



June 1, 2025

Real Wisdom for a Messy World

WORDS, ACTIONS, SELF-DECEPTION, AND REAL CHRISTIANITY

James 1:19-27



1. Opening Discussion: (You will probably want to use only one of these openers)

- a. As you were growing up, were you ever told, “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all?” What was your response? Do you think it is always a good suggestion? When might it not be appropriate?
- b. Have you ever been in a hall of mirrors where each mirror is distorted in such a manner that you get strange, perhaps weird reflections? What was the experience like? Did any of the images cause you to want to change your appearance? If you’re up to date on cell phone apps, what is the modern equivalent?

2. Prayer:

- a. Adoration – Pray Psalm 95 or another passage of Scripture that enables you to focus on praising God for who He is in all His majesty and glory, the only One worthy of praise.
- b. Confession – Spend time in silence, allowing the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any sins you need to confess. Keep a paper and pencil handy in case He reminds you of one that requires you to ask forgiveness of someone. Close by reading 1 John 1:9
- c. Thanksgiving – In the spirit of Ephesians 5:20, thank God for answered prayers, His blessings and gifts, and the opportunities He provides to serve. Make a point to thank Him for at least one thing that you’ve never given thanks for before.
- d. Supplications
 - i. Pray for the activities of His Church
 1. *Locally*: LRBC, its ministries and outreach activities; for our pastors, staff, and volunteers; for the other churches in PWC that faithfully share the Gospel.
 2. *Around the world*: for missionaries and pastors serving in other cultures; for the persecuted Church in countries that are actively hostile to the Gospel; for unreached people groups which have little or no access to the Gospel; that God will raise up workers to go and serve Him, perhaps even young people from LRBC.
 - ii. Pray for the spiritual and physical needs of
 1. At least one person who needs to accept Christ as Savior.
 2. Friends, family, and yourself.
 3. Some items on LRBC’s weekly *Praises & Prayer Requests* list.
 4. Our national, state, and local leaders – especially for the salvation of those who have not accepted Christ as Savior.

3. Sermon Key Points for James 1:12-18

- a. Use God's Word to Control Your Words
 - i. Loose lips sink a lot more than ships!
 - ii. Self-control, including over your mouth, is a Fruit of the Spirit
- b. Actively Obey God's Word In Your Daily Life
 - i. Seriously believe and receive the word that saves your soul
 - ii. Saving faith leads to active obedience
 - iii. Active obedience leads to blessing
- c. Embrace Authentic Christianity
 - i. True Christianity isn't defined by rituals and outward appearances
 - ii. Authentic Christianity is defined by imitating the heart and actions of Jesus

4. Bible Study:

- a. ***Sunday Afternoon*** – As soon as possible after the sermon, make time to consider:
 - i. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
 - ii. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
 - iii. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
 - iv. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
 - v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
- b. ***Monday:***
 - i. Read James 1:19-27 several times. The first time, read it as you would read a letter or email from a casual acquaintance. Then reread it as you would read a letter from an authority figure (government or business) to whom you were going to have to give a response. Finally, read it as you would read a letter from the love of your life after being apart for some time. After each reading, record your thoughts and observations.
 - ii. List all of the admonitions James gives in verses 19-27:
 - 1. Positive instructions that he expects us to do.
 - 2. Negative cautions that we are to avoid.
 - iii. Some see these verses being divided into three sections, each describing a distinct response to the Word of God. What single word would you use to describe the response of:
 - 1. Verses 19-20
 - 2. Verses 21-22a
 - 3. Verses 22b-27
- c. ***Tuesday:***
 - i. Read and meditate on James 1:19-20.

- ii. What does it mean to “be quick to hear (“listen” in the NIV)”? How would you paraphrase it in today’s vernacular?
 - 1. Five times in the Gospels (Matthew 11:15, 13:9, 13:43, Mark 4:23, and Luke 14:35), Jesus says, “Whoever has ears, let them hear” (or equivalent depending on the translation being read). Look up each occurrence and examine the preceding verses to determine what Jesus was teaching when He issued these commands. Do you detect a common thread?
 - 2. Jesus also issued the same instruction to each of the seven churches He had John write to in Revelation. See Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22. In these cases, who are we to listen to?
 - 3. If you have a good concordance or Bible search app, look up how often Jesus instructed those He was teaching to “listen.”
 - 4. What can we conclude about how important Jesus considered listening/hearing?
- iii. How do talkativeness and anger hinder a person from listening? What do Proverbs 10:19, 13:3, 14:29, 17:27-28 and 29:20-22 tell us about talkativeness and anger?

d. Wednesday:

- i. Read James 1:19-21, meditating especially on verse 21.
- ii. What rationale does James provide for why we should be “slow to anger”? Why doesn’t he just say, “Don’t get angry”?
 - 1. What do Ephesians 4:26-27 tell us about anger and its relationship to sin? Is anger always sinful (see Mark 3:5)?
 - 2. Why doesn’t human anger bring about the righteousness that God desires? What is most often wrong about our anger? (See Matthew 5:21-24, Ephesians 4:31, and Colossians 3:8)?
- iii. What two things does James tell us should happen when we actively listen to God’s Word? Compare Romans 13:12-14, Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:8, Hebrews 12:1, and 1 Peter 2:1-2.
 - 1. James was written very early, probably before any of Paul’s Epistles, so he would have relied heavily on the Old Testament and very likely is thinking of Jeremiah 31 when he wrote about the word being implanted. Read Jeremiah 31:31-33. How does this help explain what James is saying in verse 21?
 - 2. How does Jesus illustrate this in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-9 and 18-23)?
 - 3. When James says “which can save you” we must remember that the New Testament presents Salvation in three phases: we **have been saved** through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:24-25) but we are also **being saved** (1 Corinthians 1:18) and we **will be saved** (Romans 8:21-23). How is this triple pattern beautifully illustrated in the image of being “planted”?

e. Thursday:

- i. Read and meditate thoughtfully on James 1:22-25, especially verse 22, which some consider to be the theme for the entire letter. Then read Matthew 7:21-27, 25:31-46, Luke 11:27-28, and John 14:21-24.
 1. How would you summarize what Jesus taught about the importance of obedience to His commands?
 2. What did He teach about our being deceived? When you read the two passages in Matthew, what sense do you get about what those whom Jesus said He didn't know must have felt about their salvation? What caused them to be deceived (Matthew 7:21 & 26)?
 - a. Why would it not be unexpected that a person who has not accepted Christ listens to God's Word but never does anything in response?
 - b. Why is there a tendency for Christians to listen to and yet not to follow God's Word? How can we avoid this tendency?
 - ii. How would you explain James' illustration of looking in a mirror to someone? Why do we use a mirror? What would you think of someone who came to church with their hair completely messed up and then said, "But I looked in the mirror"? Why is "looking" not enough?
- f. **Friday:**
- i. Read and meditate on James 1:26-27.
 - ii. What does the word "religious" mean to you? The Greek word translated "religion" or "religious" in these verses is only used twice elsewhere in the New Testament: Acts 26:5 and Colossians 2:18 – where it is translated "worship". How might this change your understanding of the word's meaning?
 - iii. What are the one negative and the two positive outward practices that James identifies as indications of the validity of our "religion"? How do Matthew 12:34-35, 1 John 3:11-18, and 1 John 2:15-17 support James' position?
- g. **Saturday:**
- i. End the week by reading James 1. Better still, if you have time, read the entire letter so you can see how this week's passage fits in the overall context.
 - ii. Go back and review the list of admonitions you prepared on Monday. Are there any of James' positive commands that the Holy Spirit is convicting you to work on in your life? Are there any negative ones you need to stop?

5. **Application:**

- a. If you read between the lines, it is clear that James is pleading that we spend time in introspection, truthfully evaluating our life in view of what the Bible commands and what Jesus demonstrated. Do so this week, praying that the Holy Spirit will show you areas that fall short of His standard.
- b. James will talk more about speech in the coming chapters, but even with just chapter 1, it is clear that his readers must have had a problem in that area. We might wonder what James would think if he could spend a week with us. As we prepare to debate and vote on a new organizational structure for LRBC, we need to be especially careful that our speech does not end up making "our religion worthless."