

# BEING BLESSED IN OUR DOING



# AVOIDING WORTHLESS RELIGION



---

HEALTHY CHURCHES KNOW WHAT IT TAKES TO BE BLESSED IN OUR DOING.

HEALTHY CHURCHES KNOW WHAT IS VALUED BY GOD AND WHAT IS WORTHLESS IN THE EYES OF GOD.

HEALTHY CHURCHES AND THE PEOPLE IN THEM ARE BLESSED IN THEIR DOING AND DO NOT PRACTICE WORTHLESS RELIGION.

---

## TO BE BLESSED IN OUR DOING AND TO AVOID WORTHLESS RELIGION ...

### 1. We must be firmly determined to hear the word, 1:19-20.

- (James 1:19–20 ESV) **Know this**, my beloved brothers: **let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger**; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Being quick to hear is a good general principle of communication but in this context the writer is specifically referring to the word of God which is able to save our souls (see 1:21).

- A. Know this—Every person (no exceptions) is to be quick to hear.
- B. Know this—Every person (no exceptions) is to be slow to speak.
- C. Know this—Every person (no exceptions) is to be slow to anger.
- D. Know this—The anger of a person does not produce the righteousness of God (no exceptions).

### 2. We must persistently put away all filthiness and wickedness in our lives so that we may receive the word we hear, 1:21.

- (James 1:21 ESV) Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and **receive with meekness the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls.

- A. Discipline ourselves to persistently put away all the filthiness and wickedness in our lives.
- B. Receive with humility the word that blesses our lives with the sanctifying work of God.

### 3. We must be firmly determined to not only hear the word but do the word, 1:22.

- (James 1:22 ESV) But **be doers of the word**, and **not hearers only, deceiving yourselves**.

- A. The person who firmly determines to do the word he hears chooses to not be deceived.
- B. The person who does not firmly determine to do the word he hears effectively chooses to deceive himself.

### 4. We must be firmly convinced that even serious attention to and diligent study of the Scriptures does not substitute for doing the word, 1:23-24.

- (James 1:23–24 ESV) **For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer**, he is like a man who **looks intently at his natural face** in a mirror. 24 For he **looks** at himself and goes away **and at once forgets what he was like**.

A. First we must not overlook what is clearly pointed out that this person hears the word.

B. Also we must understand that the **hearer only** may even thoughtfully, seriously look into the word with clear observation, perception and awareness.

1:23 looks ... *κατανοέω* [kat-an-o-eh-o] ... to look intently; to perceive clearly; to be fully aware of through thoughtful viewing; realize fully with the eyes and mind; to observe, understand; to consider attentively, fix one's eyes or mind upon.

C. **Case Study**: “They” studied the Scriptures diligently seeking eternal life yet they **refused to do** what the Scriptures told them was necessary for eternal life.

- (John 5:39–40 NIV) **You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life**. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, 40 **yet you refuse to come to me to have life**.

**Search/study ...** to examine, analyze; to consider in detail and subject to an analysis in order to discover essential features or meaning.

i. Even though they diligently studied they had never **heard** the voice of God, **did not have his word abiding in them** and **did not have the love of God within them**.

- (John 5:37–38, 42 ESV) And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. **His voice you have never heard**, his form you have never seen, 38 and **you do not have his word abiding in you**, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. ... 42 But I **know that you do not have the love of God within you**.

ii. The missing ingredient in their worthless religion was doing the word.

D. The **hearer only** has a momentary, clear perception of himself—1:24 **looks** ... same word as verse 23.

i. An awareness and understanding will momentarily come to this person.

ii. At that instant he or she will then make a choice to either do the word and draw near to God or “go away” from what he saw and remain a hearer only.

iii. He "goes away" and immediately loses sight of who he is and forgets what he is like.

E. His flawed interaction with the word as a hearer only does not provide him with a lasting reality of what he is truly like.

F. He sincerely believes himself to be—in his deceived perspective—different than he actually is.

5. The person who looks into the word and is a hearer **and** a doer of the word will be blessed in his doing, 1:25.

• (James 1:25 ESV) But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, **he will be blessed in his doing.**

A. The one who bends himself to see into the word of God continues in the word and the word frees him.

1:25 Looks ... παρακίπτω [parakupto] ... a different word than in 1:23-24 and means ... to stoop to a thing in order to look at it; to look at with head bowed forward; to look into with the body bent; to stoop and look into; metaphorically to look carefully into, inspect curiously.

• (John 8:31–32 ESV) So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "**If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**"

B. He is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts.

C. This person will be blessed in his doing because he has a love relationship with God and his word.

He will be blessed in his doing because what he is doing is pleasing and acceptable to God because he is doing the will of God.

• (Psalm 119:161b–163 ESV) **My heart stands in awe of your words. 162 I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil. 163 I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law.**

A BRIEF DIGRESSION EXAMINING THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE BUILDERS IN MATTHEW 7 AND LUKE 6 ...

I. Both the wise man and the foolish man used the words they heard from Christ to build a spiritual house.

II. The **essential difference** between the builders was that the wise man **hears and does** his words and the foolish man **hears but does not do** the words.

III. The result for the wise man is that he built a spiritual house on a rock foundation that could not be shaken and would withstand the coming judgment.

IV. The result for the foolish man is that he built a spiritual house on the sand without a foundation which will ultimately crash and come to ruin at the judgment.

V. The foolish man's spiritual house is worthless but in his deceived state he will not find that out until it is too late.

• (Matthew 7:24–25 ESV) **Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, **because it had been founded on the rock.**

• (Matthew 7:26–27 ESV) **And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, **and it fell, and great was the fall of it.**

• (Luke 6:46–48 ESV) Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? 47 **Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.**

• (Luke 6:49 ESV) **But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.**

6. The person whose religion is worthless will not be blessed in his doing, 1:26.

• (James 1:26 ESV) **If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.**

A. The distinctive characteristic of a person whose religion is worthless is that he does not bridle his tongue.

i. He is deceived regarding the use of his tongue—how he talks to and about other people.

- ii. He is deceived in regard to an evaluation of his religion not knowing it is worthless.
- iii. He thinks he is blessed in his religious doing but he is using the wrong measuring tool.
  - (2 Corinthians 10:12b ESV) ... **when they measure themselves by one another** and compare themselves with one another, **they are without understanding.**
- iv. The result is that what he believes to be very valuable is actually worthless.

**B. Here is a stark reality check for the deceived person and solid insight for those trying to help him.**

- i. He really and truly does not know what he looks like to God and to the people around him.
- ii. He really and truly does not know that his religion is worthless—has no value to God.
- iii. This does not excuse him from his sinful behavior but does help us understand the person.

**C. It is self-evident that the person who does not bridle his tongue has ignored the strong cautions James has given in chapters one and three.**

- (James 1:19 ESV) Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be **quick to hear, slow to speak**, slow to anger.
- (James 3:6–8 ESV) **And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness.** The tongue is set among our members, **staining** the whole body, **setting on fire** the entire course of life, and **set on fire by hell.** 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, 8 **but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.**

**UNTAMABLE:**  
UNABLE TO BE  
TAMED OR  
BROUGHT  
UNDER CONTROL

- D. In ignoring the warnings he turns away from a life in which he would be blessed in his doing.
- E. The sad end for this deceived person is that the religion he believes to be lofty and valuable is indeed worthless and will one day crash and come to ruin.

**7. Valuable religion is pure and undefiled before God and is pleasing and acceptable to him, 1:27.**

- (James 1:27 ESV) **Religion that is pure and**

**undefiled before God the Father** is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

**A. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is religion that is pleasing and acceptable to God and offered by those who hear and do God's will.**

**B. This person helps the helpless and keeps himself unstained from the world.**

- i. He does this by not being conformed to the ways of this world but by being transformed to the ways of God by the renewing of his mind.
  - (Romans 12:1–2 ESV) I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God**, which is your spiritual worship. 2 **Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you **may discern what is the will of God**, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- ii. Presenting his body as a living sacrifice to God he is then able to discern the will of God and then do the will of God.

**C. The person who shows favoritism to the rich does not help the helpless and is stained by this world.**

- (James 2:1–4 NIV) My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ **must not show favoritism.** 2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. 3 **If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say**, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” 4 **have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?**
- (James 2:8–9 NIV) If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. 9 **But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.**