

# Studies in James

**Key verse:** James 1:22

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

**Kick Off**

## Study three



**Big Idea:** The implanted word of God must be worked out in practice.

Is it easy to spot those who are only hearers of the Word? What do we call these people and why do they irritate us so much?

What is our first reaction when we come across a command in Scripture that is difficult to accept?

### STUDY

**Read James 1:19-27.**

1. The word “Know” in verse 19 can be either a command (“Know this!”) or a reminder (“You already know this ...”). Which do you think makes most sense, especially in relation to v 18?
2. Is there a connection between speech, listening, and anger (v 19)? Why do you think “the anger of man does not produce the righteous life that God requires” (v 20)?
3. Have a look at Proverbs 17:27. How does the theme of anger and wisdom fit with James’ concern (cf. James 1:5)?
4. What do you think the implanted word is (v 21)?

Read Jeremiah 31:33-34, Ezekiel 36:25-27, and Titus 3:5

How do you think James’ idea of the implanted word fits with what you’ve discovered?

5. What is James asking for then, when he commands the putting off of “filth” and “prevalent evil” (v 20)?

6. What is the danger of not being a doer of the word (v 22)? Why is this so? (v 23-24)? What do you think a person sees when he looks into the mirror of God's Word?

7. What is the person who looks into the "law of freedom" meant to do and what is the result? (v 25) What sort of blessing do you think they will experience?

8. Religion is a bit of a negative word today. Why do you think James used it in v 26-27 and what do you think it signifies for him?

## THINK AND APPLY

We've seen that the commands James gives us in these verses are both challenging yet reassuring. We're not asked to pull up our bootstraps and get by through our own moral efforts. Rather we are to *recognise* the word *already* implanted, and then live it out. This tension between the Spirit's work within and our obedience on the outside is the only context within which James can make proper sense. So, contrary to Luther, who called it "the epistle of straw," James is a wonderful call to authentic Christianity based on the Spirit's work within, very much like Philippians 2:12-13.

1. How does this tension between Spirit and our obedience affect our daily lives? Do you think much about this tension?
2. Remember that James was addressed to congregations (cf. James 1:1), and so we shouldn't individualise it too much. How can we encourage one another to live as doers of the word rather than just hearers?

## PRAYER

**What can you pray about arising from this study?**



**For next week  
Read  
James 2:1-13**