

The Life of the Believer

Lesson #5

James 1:19-2:26

In the remainder of James' letter written to believers, he teaches how to live in a way that is pleasing to the Lord.

Attitude – James 1:19-25

1. What does James say the proper attitude should be for a believer? (James 1:19)
2. Why is choosing to have that attitude important? (James 1:20)
3. What practical steps does James give that are necessary if one is to be successful in having this attitude? (James 1:21)
4. James does not want his audience to miss his point so he restates it in very clear terms. What does James say is absolutely necessary if one is to *"bring about the righteous life God desires?"* (James 1:22)

Reflect on these words of James 1:22. This is not a new command but a common theme that runs throughout the Old and New Testaments. How does that apply to your life today - and what does that require?

5. How does James describe someone who has the privilege of *"listening to (God's) Word but does not do what it says?"* (James 1:23, 24)
6. In contrast, James lays out the right way. Using James 1:25:
 - What does this man (person) do?

- What is the benefit of this?

Authentic Faith – James 1:26-27

7. Next, James teaches on how to know if your faith in Jesus Christ is authentic. What is James' first "test" and what does he say about it? (James 1:26)
8. What does he say will be evident in the life of an authentic believer, one who not only believes Jesus is Savior but obeys his word? (James 1:27)

Discrimination – James 2:1-13

9. Beginning with the introduction, "*My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism,*" what common cultural practice does James use to illustrate this teaching? (James 2:2, 3)
10. What is his point with this illustration? (James 2:4)
11. Why does James say it is important not to discriminate among believers? (James 2:5)
12. But the tendency is to give preference to the rich. By doing so, what does James say they are doing to the poor? (James 2:6a)
13. What does he remind them about the rich whom they tend to cater to? (James 2:6, 7)
14. James said they are doing right when they keep the "Royal law." What is the "Royal law?" (James 2:8)

15. Since the “Royal law” was first given by God to Moses (Lev. 19:18) and Jesus also said this law, along with the greatest of all the commandments which is to love God (Matt. 22:34-40), what did James say believers are doing when they show favoritism? (James 2:9)
16. James also reminds his readers that keeping the law means the whole law. If you keep one law and yet stumble and break another law, you are still a lawbreaker. As believers, however, the law no longer is binding. (Paul’s explanation of that truth will be studied in the book of Galatians.) What does James say the believer’s attitude should be toward others, rich or poor? (James 2:12)
 - Why? (James 2:13)

Faith & Action – James 2:14-26

17. James continued his teaching on the life of a believer by asking questions about the value of one’s faith if there is no evidence through the way that person acts. What illustration does James give to help make his point? (James 2:15, 16)
18. What is the clear statement about faith given in James 2:17?
19. “*But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds (action).’*” How does James answer that statement? (James 2:18b)
20. James points out that to be a true believer more than faith is required. He starts by quoting the “Shema” the Jewish statement of faith from Deuteronomy 6:4, 5; there is only one God. That, James says, is good and right. However, who else believes that there is one God and trembles in fear? (James 2:19b)
21. James concludes with two examples from the Old Testament of how faith and action must work together. His first example relates to Abraham, considered the father of the Jews. What incident in Abraham’s life does James say showed his faith through his action? (James 2:21, 22)

22. How does James say God viewed this act of faith by Abraham? (James 2:23)

James said, "You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone" (James 2:24). This statement can be confusing if taken out of context. James was not talking about salvation for that comes through faith alone (book of Galatians), but how a true believer is to live his/her life. "James uses the language of justification in the typical Old Testament / Jewish manner to refer to what we would call the judgment. Against those who are suggesting that a person can be saved by faith apart from deeds, James cites Abraham to show that true faith is always revealed in deeds, and that these deeds are taken into consideration by God in the judgment."

Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids, MI, 2002), p. 102

23. On the other end of the spectrum is Rahab. What does James remind his readers about her? (James 2:25)

24. What is James' closing statement about faith in the life of a true believer? (James 2:26)

Reflect: on this teaching of James on faith and action. How does that apply in the life of a believer today?