

VISIBLE TRUTH IN THE FACE OF GOD'S WORD

James 1:19–25 New Living Translation (NLT)

19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. 20 Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. 21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. 22 But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

This morning I want to talk to you on **VISIBLE TRUTH IN THE FACE OF GOD'S WORD**. The way you handle God's word says a lot about your religion – we have many Christians who cannot handle God's word aright. Lets take a journey with James again.

- James must have received a report regarding the behaviour of his fellow Jews in the diaspora and the report was not good.
- The report had to do with serious character flaws that had been observed amongst the believers and I would like to say that that report sounds like one written in our contemporary days.
- One of his concerns was the presence of anger in the life of the believers.

James 1: 19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. 20 Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

- A believer with an angry disposition cannot influence others unto godliness.
- There is nothing as disheartening as seeing a believer in a fit of rage – I can tell you now that an angry believer is not a nice person to be around. No matter how provoked a believer is, there is an expectation for some level of self control.
- An angry believer will sound worse than an unsaved person, an angry believer will spew words that kill everyone around him.
- An angry believer will break the pots in the kitchen, an angry believer will slam the door in the face of his wife.

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- Uncontrolled anger makes you weak and will cause you to do the most regrettable of things – *Proverbs 16:32 A man slow to anger is better than a strong man; and he that governs his temper better than he that takes a city.*
- James says that try to be quick to listen and slow to get angry – this is the reason why you have 2 ears and only one mouth.
- It is for you to be more attentive to learning and to receive information than it is to give out information. Your ears are readily open whereas your tongue is heavily guarded by a row of 32 soldiers in the form of your teeth.

- James' second concern was the constant moral failure among the believers.

James 1: 21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives...

- To show how deep the moral failure had gone, James uses a strong word -“filth”.
- It is the only time it is used in the New Testament and it means evil conduct considered as disgusting or offensive.
- Your truth is attractive when you aggressively deal with any hint of filth in your life.
- A regenerated person can live a godly life – this is a life that honours the one who died for you. Church, let's be intentional in dealing with self so as to be pleasing to God.
- I am not going to dwell too much on the moral failure taking place in the church because we know about it; we know the infidelity that is happening, we know about the lying that goes on, we know about the hypocrisy that goes on in church, we know about the gossiping that goes on and so forth.
- The big question is this; how do we move from these character flaws into a victorious life that is attractive to this morally bankrupt society?

James 1: 21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

- James gives us the source of the solution to this – A life lived in full submission to God's word overcomes the common human weaknesses.
- When you get into the word and the word gets into you, transformation is inevitable. The formed all that we see today – your life will be changed by the word.
- The way you handle God's word will determine how victorious you will become over self.

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- A person who has fully encountered God's word cannot remain the same;
 - It is the bread of life – food for your soul.
 - It is water – bringing refreshment to the thirsty life.
 - It is a hammer – breaking down the sin hardened heart.
 - It is like fire – burning all the dross and dirty in your life and an igniter for a life after God.
- The word that changes you, is the word received with humility.
 - The word is rendered ineffective and weak when you receive it with preconceived ideas, with arrogance and earthly wisdom.
 - Yes, the matter of avoiding anger is applicable to your day-to-day life but it has more to do with how you respond to the revealed truth of the word of God.
 - A state of wrath or anger is always unfavorable to the investigation of truth.
 - The word will change you when you study it with a calm spirit – many believers argue with the word of God, instead of willingly submitting to it.
- The word that changes you, is the word you put into action.
 - You can sit right next to a well of water for as long as you want but if you don't get up and drink the water, your thirst will remain with you.

James 1: 22 But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

 - Hearing the word and not doing it results in self-deception. Many believers are living in deception because they know the word but they have not chosen to live it out.
 - It is the word you live out that will transform your behaviour. Your blessedness is not based on how much you know – we have a lot of people who attend Bible school but who only practice 5% of what they know.
 - It is not the truth that you know but rather the one that you believe that will translate into a behaviour.
- The word that changes you, is the word you carefully study.
 - We need to master what I call walking slowly through scripture. I borrowed it from the behaviour that managers are encouraged to adopt in which they

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walk slowly down the corridor in order to make time to connect with their subordinates.

- Every time you rush through the scriptures, you miss out on the details, and you quickly forget.

James 1: 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

- The NLT says “it is like glancing at your face in a mirror” – this is smash and grab situation, an in and out type of visit. Lets dig deeper into the statement.
- The word of God is like a mirror that shows us the perfect life in Jesus. The word is the benchmark of how we must live our lives.
- Someone who spends enough time in the word will clearly appreciate the character and nature of Christ.
- With every revelation, you are able to see how far or how close you are from the life of truth.
- The longer you look at the mirror the more you see what is wrong and you get the inspiration to change.
- If you only spend 2 seconds looking in the mirror, you might leave thinking that all is well with your face – you would not have taken time to see the lipstick that is smudged or the green veggie that is stuck between your front teeth.
- The word has the power to save your spirit man as well as serve your emotions, your will power and your intellect.
- If your emotions are still running wild in the presence of the opposite sex, then maybe you have not spent enough time in the word to change you.