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3/6/2024

A call to action

(James 1:22-25) But be **doers** of the word, and **not hearers** only, deceiving yourselves. ²³For 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. ²⁴For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵But 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.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only:

- We must receive God's word as **doers**, not just **hearers**. To take comfort in the fact you have heard God's word (Sermon) **but haven't done it is to deceive yourself.**

He is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror; for he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what he looks like:

- The person who only hears God's word without doing it is like a man who looks into a mirror and **immediately** forgets what he saw. *The information he received did not do any good in his life.*
- The *Word of the Lord is a revealer of secrets*, it's like a mirror, *it shows a man his life, his thoughts, his heart, his inner self.*

But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it... this one will be blessed in what he does:

- If we study the Word of God intently, and do it (**continue in it**), then we will be **blessed**.
- Though James stressed doing, he did not neglect studying God's Word either. We should **look into** God's Word. (when was the last time you looked into the word of God or studied)

KEY ACTIONS FOR YOUR PERSONAL GROWTH

1. **SELF-AWARENESS** (*Through self-examination*) Knowledge of one's character, feelings, motives and desires.

(Psalm 139:23-24) Search me God and know my heart, test me.

- This is also an admission that God knew David better than David knew himself, and that he needed God to search him and know him. (*Have you ever asked God to search you?*)
- It is easy to ask God to search us, **but have you made any effort to search yourselves**, and act upon the result of your search.

(Roman 12:3) Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought. (*Be honest with yourself.*)

- We should **see the truth about ourselves** and live in it. When we see ourselves as we really are, it is impossible to be given over to pride.

(2 Corinthians 13:5) Examine yourself to **see if your faith is really genuine**.

(Just as we get a physical exam, Paul tells us to give ourselves spiritual exams.)

- Be aware of the areas in which you need to grow. (*Has anybody ever told you to grow up?*)

- Be aware of your **strengths** and **limitations**.

(Many people focus on their strengths, but very few focus on their weakness.)

(Every now and then you should just stretch out your arm and it will remind you of your limitation.)

- Be aware of your **values** versus those of others.

- Be aware of **what others are better at** than you are.

(We are not good at everything)

- Be aware of the **opportunities** God has now given you.

(Ephesians 5:15–16) Be **very careful**, then, how you live (**Behavior**)—not as **unwise** but as **wise**,¹⁶ making the most of every **opportunity**, because the days are evil.

- Be aware of what you can become in Christ. (**Potential**)
(God is not finish with you yet!!!!)

2. **Make RIGHT NOW” and “TODAY DECISIONS** (Through Actions-with follow-thru and finish)

(Psalm 90:12) Teach us to make the **most of our time**, so we may grow in wisdom.

(Matthew 3:2) **Turn** from your sins and turn to God.

(2 Chronicles 7:14) **14** **if** my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and **turn** from their wicked ways, **then I will hear from heaven**, and **I will forgive their sin** and **will heal their land**

- *(Where do you need to make a turn in your life TODAY?)*

3. **SPIRITUAL EATING** (*Through spiritual nutrition*)

(Matthew 4:4) It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

- Jesus shows that **every word that proceeds from the mouth of God** should be more precious to us than food itself.

- We need more than physical bread for our life.

- If we are **ignorant** of God's truth, **we are not equipped to fight** against temptation.

(1 Peter 2:2) as newborn babes desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow.

- A new baby has a **yearning** for its mother's milk.
(*What are you yearning for today? Desires of the flesh or the Spirit*)
- Each believer should have a **DESIRE** for the word of God.
- The Word of God is **necessary** for the growth of a believer.

4. **LEARNING** (*Through Mind renewal/Renovation*)

(Romans 12:2) And do **not be conformed** to this world, but **be transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- The battle ground *between conforming* to the world and *being transformed* is in the mind of the believer. **Christians must think differently.**
- Don't follow the pattern of this world.

(Eph. 4:22-23) and **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, and that you **put on the new man** which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

- **We must take off our old clothes and put on a set of new clothes.** The idea is to "**change into**" **a different kind of conduct.**
- Think of a prisoner who is released from prison, but **still wears his prison clothes** and **acts like a prisoner and not as a free man**. The first thing you would tell that person is that they should put on some new clothes.

- **Throw away your evil nature.**

5. **UNLEARNING** (*Through Holy Spirit Sanctification*)

(Matthew 3:2)- Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

- John's message was a call to repentance. *Some people think that repentance is mostly about feelings*, feeling sorry for your sin. It is wonderful to feel sorry about your sin, but repent

isn't a "**feelings**" word. **It is an action word.** *John told his listeners to make a change of the mind, not to feel sorry for what they had done. Repentance speaks of a change of direction, not a sorrow in the heart.*

- Turn from your sins and turn to God.

(Romans 8:13) For if you live **according to the flesh** you will die; but **if by the Spirit** you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

- Paul constantly reminds us that living after the flesh ends in death. We need the reminder because we are often deceived into thinking that the flesh offers us life.

6. **SPENDING TIME IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD** (*By spending DAILY quality time with him*)

(Psalms 1:1-3) We should meditate on his word day and night.

- Meditate-Filing your mind with the thoughts of God

to meditate (religious) — **to think intently**, for spiritual purposes.

(What part of your day do you set aside to meditate?)

7. **WATER WALKING FAITH** (*having great ambitions and attempting impossible things for God*)

(Matthew 14:28) Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.

- We have no idea what prompted Peter to ask such a question, **but his faith in Jesus was remarkable**. He really responded to Jesus' invitation and got out of the boat.
- He walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was blowing, he was afraid; and beginning to sink: **This is a wonderful picture of walking in faith**, showing that **Peter was able to do the miraculous as long as he looked to Jesus**. When he saw that the wind was blowing, he was troubled by fear and began to sink.
- **"Peter walked on the water but feared the wind"**: This is human nature, often achieving great things, but failing in little things."
- Beginning to sink he cried out, saying, **"Lord, save me"**: **Even when Peter failed, Jesus was there to save him**. **Peter knew who to call out to at the moment of crisis**. Jesus then brought Peter back to the boat. *(Have you cried out to God for help?)*

8. **HAVING FRIENDS AND BEING AROUND the right PEOPLE.**

(Proverbs 27:17) As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

- A man can be used to sharpen (*improve and develop*) his friend, but the wrong people can dull your life.
- As Iron sharpens Iron, a friend sharpens a friend.

9. **SERVING GOD THROUGH THE WORK OF THE CHURCH** (We need help in growing the church)

(1 Tim. 4:14) *Do not neglect the gift that is in you*, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

- *don't neglect your spiritual gifts*

(1 Pet 4:10) Each of you should *use whatever gift you* have received *to serve others*,

- God **has given** gifts to each of us a gift **for the benefits of others**.

Service/serving helps us to grow.

10. **REJOICING ALWAYS AND LEARNING TO REST IN GOD**

(Psalm 34:1) *I will bless the LORD at all times*; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. (How many of you are really at this point in your life?)

(Philippians 4:4) Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Conclusion:

(John 15:4-5) **The vital relationship between the branch and the vine.**

Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. **Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.**

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. **If you remain in me and I in you**, you will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing**

- Jesus is **the true vine**. We must be **rooted** in Him if we will bear fruit for God and grow.

- It is only by Getting and staying connected with Him that any branch can bear fruit.

Do you need to connect to him today on a personal level?