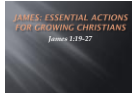


#1



James: Essential Actions For Growing Christians

James 1:19-27

#2



Here are three essential actions if we are going to continue growing as a Christian.

Be quick to receive the Word of God, verses 19-21

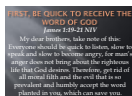
Be quick to *do* the Word of God, verses 22-25

Practically apply the Word, verse 26-27

Often we miss things in our lives because we did not know that it was available, or possible.

First, be quick to receive the Word of God, verses 19-21

#3



James 1:19-21 NIV My dear brothers, take note of this:

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. 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.

#4



You cannot be saved until you receive the Word of God.

We cannot ignore this valuable lesson.

Our greatest temptation in life is to go it on our own.

It is so easy to fall in the trap of just doing what you want to do.

If you ignore, neglect, or reject God and His word it will have eternal consequences on your soul.

The result of that kind of action is death.

James lists several things that cut down on the reception of God's Word.

Things in our own lives personally keep the Bible from becoming a living force in our lives.

This is why James tells us to be quick to listen, verse 19.

Have you heard the statement: "Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up!"

What people really mean is they know all they want to know.

They really don't want to know what God thinks, because they have made up their mind what they want to do.

That attitude will keep you from all of the blessings that God has planned for you.

Be quick to listen and slow to speak (verse 19).

I do the opposite some times.

Have you ever said: "I wish I would have thought before I spoke?"

You should have kept quiet, but you said too much, too soon, and now you are in trouble.

You have to be willing to listen instead of speaking.

You can't learn if you are always talking.

Most of us are very opinionated.

We know what should be said.

We know how to tell others what they should do.

James tells us to be slow to speak.

Learn to sit and listen rather than hanging on your own ideas.

#5



Then he tells us. "Be slow to anger" (verse 19).

Do you find it interesting that anger is mixed up with listening and speaking?

If you are going to receive what God says, you must be slow to wrath or anger.

We cannot react negatively to what God's Word says about our lives.

God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway.

His word will point out your error.

When God corrects you, what is your response?

When God speaks out against your temptations, you have to respond.

The response you take will determine the results.

Have you found out that you don't listen very good when you are mad?

The kind of anger here in James is the sort of anger that represents deep-seated, long-lasting, long-standing resentment.

If that kind of stuff is in your life, some flash point will happen that will stir it up.

When that happens, we become quick to speak and slow to listen.

This kind of thing takes us away from being receptive to living out God's Word in our daily lives.

This is opposite to Spirit-filled living.

It is completely opposite to love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, and self-control.

#6



James tells us to: "get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent" (verse 21).

The King James tells us to get rid of "the superfluity of naughtiness."

Literally, that means to get rid of the excess or remainder of evil.

Even though you are saved and your life has been changed some of our old nature is still hanging around.

James is telling us to deal with the stuff that remains.

Do you remember the battle Paul was having with this in Romans 6-8?

He recognized the power of God's salvation in his life, but he still struggled with his fleshly nature.

If we are serious about being more like Jesus Christ, we must get to the place where we are quick to receive what He says.

We must also respond by taking off all of the dirty, filthy things that remain and lay them aside.

Put them away from you.

There is nothing automatic in your spiritual life.

#7



A retired couple bought a motor home so they could travel. The husband drove it for a few hours. He finally told his wife he was tire and wanted to lie down in the back and asked her to drive for a while.

She got behind the wheel, and set the cruise control and was going down the highway.

It's great.

The thing was going so well that she got up and went to get something to drink.

She was talking to the Highway Patrol after the accident, and she indicated that she thought cruise control meant —automatic pilot.

Our Christian Life requires constant work.

It is work to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

It is work to put away the moral filth, and the residue of evil from the life, we had before we came to Christ.

If we don't deal with those things they will hinder our receiving what God has to say to us.

Hebrews 12:1 NIV "let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles"

We must receive the Word of God with meekness.

We have to get in shape instead of getting all bent out of shape.

We must take this matter of receiving God's Word seriously.

We have to be as a child before God.

Learn to sit before Him meekly.

Listen to God's Word with an open heart.

The second essential action for growing Christians is not only "Do we receive the Word?" but, "Do we do the Word?"

We must be knowledgeable of the Word.

It is critical that we live out what we have heard.



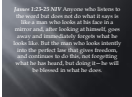
#9



James 1:22 NIV "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

It is easier said than done.

#10



James 1:23-25 NIV 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, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

*We cannot simply go into a listening mode.
Christianity is a life of action.*

#11



Hearing without doing brings self-deception.

Listening to God's Word will not make us acceptable to God.

Knowing what God has said does not make us acceptable to God.

You have to do something.

We all must start doing this as some point in our Christian life.

This text tells us to "continue to do this" (verse 25).

Charlie Brown is walking along the street, rewinding his kite string, and following it, to wherever his downed kite is. As he goes along, he is waxing philosophical to, Lucy. —In kite flying, the ratio of weight to sail area is very important. The ratio is known as sail loading and it is measured in ounces per square foot. For example, a three

foot kite with a sail area of 4.5 square feet would weigh about 2 or 3 ounces.

Lucy observes, —You know a lot about kites, don't you, Charlie Brown?

And Charlie Brown throws back his shoulders and very proudly admits, —Yes, I think I can say that I do.

By this time, the string has led them to the mouth of a large storm drain, into which the string disappears. In the last frame, Lucy digs Charlie with this question.

—If you know so much about kites, then why is your kite down the sewer?

That is exactly the problem with many Christians. We can give eloquent theological arguments.

It is important that you have a vital and working knowledge of the Bible.

My problem is that if I don't use it, I lose it.

If the Word of God convicts you of some defect, shortcoming, failure, or sin you need to deal with it.

You have to do something about what you have heard.

The Word of God will lead us to a life of love, joy, and peace.

#12

THE THIRD ESSENTIAL ACTION FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS IS THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE WORD
James 1:26-27 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that flatters itself in order to look after appearance and not to keep its inner self is dead.

The third essential action for growing Christians is the practical application of the Word.

There are many practical applications of Christian living.

James 1:26-27 NIV If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion 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.

James is not referring to religious as many people measure it.

#13



Real religion and pure religion before God involves these elements.

First, James says that if a person thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue, he deceives himself.

James just spent 19 verses talking about the various trials and temptations that are coming against us to destroy us.

When we get under enough pressure, it is easy to erupt.

Something will set you off and you will spew out a ton of speech you really wish you had not.

It is so easy to go ahead and vent.

It is not wise from a Biblical viewpoint to live by that standard.

The image James gives is clear.

Often the tongue wants to run off.

James says we need to bridle a loose tongue.

- *A tongue is loose when it constantly interrupts and dominates conversation.*
- *A tongue is loose when you are easily provoked and lash out at others.*
- *A tongue is loose when it is full of gossip and telling lies.*
- *A tongue is loose when it is full of cursing and slang*

- *A tongue is loose when it is engaged in suggestive and off-colored language.*
- *A tongue is loose when it runs others down*

A person's religion is vain who does not bridle his tongue.

If your tongue is loose, you are not going to withstand temptation or overcome trials.

James is very concerned about speech and the tongue.

When we are under stress we must take special care and take a tight reign on the tongue.

Sometimes the most effective way to deal with a fire is to close all of the doors so it starves of oxygen.

It is not a good idea to always vent our anger.

James' image reminds me of a bull rider, grabbing hold of the reins, hanging on, and not letting go.

Keep a tight grip.

Grab hold and don't let go.

#14



Second, James tells us that on a practical level we should have social concern.

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress" (James 1:27, NIV).

These were two of the most pressing issues of the Christian church of his day.

There were not government welfare programs.

There were no private fundraising efforts.

They did not have shelters for abused women or orphanages.

Christians developed a concern for the last, the least, and the lost.

They had to find answers for helping the large numbers of widows and children.

We need to understand that pure religion reaches out to those who cannot help themselves.

If James were here today, he would also consider the abused children and the homeless.

He would consider the mentally and physically handicapped.

He would address concern over those in nursing homes, prisons, and the poor.

All of this relates to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus wants to draw us out of those things.

His Word makes us aware of the need of others.

He wants us to be involved in the healing of others.

Our concerns must reach beyond self-concerns.

Jack Nelson has written a book called Hunger for Justice, in which he talks about his experience of walking through the streets of Calcutta, India, which probably has the greatest level of human suffering and misery in the world per square inch. He said, as he walked through the streets, —The poverty so enraged me that I wanted to scream at God. Then I came to a painful realization: in the suffering of the poor, God was screaming at me."

#15

This is what Jesus is saying to us.

"I was sick and you came to me. I was poor and you visited Me. I was hungry and you fed Me. I was naked and you clothed Me. You came to Me" (Matthew 25:36).



#16



The third area that James tells us as a practical application of the Word is THAT WE KEEP OURSELVES UNPOLLUTED FROM THE WORLD.

We must have personal purity in our lives.

If you look at the first 19 verses of James, you see people in many stressful situations.

All of these things stress our relationships.

They stress our family lives.

The stress of these situations, bring many people to seek some way to escape the pressures of life.

Some cave in and fall into a life of sin.

They try to escape through drugs or alcohol.

They try to escape through wrongful sex and letting all the barriers down.

The Scripture is calling us to a life of personal purity and responsibility.

Many of you face all kinds of things that could corrupt your mind and spirit.

You live and work around environments that challenge your Christian values.

In that kind of polluted world, you are called to live morally pure and unpolluted lives.

Some things are wrong.

It is wrong to be involved in homosexual activity.

It is wrong to be involved in heterosexual immorality.

It is wrong to be involved in adultery or fornication.

It is wrong to cheat on your income tax.

It is wrong to tell jokes that denigrate others.

It is wrong to have racial attitudes that are not like Christ.

It is wrong to steal from your employer.

Christians are to keep themselves unpolluted from the world.

*This is God's Word.
God is calling us to this lifestyle.*

#17



God will do anything to spare us from moral pollution that is in the world.

It is very clear that He will when we look at John 3:16.

Sin is a very real thing.

It is estrangement from God.

It is separation from God.

God looks at this very seriously.

Whether you feel this way or not is immaterial.

God holds it to be so serious that He sent His own Son into the world to die in our place.

God knows the eternal consequences of sin.

He has provided a way out.

He calls us to not just be saved, but to be converted.

He calls us to not just be challenged, but to be changed.

He calls us to be Christians when we worship, and when we are out in the world.

Let's do it in the power of the Spirit.

Let the Holy Spirit in to work in your life.