sermon after sermon, Sunday after Sunday that contain God’s direction for their lives, the solutions to their problems, the areas in need of correction and never become doers of the Word but hearers only. In addition to the “hearers only” you find in church on Sunday morning, you find those that are there for the entertainment value of the church or something other than the Word of God. It’s not uncommon to hear folks say, “We had a good time in the Lord today.”, but when asked what the sermon was about they don’t know. This is not to say church should not be a joyful, uplifting time, it should, but it is to say that the Word of God is of huge significance if one intends to grow spiritually.

In my walk with the Lord, I’ve run across many Christians that could upon request quote numerous Bible verses verbatim. Some could even explain the setting or give the date and time when a particular passage was written. Still yet, some could dissect the Greek or Hebrew words to further clarify the meaning of a given verse. However, all of our knowledge of God’s Word and our ability to quote, explain and dissect it is of little value to us until we become doers of the Word and not learners or hearers only.

James, the Lord's brother, gives us two keys as to why we should not be hearers only but doers of the Word:

Key #1 – James says, if we are hearers only and not doers, “we deceive ourselves.” That is to say, we don't deceive God, our church family, biological family, friends or even our children; everybody sees when we are not lining our lives up with God's Word except us. Self deceit is the worst type of deceit because you've lied to the person you've known the longest, slept with all your life, feed all your life, etc. That person is yourself.

Key #2 – James compares God's Word to that of a mirror that shows us exactly who we are. Mirrors never lie, every blemish, every hair out of place, every wrinkle and pimple are seen when we look into a mirror. God's Word acts like a spiritual mirror, it shows us the sinful areas in our lives that we need to work on. God's Word tells us exactly where we are spiritually and which areas of our lives are not pleasing to God. Who gets up in the morning and looks into the mirror, sees crust on their face, their hair in need of combing, their teeth covered with plaque and walks away from the mirror and does nothing to correct what they've just seen and forgets what they've seen? Nobody. James is saying the Word we hear, either on Sunday in church, at Bible Class or through your own personal study, is showing us our spiritual condition. Just the same way we would go get a rag to wash our face to clean off the crust, a comb to fix our hair and a toothbrush and toothpaste to remove the plaque we saw in the mirror, we should be, through the aide of the Holy Spirit, making adjustments to our lives each time the Word of God shows us areas that need work. If we ever intend to please God and grow spiritually, we must not be “hearers only” but doers of God's Word, this is what God is pleased with.

Finally, James says the one who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. So the next time you hear God's Word, through preaching on Sunday, weekly Bible Class or your own personal studies, do what it says, don't be a hearer only.

In closing, I'd like to offer four steps to becoming doers of God's Word:

Step #1 – Every Sunday you attend church, when the Word of God is preached or taught, make a decision to ignore the theatrics, or anything else that distracts you while the Word of God is coming forth.

Step #2 – Change your thinking about why you come to church, Bible Class, and have your personal studies. You do not come to church to be entertained, you come to hear Gods' Word and apply it to your life. You do not come to Bible Class just to hang out, you come to be taught God's Word. You do not have personal studies just to say you read the Bible and impress folks, you have personal studies to equip yourself for your Christian journey and develop spiritually.

Step #3 – Every time the Word of God is preached or taught, ask yourself:

1. How does it apply to me?
2. What course of action will I take to be a doer of the Word I just received?

Step #4 – Take notes during sermons and Bible Study, highlight the part that applies to you. Occasionally, go over your notes to be sure you've applied the Word to your life.

Follow these steps and I believe you will become doers of God's Word and not hearers only. Like the couple I mentioned, your choice to either be "hearers" or "doers" of God's Word will greatly impact your life, for better if you become "doers" for worse by becoming or remaining "hearers only", it's your choice!!

God Bless,
Pastor D. M. Duncan

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