

## INTRODUCTION.

TODAY ~ WE'LL BEGIN TO LOOK AT ~ THE NEXT TOPIC ~ in the first major section of James, ~ 1:21-25.

▶▶ In this passage, ~ James discusses ~ hearers and doers ~ of the word of God.

THIS BRIEF PARAGRAPH ~ FORMS ~ A SELF-CONTAINED UNIT.

▶▶ Many translations and commentaries take vs 21 with vv 19-20.

▷▷ But it really introduces the next topic.

↪↪ And i.e., ~ hearers and doers of God's word.

→→ If "therefore" points back to anything, ~ it's most likely v 18.

THE PARAGRAPH CAN BE DIVIDED ~ INTO 2 SUBSECTIONS.

▶▶ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ James gives an exhortation and a warning ~ regarding embracing and practicing the word, ~ vv 21-22.

▷▷<sup>21</sup> Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

▶▶ And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ he elaborates on the problem with mere listeners of the word. 📖 1/12

▷▷ And contrasts the mere listener with the doer of God's word. ⇔⇔ vv 23-25.

↪↪<sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup> 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.

TODAY, ~ WE'LL LOOK AT THE 1<sup>st</sup> SUBSECTION.

JAMES GIVES AN EXHORTATION AND A WARNING ~ regarding embracing and practicing the word, ~ vv 21-22.

▶▶{Exhortation:} <sup>21</sup> Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷{Warning:} <sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

BREAK IT DOWN.

VERSE 21.

(VS 21) PUT AWAY.

▶▶ Vb trans ~ Put away ~ connotes the idea ~ of removing clothes.

▷▷ Acts 7:58, ~ ~ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

▶▶ The imagery is applied metaphorically in the NT ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to the putting off ~ of old, ~ pre-Christian ~ patterns of behaviour. ¶¶ 2/12

▷▷ It expresses the idea of ~ turning away from evil ~ and turning to God, ~ a complete change of lifestyle.

THIS THEME OF PUTTING OFF THE OLD LIFE ~~ is driven home throughout the NT.

▶▶ Shows us ~ the importance of it ~ and ~ how serious God is about this.

▷▷ And again, ~ for our good.

▶▶ Since great emphasis is placed on this theme, ~ should review some of the vv.

▶▶ E.g., ~ Paul stresses this theme in [Rom. 13:12](#).

▷▷ The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

▷▷ I.e., ~ the shining armor of right living (NLT).

↪↪ In the NT, ~ Christ-honoring living ~ is often referred to ~ as being in the light.

▶▶ [Heb. 12:1-2a](#).

▷▷ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

▶▶ And [1 Pet. 1:1-3](#) (NIV).

▷▷ Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. ↪↪ 3/12

(VS 21) WHAT JAMES CALLS ON BELIEVERS TO PUT AWAY ~ IS ~ all filthiness and rampant wickedness.

▶▶ The Greek noun translated as filthiness ~ occurs only here in the Bible.

▷▷ But James uses ~ the adjective form in 2:2 ~ to characterize the clothes of a poor person.

▶▶ The literal meaning of the Greek noun for filthiness is ~ "dirt, ~ filth."

▷▷ But metaphorically ~ it denotes moral uncleanness or impurity, ~ that which defiles human nature.

↪↪ NIV: ~ ~ Get rid of all moral filth.

▶▶ David implied the filthiness of sin ~ in his confession recorded in Ps. 51.

▷▷ Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

▶▶ Remember Isaiah's response ~ when he saw the Lord.

▷▷ "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

▷▷ When seen next to the purity of God's holiness, ~ the impurity of human sin ~ is all the more evident.

▷▷ The prophet's unclean lips probably symbolized ~ his attitudes and actions ~ as well as his words, ~ 77

↪↪ for a person's words reflect his thinking and relate to his actions. 11 4/12

▶▶ We find the adj of the word James used ~ in the Septuagint of [Zech. 3:3-4](#) ~ 77

▷▷ to describe the garments that the high priest Joshua must discard ~ 77

↳↳ before being given a new, ~ splendid set of clothes.

▷▷ In the Hebrew text ~ of [Zech. 3:3-4](#), ~ the word for filth ~ 77

↳↳ is the strongest expression in the Hebrew language ~ 77

→→ for filth ~ of the most vile and loathsome character.

▷▷ Some interpreters maintain that, ~ in the vision, ~ Joshua was covered with ~ human excrement.

▶▶ That's how God sees sin, ~ all sin.

▷▷ Absolute filth, ~ defiling us.

↳↳ And we need ~ to view sin ~ the way God views sin.

(VS 21) JAMES CHOSE A WORD, ~ FILTHINESS, ~ THAT REMINDS US ~ 77

▶▶ just how offensive and detestable ~ sin really is.

▷▷ And he tells us ~ My ..., ~ that ~ we must rid ourselves of all ~ filthiness, ~ 77

↳↳ all that is morally defiling, ~ as inconsistent with the Christian life. 11 5/12

## WE MUST ALSO REMOVE ~ RAMPANT WICKEDNESS, ~ JAMES SAYS.

▶▶ Rampant wickedness = The evil that is so prevalent.

▶▶ I suggest to you ~ that James ~ is stressing the point ~ that sinfulness ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is present in our lives ~ in abundance.

▶▶ My ..., ~ we must never become comfortable with our sinfulness.

▶▶ Rather, ~ we must ~ face up to the fact ~ that our Christian commitment ~ ¶¶

▷▷ allows no tolerations ~ of impurity in our lives.

▶▶ In 1 Pet. 1:14-16, ~ Peter writes, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

▷▷ "be holy" means ~ to live a life ~ that pleases and glorifies God.

▷▷ Instead of continuing in the sinful lifestyle of our unsaved life, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Christians ~ are to conform our behavior ~ to our new status ~ ¶¶

→→ of being new creations in Christ. ¶¶ 6/12

▶▶ Paul says in ~ Rom. 6:11-13, ~ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ~ ~ 77

▷▷ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

▶▶ And in Eph. 4, ~ Paul says that believers are taught, ~ with regard to our former way of life, ~ 77

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ to put off our old self, ~ which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ~ ~ 77

▷▷ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ to be made new in the attitude of our minds; ~ ~ 77

▷▷ and 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ to put on the new self, ~ created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:22-24)

(VS 21) THE PUTTING AWAY ~ of all filthiness and the evil that is so prevalent ~ 77

▶▶ is to be accompanied ~ by the receiving ~ of something else.

▷▷ Namely, ~ the implanted word.

↳↳ Specifically, ~ the word of God.

▶▶ This is not ~ a command ~ to be converted.

▷▷ Rather, ~ it is a command ~ to accept the word's precepts as binding ~ 77

↳↳ and to seek to live by them. 77 7/12

▶▶ Christians who have been truly ~ brought to spiritual life by the word of truth, ~ vs 18, ~ demonstrate ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that the word has transformed them ~ by their humble acceptance of that word ~ ¶¶

↳↳ as their authority and guide for life.

▶▶ Or, ~ we could use the imagery Jesus used to make the same point.

▷▷ The believer ~ is to prepare good ground ~ in his/her heart ~ in order that ~ ¶¶

↳↳ the seed of the word ~ that has been planted there ~ might produce much fruit (cf. Mk. 4:3-20).

AT THE END OF VS 21, ~ JAMES CHARACTERIZES THE WORD AS ~ THAT WHICH ~ IS able to save your souls.

▶▶ Now, ~ in accordance with OT usage, ~ "soul" here ~ simply means oneself.

▷▷ The end of verse 21 can be translated ~ as the NIV has it. ⇔⇔ Which can save you.

▶▶ The implanted word ~ can save you, ~ James says.

▶▶ What does he mean by save?

▷▷ Well, ~ keep in mind ~ that there are three stages of salvation.

▷▷ We can express it this way.

↳↳ Believers have been saved from ~ the penalty of sin. ⇔⇔ Justification. ¶¶ 8/12



↪↪ Presently, ~ we are being saved from ~ the power of sin.

→→ I.e., ~ sanctification.

↪↪ The process, ~ occurring between salvation and entrance into the presence of Christ, ~ ¶¶

↻↻ in which God is at work to make the believer like Christ.

↪↪ Ultimately, ~ 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, ~ in heaven we will be saved ~ from the presence of sin.

▷▷ We need to keep these three stages in mind, ~ when we read the NT.

▶▶ Now to James.

▷▷ Though there is not agreement on this, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ I believe James has ~ the second stage ~ of our salvation in view.

→→ Namely, ~ our sanctification.

▷▷ Always keep in mind James' overall purpose ~ for writing this letter.

↪↪ It is to instill ~ correct thinking ~ and right behavior ~ in believers.

▶▶ So ~ save ~ here ~ is referring ~ to the ongoing and continuous work ~ ¶¶

▷▷ in which God is at work ~ to make the believer like Christ. ¶¶ 9/12

▶▶ Through the continual intake of God's word, ~ we can experience ~ ¶¶

▷▷ a greater and greater measure ~ of what has been done for us by our Lord.

↪↪ And i.e., ~ being saved from the power of sin.

▶▶ E.g., ~ the psalmist writes, ~ I have hidden your word in my heart ~ that I might not sin against you.

▷▷ The psalmist's commitment ~ is whole-hearted.

▷▷ And he has treasured up God's word in his heart ~ in order ~ ¶¶

↪↪ to be kept in the ways of righteousness.

▷▷ To hide God's word in the heart ~ is more ~ than just being able to recite from memory.

↪↪ It is living in accord ~ with the directives that he has given.

▷▷ To stop listening to that instruction ~ causes one ~ ¶¶

↪↪ to stray from the words of knowledge, ~ according to [Prov. 19:27](#).

### IN VS 22, ~ JAMES SERVES UP A WARNING.

RECEIVING, ~ NAMELY HEARING, ~ THE WORD ~ must be accompanied by ~ doing the word.

▶▶ But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ¶¶ 10/12

▶▶ According to James, ~ however important may be ~ mental assent to the word, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ it has not been truly received ~ until ~ it is put into practice.

▶▶ He is once again ~ firmly in line with Jesus' teaching.

▷▷ Blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice (Lk. 11:28).

▷▷ Jesus' preaching ~ is filled ~ with the overwhelming, ~ amazing wonder ~ ¶¶

↳↳ of God's sovereign grace ~ reaching down to sinful people in the gospel.

▷▷ But equally prominent ~ is Jesus' summons ~ to radical obedience ~ ¶¶

↳↳ an obedience ~ that is the necessary human response ~ to God's grace.

THOSE WHO FAIL ~ TO PRACTICE/OBEY THE WORD, ~ WHO ARE HEARERS ONLY, ~ ARE guilty ~ ¶¶

▶▶ of a dangerous and potentially fatal ~ self-delusion.

▶▶ Please listen carefully.

▶▶ The gospel, ~ by nature, ~ contains both ~ saving power and summons to obedience.

▷▷ Therefore, ~ those who relate to only one ~ have not truly embraced the gospel.

▶▶ That's why James can say that ~ people who hear but not do the word ~ are deceiving themselves. ¶¶ 11/12

▷▷ Those who hear but do not put the word into practice ~ 77

↳↳ think that they have a relationship with God ~ because ~ 77

→→ they regularly ~ attend church, ~ go to Bible studies, ~ or read the Bible.

▷▷ But ~ if their listening is not accompanied by obedience, ~ 77

↳↳ their true situation before God ~ is far different.

SOMETHING TO GIVE SOME SERIOUS THOUGHT TO. 12/12