

THE B-I-B-L-E: "THAT'S THE BOOK FOR ME"

Text - James 1:17-25

Introduction: Someone has written:

The B-I-B-L-E

Yes that's the book for me.

I stand alone on the Word of God, The B-I-B-L-E.

The Bible is all that the writer described it to be. It is all that anyone can ever need. If I were to sum up all that James is saying in verses 19-25, it would be, "**Just use me.**"

*One survey found that 27 percent of all Americans own at least five Bibles. Yet a poll in USA Today found that only 11 percent of Americans read the Bible every day. More than half read it less than once a month or not at all.

*Even worse, George Barna conducted a survey of "born again" Christians and found that only 18 percent (2 out of 10) read the Bible every day, and even worse, 23 percent (1 in 4) professing Christians say they never read the Bible.

It is not enough to own a Bible. One must read the Bible and use the Bible. The Bible will do a person no good if all it does is sit on the shelf or coffee table. It must be used. Let's look at these 7 verses and notice the place the Word of God is to have in our life as a believer.

1. OUR AFFECTION FOR THE WORD...HEAR!

1. In verses 19-21a, the emphasis seems to be on how we feel about the Bible. It speaks of our affection for the Bible that is revealed in our hearing of the Word of God. Luke 8:18 says, "*Take heed therefore how ye hear*" and Mark 4:24 says, "*Take heed what ye hear.*" We are to take heed "how" we hear and "what" we hear.

A. Unlimited Hearing.

1. When it comes to our hearing of the Word, we are to avail ourselves of every opportunity to hear God's Word. There should be an eagerness on our part to take advantage of every opportunity to hear God's Word. Our hearing should not be occasional or irregular. Our hearing should be unlimited. By that, I mean that we should look for and strive for every occasion and opportunity to hear

God's Word. We should not limit our opportunities to hear God's word.

2. In verse 19 James emphasizes this unlimited hearing by describing the response we should have to three particular matters. He tells us that we are to be "*swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.*"

B. Unhindered Hearing

1. Again in verse 21 we see the word "*Wherefore.*" In light of what has just been said, we are instructed to, "*lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness.*" There is not only to be a response on our part, but a removal as well. Since there is to be an unlimited hearing of the Word, there should also be an unhindered hearing of the Word. Let me explain.

2. The words "*lay apart*" simply mean, "to put off." The words are descriptive of taking off a coat or garment. In other words, there are some things that we need to get rid of in our life as it relates to how we hear.

2. OUR ACCEPTANCE OF THE WORD... RECEIVE!

1. We read in the latter part of verse 21, "*and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*" James not only talks about hearing the word, but also receiving the Word. Notice:

A. The Welcome We Are To Give

1. Notice the word "receive." It simply means, "to welcome." Like we would receive or welcome a friend into our home, we should welcome the Word of God in our life.

2. How are we to welcome the Word? We are to welcome the Word with "*meekness.*" The word was used to describe an animal that had been broken and domesticated, such as a wild horse being broken and made submissive to a master.

3. I have known of a few through the years that got mad at a preacher for what he said. Sometimes it was due to **how** he said it. I am afraid that I have upset a few through the years, both by what I said and how I said it. I do not want to

make people mad by my disposition but if I make them mad by my position, then I am not going to lose a minute's sleep over it.

B. The Work We Are To Grant

1. Verse 21 calls the Word of God the *"engrafted word."* It is literally the *"implanted"* word and means, *"to plant a seed in the ground."* At our conversion the Word was planted in our hearts. Our receiving of the Word with meekness speaks of our allowing the Word to work in our lives.

2. As believers, the Word has been planted, and we are to provide the soil that will enable the seed to grow in our life. We are to water and fertilize the Word so it can accomplish in our life that which God intended.

3. OUR ABIDING IN THE WORD... DO!

1. In verse 22 we read the words, *"But be ye."* The words speak of that which is *"continual."* It speaks of that which abides or is habitual in a person's life. The same thought is found in verse 25 when it speaks of one that *"continueth therein."* Again, the ideal is of abiding therein. There is not only to be a proper response and reception to the Word, but also a proper result. We are to abide in the Word.

2. In verses 22 James speaks of both a *"doer"* and *"hearer"* of the Word. He says, *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."* The word *"doer"* speaks of more than what a person does. It is a word that characterizes the whole person. It describes what a person becomes, more than what a person does.

3. The word *"doer"* speaks of a productive action leading to an actual result. If a person will hear and receive the Word, it will work in their life and bring about certain results in their life. It speaks of what we become as result of the working of the Word in life as well as what we do.

4. The Bible is telling us not to be someone who hears but does not get any benefit from what they hear. Again, we are to hear and receive the Word and allow it to work in our life. There are many who attend services each week who hear the Word but never welcome it into their life and allow it to work in them. All they had done is audit the Word they heard.

A. The Picture That Explains Abiding

1. In verses 23-25, James sets in contrast the *"doer"* and *"hearer only"* of the Word. The picture is of each looking into a mirror. The word *"glass"* in verse 23 speaks of a mirror. In verses 23-24 we see one who is a hearer only: *"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: [24] For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."*

2. This person looks into the mirror and the mirror reveals certain needs in their life. It shows that their face needs to be washed and their hair needs to be combed. But this person does nothing about what the mirror has revealed. As James describes, he sees what needs attending to but does nothing about it and goes their merry way and soon forgets about what needs to be done.

B. The Promise That Encourages Abiding

1. What does James say about the person who abides in the Word? He says in verse 25: *"this man shall be blessed in his deed."* James says that God blesses the one who abides in the Word. Do you want to be blessed by God? Then hear His word, receive His word, and obey His word.

2. The world-renowned physician, Dr. Howard A. Kelly of John Hopkins, was once visited by a woman in which the cares of life threatened her physical strength, and even her reasoning. Once she described her symptoms, she was surprised at the prescription he gave her. *"Madam,"* he said. *"What you need is to read the Bible more!"* He told her to go home and read her Bible an hour each day and then to come back to him in a month. At first the lady was inclined to become angry with him, but she did what he told her. She was a Christian and had neglected the things of God. When she came back a month later he said to her, *"I see you have been an obedient patient. Do you feel as if you need any other medicine now?"* She said, *"No, Doctor, I am a different person. But how did you know what I needed?"* He reached over and picked up his well-worn and well-marked Bible and said, *"If I omit my daily reading of God's Word, I not only lose my joy, but I lose my greatest source of strength and skill. You case called not for medicine but for a source of peace and strength outside yourself. My prescription, when tried, works wonders!"*

3. In light of all James says, I say: *"The B-I-B-L-E: THAT'S THE BOOK FOR ME!"*