

CCC HOW TO BE BLESSED BY THE BIBLE P5

Developing a Faith That Works

In America, Bibles are everywhere. You can find them in grocery stores, bookstores, motel rooms, really there everywhere. Bibles are also available in all sizes, shapes, translations, versions, leather bound, paperback.

Did you know that every year the Bible out sells every other major bestseller. Last year there were 500 million Bibles published in the world in 18,000 different languages. In America we are glutted with the word of God, it is on the airways, radio, TV, books, magazines. It's everywhere. Yet millions and millions of people still miss the blessing of the Bible. Why is that? (PAUSE) Because it's not automatic, the Bible is a book of blessing and it promises comfort, it promises strength, hope, wisdom, joy,

power, and purpose. But just because you have a Bible doesn't mean you're going to get the benefit from it. In the book of James, being his practical person he is, gives us three steps on how to be blessed by the Bible.

Let's look into our notes v. 25 is the key verse, *"The man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does."* The Bible is called the perfect law because it's exactly what you and I need. It promises freedom and it promises blessing. James gives us three steps on how to be blessed by the Bible:

Read James 1:19-27

1. I MUST RECEIVE GOD'S WORD: if I'm going to be blessed by it. vs. 21, *"Accept the word planted in you."*

Circle the word "accept". This word in Greek is a hospitality term which literally means "to welcome" --

come on in. If we're going to be blessed by the word of God, first we must welcome the word into our lives. We must be receptive.

James gives an illustration. He says it's planted in you. He gives the illustration of a garden and seed. The Bible, all through Scripture, compares itself to seed. Jesus told the parable of the sower and said, "*The word of God is a seed and it's planted in our hearts.*" How is it you can take two seeds that are exactly the same and plant them in two different locations and get two different crops in fruitfulness? The Reason: One soil is prepared and the other is not. How is it that you can take two people and put them in the same service, with the same message, and one person gets blessed by it and the other person says he didn't get anything out of it. The Reason: One heart was prepared to receive and one wasn't. James says us, we must receive

the word of God with the right attitude. You need to have the right attitude and he describes four of them for us... to be blessed by God's word. The first attitude to be blessed by God's word is:

1. Be careful. I must have a careful attitude. In v. 19 he says, "*Be quick to listen...*" In other words, give it your full attention. Be alert. Don't miss it. "*... slow to speak ...*"

Why he say slow to speak here...because when I'm talking, I'm not listening. Many of our problems are caused because we're quick to speak rather than being quick to listen. The 2nd attitude to be blessed by God's word is:

2. Be calm. Be calm if you're going to receive God's word and be blessed by it. v. 19b "*... and slow to become angry ...*" A relaxed attitude increases receptivity. If you're relaxed, people can communicate with you more. We don't

hear much when we're angry, we don't hear much when upset, when were bitter or resentful.

And bitterness is actually a barrier, it's an emotional block that affects every area of your life and it keeps us from hearing God's word. Maybe you've got some resentment in your life you need to get rid of. What is your emotional state, normally, when you come to church on Sunday morning? The 3rd attitude James tells us about that you to have to be blessed by God's word is:

3. Be clean. v. 21 *"Get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent..."* Before you can plant the seed you need to do a little weeding. The word "filth" here actually means in the Greek, "earwax". So what is James telling us here then? He is saying, sin in your life blocks your hearing. It prevents God's word from getting into your heart. He says get rid of the evil, anything that we know

that isn't right in our lives, we need to try and get rid of God says, *"Lay aside all of the emotional garbage, the old habits, the junk in your life so that God's word can get through to you."*

So how do we rid ourselves of the obstacle, so we can be clean? Recognize it and confess it. God's word, the bible says, *"If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* The Living Bible says *"Get rid of all that's wrong in your life, both inside and out."* We need to have the attitude of desiring to be clean. The 4th attitude to be blessed by God's word is:

4. Be compliant. You need to have an the attitude that is teachable, yielded, humble, willing to be changed. James says *"humbly accept the word of God planted in you..."* Don't act like you know it all. If you know it all, God's

word can't get through to you. Pray and have the attitude that would say, "God, do what You need to do in my life." Okay let's move on to the next step that James gave us on how to be blessed by the bible.

2. REFLECT ON THE WORD OF GOD I must reflect on God's word. v. 23 *"Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and after looking at himself immediately goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like."* James uses an illustration here that God's word should be treated like a mirror. The purpose of a mirror is to evaluate us. We look in a mirror to assess things and then we do something about it. What good is a mirror if we don't do anything about what we see, what we assess? God's word reflects what we're like on the inside. Hebrews says, *"God's word detects the thoughts, intents, motives and*

desires of the heart." Many years ago, Queen Elizabeth, who was beautiful in her youth, ordered that all of the mirrors be removed from Buckingham Palace, why, because she couldn't stand to face that she was growing old.

A lot of people don't read the Bible because they're afraid. They won't read and stay with it and reflect on it in their life because they don't like what they see. They're unwilling to face themselves and see themselves as they really are.

But we, Christians, those who have asked Jesus to come into their life and be the manager, the Lord and Saviour of their lives, we need to reflect on it; it is a must to reflect on God's word. James gives us three practical ways to reflect on the word of God,

1. Read it. v. 25 *"the man who looks intently into the perfect law"*. He's actually talking here more about research that he is reading. He's talking about investigating, "to stoop down and gaze in". Focus your attention on the word of God. God says that He wants us to gaze at His word, not just a quick glance. Look at it intently in detail and there are nine things to look for --

S.P.A.C.E.P.E.T.S

S - Is there a Sin to confess?

P - Is there a Promise to claim? Look for promises, there are over 7000 promises in the word of God.

A - Is there an Attitude to change?

C - Is there a Command to obey?

E - Is there an Example to follow?

P - Is there a Prayer to pray? There are lots of prayers in the Bible. You can take those prayers and pray them

for yourself and for others. You can know they'll be answered because they're in the Word of God.

E - Is there an Error to avoid?

T - Is there a Truth to believe? Is there something I just need to believe God for?

S - Is there something to thank God for?

That's how you look intently at the word of God. Look at the details. James says to us, we need to receive the word of God and then reflect on it, first by reading it and second by reviewing it.

2. Review it. v. 25 *"...and continues to do so..."* That means over and over and over. The Bible calls this meditation. When you think about something over and over, it's meditation. Meditation is not, put your mind in neutral and contemplate lint in your navel. Meditation means to think seriously about something

over and over. If you know how to worry, you know how to meditate. Worry is taking a negative idea and thinking about it over and over. Meditations is taking God's word and think about it over and over. The Bible says, "Meditate on God's word". Jesus said, *"...if you continue in My word, then you're truly My disciples."* Read it and review it.

The outlines, message notes, I give you each week are not so that you can keep up with me, it's so that you can review it during the week. God says, "You want to be blessed by the word? Review it."

Psalm 119:97 *"I meditate on your word all day long."*

Every person in this building ought to memorize Joshua 1:8. God says if you do one thing, He promises to bless you with success. And that promise is:

IF you meditate on His word.

Read it and review it continually. We need to fill our minds with the word of God. James says, "You want to be blessed? Reflect on the word. Think about it by reading it and reviewing it."

3. Remembering it. v. 25 *"... not forgetting what he has heard."* Nothing will do more for your spiritual life than developing the habit of memorizing Scripture.

Nothing will benefit your personal spiritual life more than developing the habit of memorizing Scripture. *"Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee."*

Memorize God's word if you want to be blessed by it. We remember what's important to us.

Take notes, write things down. If you value God's word you're going to take notes on it. Hebrews 2:1 *"Write things down so we don't let slip what we've heard."* The United States Air Force did a study and found that we

forget 95% of what we hear within 72 hours. This statistic depresses a pastor. I spend all week preparing a message to give on Sunday. By Wednesday you've forgotten 95% of what I've said unless you've written it down. James says, "Receive God's word with the right attitude, reflect on God's word by reading it, reviewing it, remembering it." But even that's not enough.

3. I MUST RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD

I must do something about it, I must act on it, I must chose to live it, I must chose to practice it. James tells us in vs. 22 "*Do not merely listen to what the word says and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*" What good is a mirror if you look at it and don't do anything about it? The word "listen" in Greek is the word for "auditor". If you audited a class in college, you didn't take the class for credit, there's no tests, no responsibility, no research. You were totally relaxed.

You just listened; you didn't have any intention of applying it. Don't come to church, walk in, hear the word of God, and walk out with no intention of ever being changed. I was one of those people for years and guess what... It never changed me. Why, because I must respond to God's word, I must respond and let it change me if I'm going to be blessed by it.

James calls it, self-deception when we don't let it change us. James calls it self deception when we think that just gaining content is making us spiritually mature. The test of maturity is not knowledge. The test of maturity is character. That is what James is attacking. He's saying, "If you want to be blessed, you've got to live the word of God, not just hear it. Not just know it."

My honest prayer on Sunday afternoon after everyone gone and I am alone and talking with God is that you will

remember what I said and you will put it into practice. I so much desire and pray that Calvary Church will develop the reputation that people say, "*They are doers of the word.*" That people will say, they practice what everybody else talks about. They live it at Calvary."

What pleases me more than a comment or compliment about a Sunday message is when somebody says they will or have put the message into practice in their life.

Jesus, in Matthew 7, tells the story of the wise and the foolish builder. He says the foolish builder builds on sand. He is like the guy who hears the word of God but doesn't do what it says. The wise man is the one who hears it and then goes out and makes an honest attempt to put it into his life. They practice it.

I think the simplest definition of a mature Christian is for them to be a doer of the word. That's what it means to be

mature. You do what God's word, the Bible says. You don't need to know more, you already know enough. It's not a matter... that we need to know more. We just need to put into practice what we already know; we don't need to learn anything new. Just be a doer of the word.

James is saying that the blessing of the Bible comes when we start living it.

Prayer: Father, You have not beat around the bush this morning with us all, you have spoken quit clear to us all. We can't ignore what Your word says. You've told us to be doers of the word, to practice what we already know. Lord, I know You have put some ideas in the minds of people and they know they've got to do something maybe even before today ends. They need to be that doer... I pray that You would give them the courage to act on what they know. Help them to do the right thing. Help them to act on what they already know is right. Lord, maybe it's to pay off some debt, or to ask forgiveness, or to return an object, or to be baptized today, Why because You have

commanded us to go and be baptized, or to join the church, or to make a phone call, or to witness to some neighbor and invite them to church, to get involved, or to receive Christ for the very first time. Lord, Help us to do what we need to do and not to deceive ourselves, to not glance at the mirror of the word and walk away unchanged. Help us **not** to miss the point, that we need to receive Your word with the right attitude and we need to reflect on it through reading and studying and memorizing. But Lord, that we most of all need to respond to it and allow it to live in our lives.

If you've never opened up your life to Jesus Christ, do it this morning. Ask Him to come into your heart. That's the first step. Say, "Jesus Christ, I don't understand it all but I want You to come into my life. I want to be a believer." He died for you on the cross. He will forgive your sins if you ask Him to. He will give you a new start. Just say, "Christ, come into my life. I want to be a Christian, a real Christian." Others of you know the Lord. The issue for you is not to make that first step but to practice what you already know. Say, "God help me to do what I know is right." Let me tell you something, to say

that, takes faith and courage and commitment. Just right now Say, "Lord, Help me to live Your word this week and apply even what I've heard today in the next few days."

Lord, Your word is true. It is accurate and it pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Lord, we've seen areas of our lives we need to work on today. Give us the strength and courage to do what we know we need to do. In Jesus' name. Amen.