

## Listening for Life

James 1:17-25 - NCBC, January 2, 2022

Main Point: **Your life depends on how you receive and respond to God's Word.**

- Remember how God gives new **life** (17-19a)
  - By His **Will**
  - By His **Word**
  - By His **Work**
- Receive God's life-giving Words with the right **attitude** (19b-21)
  - With **Eagerness**
  - With **Attentiveness**
  - With **Holiness**
  - With **Meekness**
- Respond to God's life-giving Word with the right **action** (22-25)
  - Living for **Integrity**
  - Living for **Freedom**
  - Living for **Happiness**

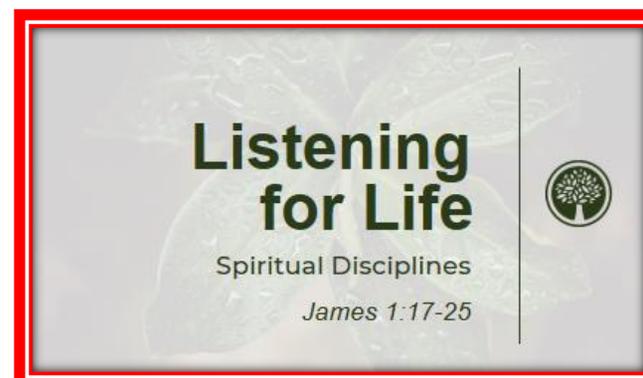
Application: **Delight in living by God's Word!**

- How will I read God's Word?
  - How will I memorize God's Word?
  - How will I learn God's Word from others?
  - How will I share God's Word with others?
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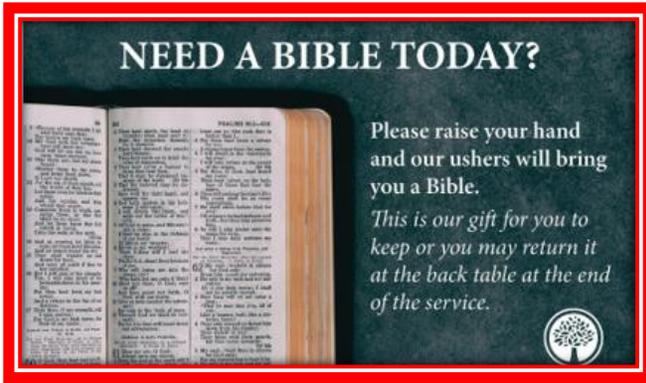
## Opening Announcements:

- **This month's Recommended Resource** is *Evangelism as Exiles* by Elliot Clark. Start this year with a great reminder of your God-given identity as an exile in this world for His glory!
- **Today we will be celebrating communion together as part of our worship service.** Please make sure to get your juice and bread before we go further in the service, so you can be prepared to participate with us during the sermon at the appropriate time.

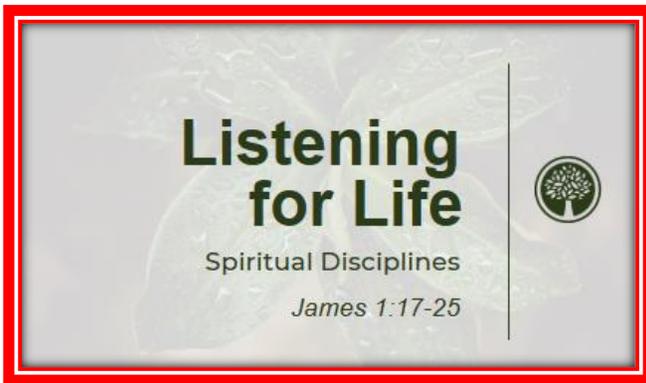
<<Behold the Lamb>>



Welcome to the closest place to our King's table on earth. We just sang about our longing for the day when we'll all join the feast of Heaven around the table of our King, but here, right now, as the church gathers with eager humility, we pull up together to the "table" of a biblical pulpit, and we open our Bibles with hungry anticipation of life-giving food.



Friends, if you need a Bible, simply raise your hand and we will gladly give you one as our gift to you today. For God's Word is more valuable than gold, and sweeter than honey.<sup>1</sup> Jesus' words give eternal life,<sup>2</sup> and those who live by God's word will truly be satisfied and happy in life.<sup>3</sup>



This month we are going to focus in on some Key Spiritual Disciplines, or grace habits,<sup>4</sup> for God's people.

Today we open our Bibles to **James chapter 1**, to remember why its so important for us to continually hear God's voice through His Word.

The rest of the messages in this series will focus on prayer, time management, financial stewardship, and lastly Church Membership.

Each of these messages are timely reminders of essential truths for Christian living. Spiritual disciplines are fundamental and basic, but absolutely essential for God's glory among us. Whenever we neglect these basic grace habits, much heartache results in our lives. So I'm eager to see how God's Spirit will change and grow all of us through this month of worship together in His Word.

So please open your Bible to **James chapter 1** if you haven't already done so. This is such a glorious text you definitely will want to spread it out in front of you today.

Today I admit to feeling like a chef leading you up to a grand buffet filled with all kinds of extravagant delicacies that will delight and satisfy you. Included in our banquet today is the wonder of celebrating communion together. So my culinary joy is full, but my pace is urgent, for I recognize that we each only have a small platter to fill. Our time is far too limited today for all the majesty that lies before us in this text.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 19:10

<sup>2</sup> John 12:50

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 1

<sup>4</sup> I highly recommend the book entitled "Habits of Grace" by David Mathis.

It provides a compelling review and exhortation for various expressions of spiritual discipline in our daily lives. It is an excellent complement to NCBC's January 2022 preaching series.

So keep the words of God spread out before you this morning, and let's trust God to satisfy us with His life-giving words together.

For those who are able, I'd invite you to stand with me now in honor of the reading of God's Word. I'm reading **James chapter 1, verses 17-25** in the English Standard Translation:

*17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.*

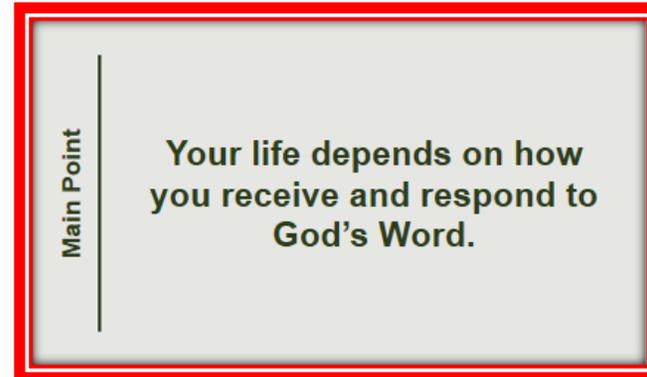
*19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

*22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 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. 25 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.*

This is the reading of God's Word. Please be seated.  
**Let's pray.**

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Today our Bibles are open to **James chapter 1** to remind us that,



Your life depends on how you receive and respond to God's Word.

Your happiness, your satisfaction, your joy and fulfillment in life is conditional. No person automatically experiences life the way God created him or her to experience it. Our satisfaction in life, or realization of true happiness in life is dependent on how we receive and respond to the words of our Creator.

Now admittedly, this is radically different from what our world continually tells us. Our world says that the good life depends on how much money you spend, or how much influence you have over others, or the sum of your achievements.

But as we begin this new year together, let's wash our thinkers with this life-changing truth: our happiness is directly related to our relationship with God's Word. How we receive God's Word, and respond to God's Word, is of ultimate importance to all of us.

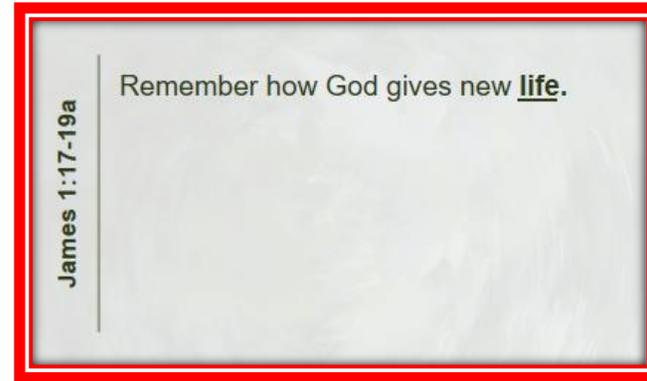
Now this is such an important topic for Jesus' church. Because God's purpose for us is most clearly communicated through God's Word, which we call the Bible, or the Holy Scriptures.

But we have to admit that we often take our constant access to God's Word for granted. We forget the centuries of church history where God's people did not possess their own personal copy of God's Word but had to rely on a public gathering where one of their leaders would teach God's Word for their own benefit.

In our age of endless information, we find ourselves nonchalantly listening more to the voices of this world than to the voice of God Himself. We might feel good about the fact that we own several Bibles, but sometimes we go an entire week between Sundays without actually opening Scripture to digest its life-giving message for ourselves.

So today, I simply want to remind us that our lives depend on how we receive and respond to God's Word. I'm praying God will use these verses in **James chapter 1** to feed our appetite for His life-giving voice so we might humbly receive and obey whatever God says.

So to begin, **verses 17, 18, and the first part of verse 19** call us to,



Remember how God gives new life (17-19a)

These verses actually set the table for celebrating the Lord's supper really well, but first let me remind us of what the immediate context before these verses.

Up to this point, **James chapter 1** has been all about trials and temptations. In **verse 12**, James says that the happy, or blessed person, is whoever remains steadfast under a trial, for his perseverance leads to the joyful crown of life, which God promises to all *who love Him*.

So if you just pause and let **verse 12** sink in... we learn happiness in life doesn't depend on happy circumstances. Because this person is promised happiness and blessedness *in the midst* of his trouble. The secret to the happy life is love for God which fuels steadfast endurance through the trial.

So don't miss this – your love for God is what powers joyful endurance through trials until you receive God's promised reward.

But then **verses 13-16** give strong warning about the reality of our desires. For unfortunately, because of sin,

no one naturally loves God.<sup>5</sup> None of us naturally desire God.<sup>6</sup> Instead, these verses awaken us to sin's deceptive death,<sup>7</sup> and remind us that our own desires are constantly enticing us to blame God for our troubles and seek our happiness in sin.<sup>8</sup>

So "Houston – we have a problem!" The blessed life belongs to those who love God during troubled times, but our own heart's sinful desires are such that we never will love God, but only love ourselves to death, literally!

And now we understand why **verse 17** is such a brilliant spray of light on the darkness of our sinful desires. For how are we to love God and keep loving God when our hearts are only idol-factories producing deadly desires?

**Verse 17** replies, All the good we need is in God and from God. Look at **verse 17** more closely:

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,*

Friend, God is an extravagant giver. He freely gives us everything that we could ever need to truly live – He holds nothing back. **Verse 18** is going to get specific in a minute that He even gives us a new heart that is able to love God... but now I'm getting ahead of myself.

First, ponder the wonder of James' description of God in **verse 17**. He refers to God as *the Father of lights*. This refers to God creating the sun, the moon, and the stars.<sup>9</sup> But do you remember *how* God created the lights back in **Genesis chapter 1**? By His Word, right?

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<sup>5</sup> John 3:19-20; 8:42-47

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 14:2-4; Romans 3:10-18, 8:7-8; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 4:18-19

God spoke, *Let there be light*... and light leapt into existence out of obedience to God's Word.

So follow James' logic: even when you're in trouble, you can trust God to give you everything you need to truly live the blessed life. For God is our powerful creator who is stronger than our sinful desires.

Our sinful desires are fickle and ever-changing... just like the shadows continually shift around us each day as the sun or moon travels across our sky.

But our Heavenly Father never changes. With Him *there is no variation or shadow due to change*. His goodness is unchanging and faithful. Where sinful desires only lead us to greater darkness and death, God's unchanging power speaks light and life into our lives.

And of course, **verse 18** is "Exhibit A" for what kind of good and perfect gifts our Father gives to His children.

*Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

Translation: God causes us to be recreated, or born again, entirely by His own decision, for His ultimate glory.

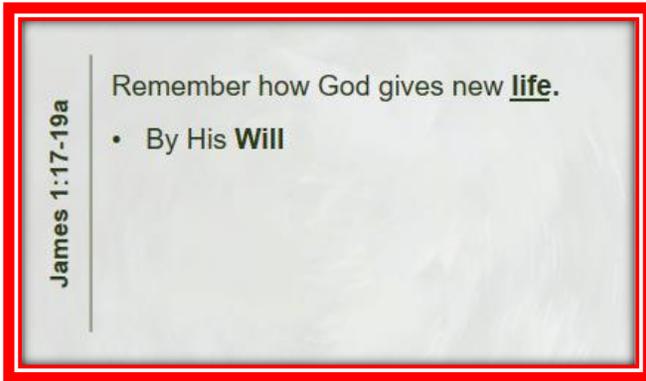
Now we could easily spend the entire sermon on the marvelous glories of **verse 18**. Look carefully at *how* God gives new life to sinful hearts with deceitful desires.

First, note that God gives salvation, or new birth,

<sup>7</sup> Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 6:21, 23; Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:22

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 15:18-20; Mark 7:21-23

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 1:14-19; Psalm 136:7-9; Jeremiah 31:35



By His Will.

**Verse 18** is clear. In His sovereign and unchanging goodness, *God decided* to set us free from our deceitful desires.

Sin so corrupts human desire that no sinner ever wants to be born again.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the natural process of childbirth is a helpful illustration here. Just as no human child ever decides that they will be born, so likewise, our new birth is entirely initiated by God's decision and decree.<sup>11</sup>

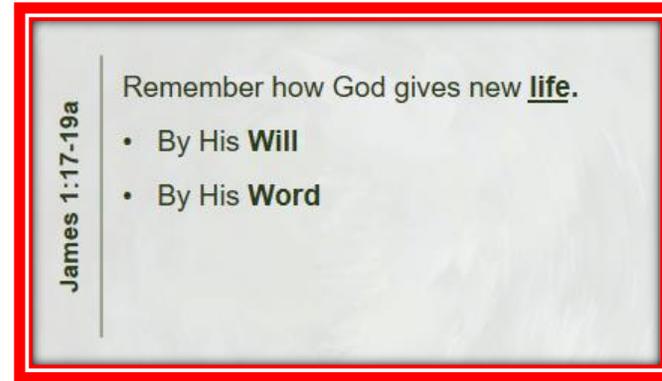
He "brought us forth", or literally, caused us to be born again. This is the miracle of regeneration, where God replaces our hard heart of rebellion with a soft heart of love towards Him and implants His own Word within us.<sup>12</sup> But exactly how does God cause us to be born again?<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> John 3:6; Titus 3:5; c.f. John 3:20, 14:17; 1 Corinthians 1:18

<sup>11</sup> John 1:12-13; c.f. 6:63; Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:11

<sup>12</sup> John 3:3-8; Ephesians 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:23-24; c.f. Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; James 1:21

<sup>13</sup> 1 Peter 1:3; c.f. 2 Peter 1:4 "...so that through [His great and precious



By His Word.

God gives new life *by the word of truth*, which is a biblical way to refer to "the Gospel."<sup>14</sup> God's Word is God's instrument by which He creates anything. And in salvation specifically, the Spirit of God uses the word of God to awaken faith,<sup>15</sup> and open blinded minds to behold the glories of God in the face of Jesus the Christ.<sup>16</sup>

Do you understand now why your relationship with God's Word is so important for your life? For God's Word is what God uses to make you into a brand-new creation all for His glory!<sup>17</sup>

After all, this is what God promised in the New Covenant:

In **Jeremiah chapter 31** we find the essence of God's new covenant of salvation for His people when God promises,

promises] you may become partakers of the Divine nature..."

<sup>14</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:7; Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:15

<sup>15</sup> Romans 10:17; c.f. John 3:3-8, 6:68; Ephesians 5:26

<sup>16</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:14-4:6

<sup>17</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 1:16



*I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ... Then I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*<sup>18</sup>

Notice that phrase, *and they shall be my people*.

That's what the end of **James 1:18** is referring to when it says, *that we should be a kind of firstfruits of God's creatures*.

The reason God causes us to be born again by His word is so we can be the first beneficiaries of His salvation harvest...so the redeemed can become the first installation of God's new creation that is still to come.<sup>19</sup>

The transformation that God's gospel creates through the conversion of sinners is just a foretaste of the fullness of God's salvation which will someday be realized when there are no more trials or temptations in the new heavens and new earth.

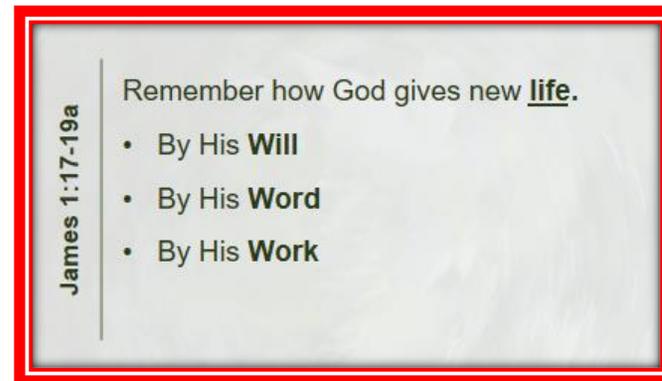
<sup>18</sup> Jeremiah 31:33-34ff; c.f. Ezekiel 36:25-27ff  
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So *who* is responsible for our salvation? God. *What* is salvation at its core? New birth. *How* does God accomplish our new birth? By His word of truth. And *why* does God save us? So we could glorify Him by living as His own newly created people .

Now **verse 19** emphatically states,

*Know this, my beloved brothers*. This phrase points back to **verses 17-18**. When you are in the midst of trials and temptations, you need to remember that God is good, and that God gives you a new heart that is able to keep loving God, even when life is hard.

And that's what Communion is all about, right? Looking back, and remembering all that God has done to make us a new creation together all,



*By His Work through the sacrifice of Jesus.*

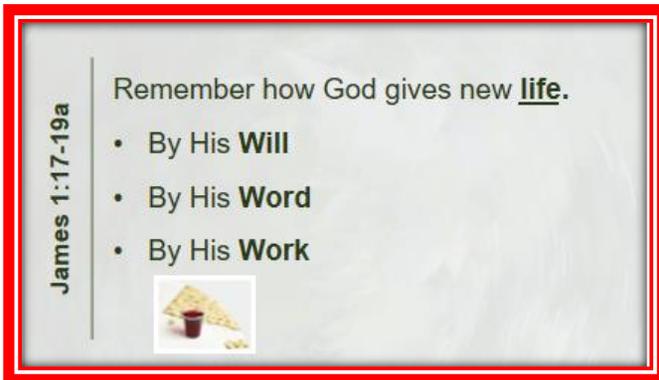
Jesus taught His disciples to regularly remember how Jesus paid for sin. He shared bread to symbolize Christians' participation in His broken body. He shared a

<sup>19</sup> 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21:1

cup of wine to symbolize how all the redeemed finds life and refreshment in His blood.

After all, the word of God powerfully proclaims the good news of Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension for all who will believe on Him. For it is the work of Jesus' sacrifice which forgives our sin and gives us new life.

So let's go ahead and prepare to celebrate communion together now.



Go ahead and open the top of your communion cup, to first expose the small bread wafer.

And before we eat this bread together, please remember this memorial feast is only for those who have been born again. If you aren't yet trusting in Jesus' sacrifice for your salvation, then please refrain from eating,<sup>20</sup> and simply watch as God's people remember how Jesus' body was crushed to save us from sin, and His blood was spilled to wash us whiter than snow.

And of course, if you desire new life in Christ, that means God's Spirit is working right now to draw you to Himself.<sup>21</sup> So pray that God will forgive your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.<sup>22</sup> Pray that God will give you a new heart and implant His Word within you. Entrust your soul to the perfect grace of our Creator – and call upon the name of Jesus. For whoever calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved!<sup>23</sup>

Before we eat and drink together to symbolize our united life together in Jesus' sacrifice, let's just each pause and bow our heads and pray.

Confess any sin that stands between you and God. Confess your faith that Jesus' death and resurrection is enough to secure your eternal acceptance forever with God. Thank God for causing you to be born again by His Gospel truth and His Spirit that is even now at work in you. Praise Jesus for His love.

In a minute, I'll lead us in prayer before we all eat the bread and drink the juice to remember Jesus' sacrifice together.

Let's pray.

<<Prayer>>

**Amen.**

<sup>20</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:27-29

<sup>21</sup> John 6:29, 37, 44, 63-65

<sup>22</sup> 1 John 1:9

<sup>23</sup> Romans 10:13

*The Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."<sup>24</sup>*

Let's eat together.

**Amen.** Now please peel back the lid of your communion cup and prepare to drink the juice together. This juice represents Jesus' blood. Do you remember, how Jesus took the cup saying,

*This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me?<sup>25</sup>*

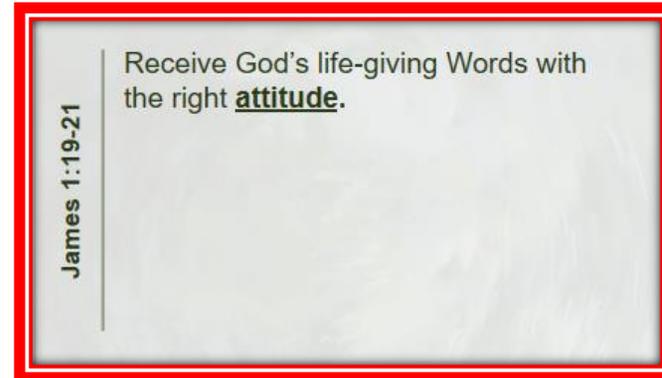
Let's drink together.

**Amen.**

May we never forget this good and perfect gift from our Heavenly Father. By His sovereign will which was made known to us through the Scriptures, He sent Jesus to be the eternal sacrifice for all of our sins, that we might be born again, and receive new life!

When you know this, and remember this, then you start to truly live. For no matter what trials or temptations you are enduring, you will continue loving God, joyfully confident of His eternal reward.

Now James continues to make sure that all who have been born again continue to,



**Receive God's life-giving Words with the right attitude.**

After all, just like a new child needs milk from its mother to grow and develop,<sup>26</sup> so likewise a heart that has been made new by God's gospel continues to need God's Word to grow and thrive.<sup>27</sup>

So **verse 19** urges us to *be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

Now, in this context, these verses are not primarily talking about interpersonal relationships and communication techniques.<sup>28</sup> No, **verses 19-21** are continuing James' argument about how we all relate to the word of truth which initially gave us new birth.

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<sup>24</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:23-24

<sup>25</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:25

<sup>26</sup> 1 Peter 2:2-3

<sup>27</sup> John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Timothy 4:6; 1 John

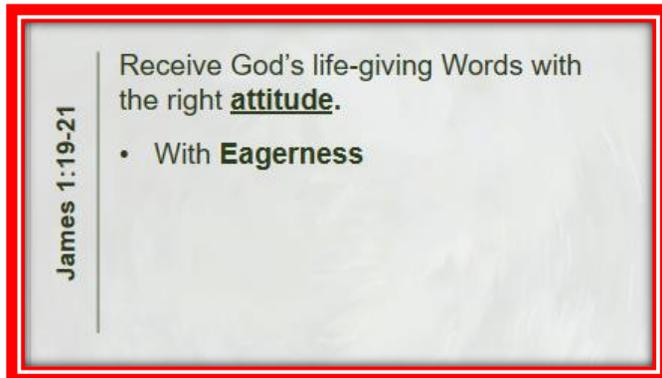
2:13-14

<sup>28</sup> For Scriptures pertaining directly to our interpersonal relations with one another, see other Scriptures like: Proverbs 14:29; 15:18; 17:27; 29:11 Ecclesiastes 7:9; and Ephesians 4:25-32.

After all, have you noticed how easy it is to justify yourself out of obeying God's Word when you read it?

For example, we'll read that God tells us to care for the poor, but we'll quickly tell ourselves all kinds of reasons why we can't give to the poor. Or God's Word calls us to forgive others, but we quickly convince ourselves that God's Word doesn't apply in our situation.

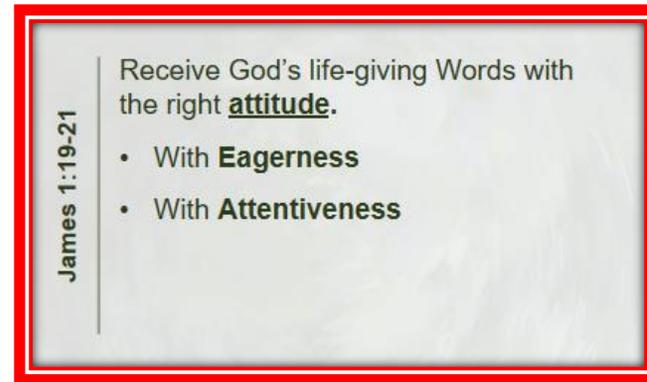
But loved ones... the same Word that created our spiritual birth is the same Word that is able to keep saving, or sanctifying, our souls. Therefore James urges us to receive God's life-giving Words,



**With Eagerness.** Christians should *be quick to hear* God's Word. Whenever God speaks, those who have been born again hurry up and listen.

So are you eagerly seizing every opportunity to increase your exposure to Scripture? Are you quick to find ways to read God's Word, or listen to it being taught?

*Slow to speak* urges us to receive God's Word,



**With Attentiveness,** not defensiveness.

This includes, *slow to anger*... because anger is how unbelief and sinful rebellion respond to God's Word.

An angry heart is not an attentive heart. Typically, when anger increases, listening decreases.

So how do you approach God's Word? With an open ear, or an open mouth? Do you approach God's word with lots of excuses? Lots of arguments? Lots of emotion stirred up by how you just can't understand God's ways and works that have allowed such trials in your life?

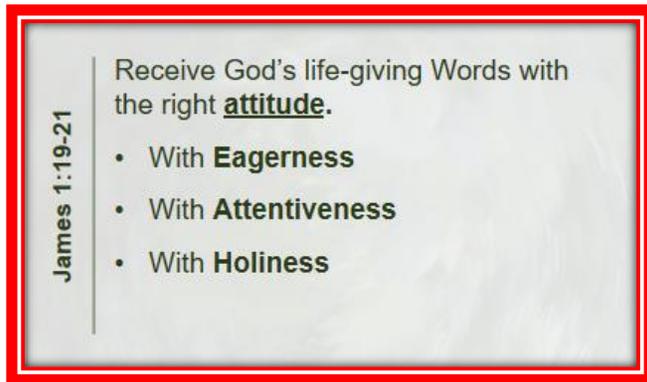
After all, during suffering we can be tempted to become angry at God. But James gives sound wisdom here. Remember, God's Word is the source of your life. So receive whatever God says with humble, eager, attentiveness. Being angry at God will never make you more holy, but God's Word is able to produce righteousness within you that will make you *perfect and complete, lacking in nothing*.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> James 1:2-5

Then, **verse 21** urges us to *put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness...*

In other words, we must receive God's Word,



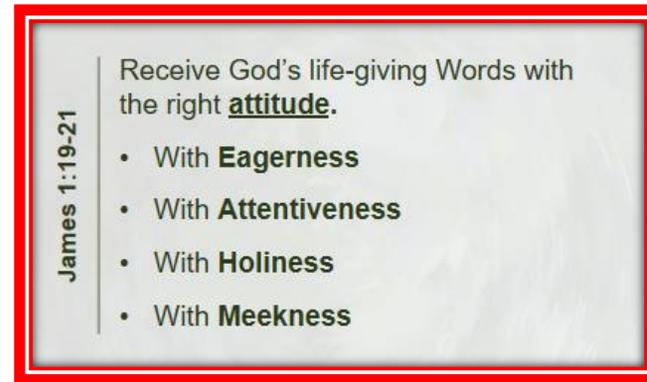
With a commitment to **Holiness**.

Pay attention to your heart's receptivity. Till your soil and pick the weeds. Put away, or turn from all moral filth and evil that hardens your heart, or chokes out the Word's power in your life.<sup>30</sup>

"Rampant wickedness" literally refers to our "wicked leftovers," acknowledging that even after we have been born again, we still have remnants of our old nature, or the flesh, that exist inside us.<sup>31</sup>

Whatever we feed will grow. So starve your flesh and instead receive God's life-giving Words,

<sup>30</sup> Like the "thorns" of "the deceitfulness of riches" or "the cares of the world" which eventually made the Word unfruitful Jesus' parable of the  
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With **Meekness**.

I love how James says this,

*Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

Again, this text deserves more time, but for now... just understand meekness is that attitude which causes us to receive everything as from God, and therefore without disputing or resisting.

God says it, so it must be good. My greatest advantage, my greatest joy, and my best life will always be realized when I humbly accept God's Word as good and right and trust God to continue His transforming work of salvation within my soul.

Don't miss the wonder of this church. God gave spiritual birth to you through His gospel which He implanted in your heart in fulfillment of His New Covenant promises. So now, every time you receive God's Word with humility

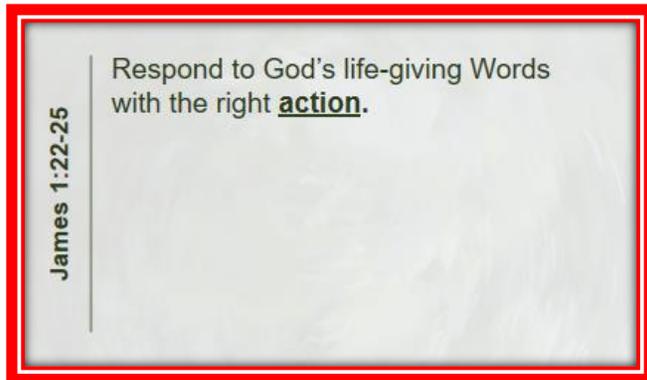
Sower in Matthew 13:7, 22.

<sup>31</sup> I.e. Galatians 5:16-17; Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:5-10

and meekness, it's like taking a "spiritual growth hormone" that stimulates and activates the Word which God has already put within you, so that it effectively causes you to grow and be conformed more and more into the likeness of Christ Himself.<sup>32</sup>

So again, consider honestly, are you approaching God's life-giving Words with the right attitude? In your trials and temptations, are you running to God's Word with eagerness, attentiveness, holiness, and meekness?

Because these are the necessary attitudes which then allow Christians to,



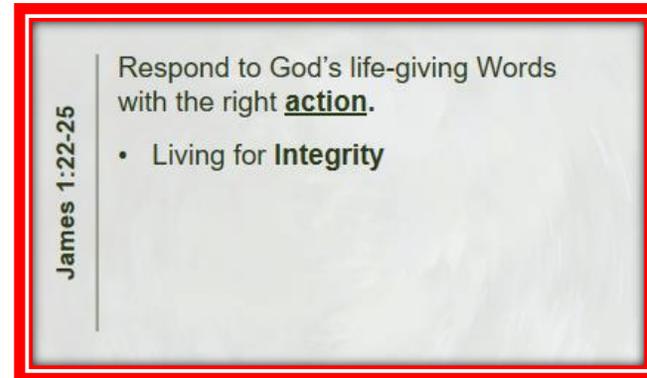
Respond to God's life-giving Word with the action.

**Verse 22** may be the theme verse of the entire book of **James**. For obedience is a major emphasis for James.

Saving faith always works. The right attitude in the heart will always be accompanied by the right actions in the life. Our walk always matters more than our talk.

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

James wants to make sure that you and I always respond to God's Word by,



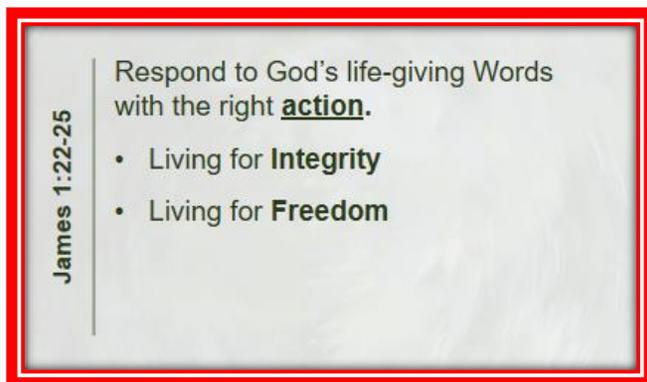
**Living for Integrity.** Self-deception is far too common among us. Far too often we think we're doing well spiritually simply because we understand what God says in the Bible. Yet we do not yet live by what we know and teach to others.

**Verse 22**, along with **verse 26** below, offers a strong warning against the self-delusion of talking a good game that is disconnected from walking the same.

We haven't truly received God's Word with meekness until we practice it. To merely nod in agreement, without experiencing the full authority of God's Word in my living, is to choose sin's forgetful deception rather than God's blessing of a happy life.

<sup>32</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Contrary to the forgetful fool in **verses 23 and 24** who is more concerned about just moving his bookmark ahead in the Bible than actually submitting to its life-giving authority, **verse 25** calls us to respond to God's Word by,

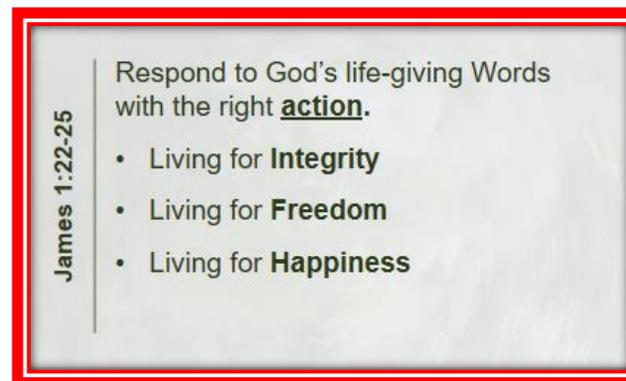


**Living for Freedom.**

This is so beautiful, isn't it? God's Word is called the law of liberty...the law of freedom.<sup>33</sup> It's fully sufficient to teach us how to truly love God and love others.

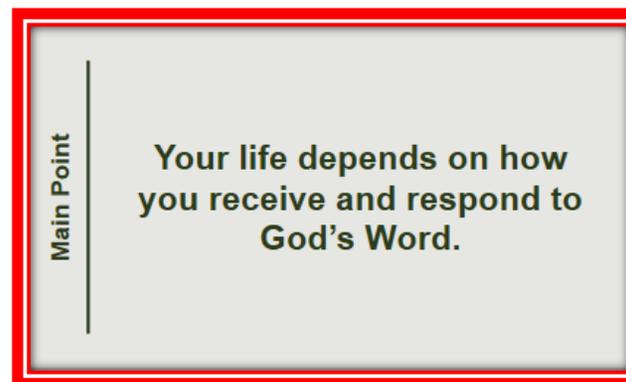
This world constantly tries to convince us that freedom means following our desires. But **James 1:15** says following our desires only leads to death. True freedom is found in becoming more like Christ, for Jesus is the only human who is entirely unpolluted by sin.<sup>34</sup>

So don't be deceived! Whenever you obey, and put God's Word into practice, you are truly,



**Living for Happiness!** For **verse 25** makes it clear, *The one who perseveres in loving God ... the one who is a doer of God's Word who acts... He is the one who will be blessed (or made happy) in His doing.*

Whenever your love for God motivates your obedience to God's Word, your life will be full, free, and satisfied.<sup>35</sup> This is why,



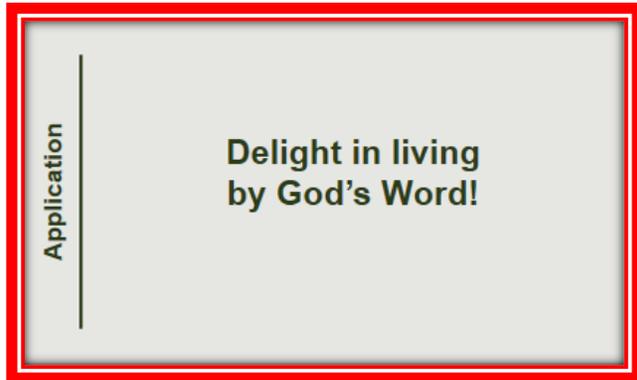
**Your life depends on how you receive and respond to God's Word.** Your happiness in life is directly related to your personal relationship with God's Word.

<sup>33</sup> C.f. James 2:12

<sup>34</sup> Hebrews 4:15

<sup>35</sup> John 15:10-11; 1 John 5:3

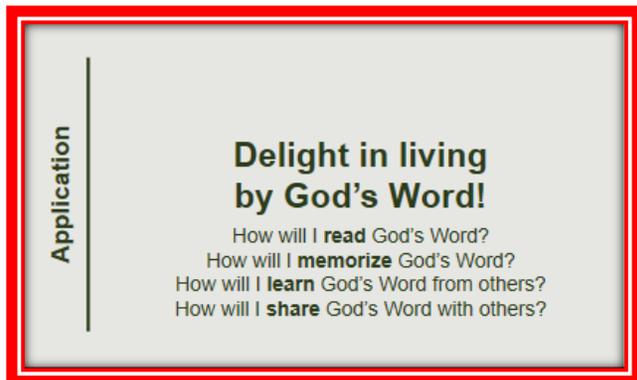
So, once we understand this, we ought to,



Delight in living by God's Word!

All who love God will treasure God's Words and seek to live by God's Word with the right attitude and actions.

So what needs to change in your practical living this week, in order for you to better listen for life?



How will you read God's Word? How will you memorize God's Word? How will you learn God's Word from others? How will you share God's Word with others?

Ask yourself these questions, and pause, and give an honest answer. Don't move on from the conviction of God's Word too quickly. Take God's life-giving Words seriously... our lives together as His people literally depend on His Word!

This past week, I was talking with one of our sisters who does formal biblical counseling here. And she shared that there was a common thread in the last 10 counseling relationships that she has enjoyed.

All 10 counselees shared a common pattern when they first came for counseling: none of them had a personal habit of delighting in God's Word for themselves on a daily basis.

Now obviously in a group of this size, some of us already have a well-oiled habit of grace for regular Bible reading, memorization, or teaching. But for those of us who don't yet have a plan for personal Bible intake yet in 2022, I'd like to invite you to join me in,



A 40 Day Bible Reading Plan through several of the shorter New Testament epistles. There's no obligation or pressure for any of you to join me in this 40 day plan, but

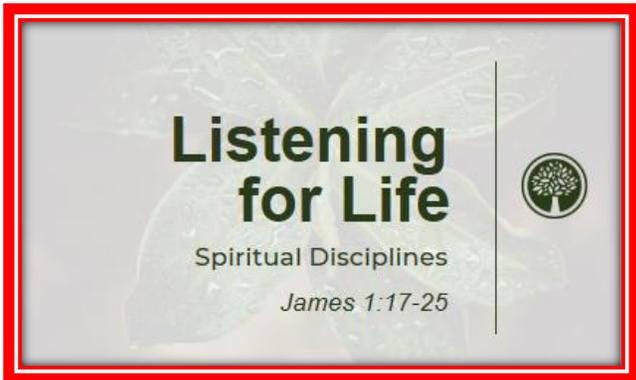
if you're not yet listening to God's Word for your life every day, I'd love for you to try to build this habit with me.

You can see the full plan at [MynCBC.org/40day](http://MynCBC.org/40day) or just look in each week's worship folder to find the assigned chapters for that week. Every Sunday will be a catch-up day.

This plan officially starts tomorrow, and as you can see inside your Worship folder, we'll plan to just read one chapter per day. This week, if you follow the guide, we'll read the entire letter of James and Philemon.

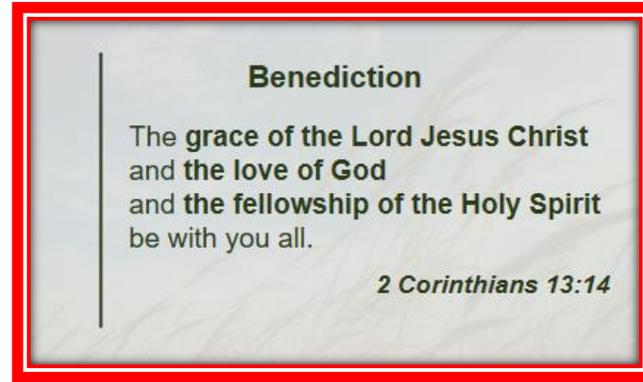
Again, if you already have a daily habit of listening to God's voice, I have no desire to pull you away from that to join me in this particular plan. The back of your notes page also suggests some alternative helps for you.

We're just offering tools aimed to build a habit of grace that will help us all better listen to God's Word for life.



Let's Pray.

<<Speak O Lord>>



Let's pray our benediction together:

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
2 Corinthians 13:14*



### **Recommended Resources on Listening for Life:**

- Psalm 1; 19:7-14; Ps 119:9-11
- Isaiah 55:10-11
- Jeremiah 15:16; 23:29
- Mark 4:14-20
- John 8:31-32, 17:17
- Romans 1:16-17; 10:17; 15:4
- 2 Corinthians 4:6
- Ephesians 5:26
- Colossians 1:5-6, 3:16
- 1 Thessalonians 2:13
- 2 Timothy 3:15-17, 4:2
- Hebrews 4:12-13
- 1 Peter 1:22-25
  
- <http://www.desiringgod.org/labs/precious-and-great-promises>
- <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/don-t-say-god-is-silent-with-your-bible-closed>
  
- *Taking God at His Word*, Kevin DeYoung
- *How to Study the Bible*, John MacArthur
- *Habits of Grace*, David Mathis

### **Recommended Bible Reading Plans:**

- [MyNCBC.org/40day](http://MyNCBC.org/40day)
- *YouVersion*™ Bible App Reading Plans - <https://bible.com/reading-plans>
- <https://www.esv.org/resources/reading-plans/>
- <https://www.challies.com/articles/the-way-ill-be-reading-the-bible-in-2022/>
- *Look at the Book*™ 8-12 minute online Bible Study labs - <http://www.desiringgod.org/labs>

### **Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions**

1. Read Psalm 1. Why do you think so many professing Christians struggle to find time for God's Word? Is it a problem of discipline or desire or both?
2. Compare James 1:15 with 1:18. What does sin "give birth to", compared to what God's Word "gives birth to"? Explain why James 1:17-18 is such good news for souls trapped in the hopelessness of James 1:14-15.
3. Review James 1:22-25. Is God's Word more like a mirror or a window, or both? (c.f. 2 Corinthians 4:6) Discuss.
4. Review James 1:16, 22, and 26. Why is it deceptive to hear God's Word but not obey it? List some areas of your life where you've said you're willing to obey, but are not yet actively obeying. How can you help each other move forward in these areas with greater faith and joy in Jesus?
5. Share your personal plans for living in God's Word in 2022. How can you encourage one another to persevere in this life-giving habit of grace this year?