

October 3-7, 2016

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Practical Lessons from the Book of James



5 MINUTES / 5 DAYS

MONDAY

Shut It!

James 1:19-27

One of my favorite presidential quotes of all time is from Calvin Coolidge: "I have noticed, that nothing I never said ever did me any harm." I wish I had known this before I got married. My words are not always what they should be, and my wife's tears have attested to that fact. As we seek to live out the Word of God in our lives, it is important that we remember to bridle our tongues. According to James 1:26, if someone is unable to control what they say, then their "religion is futile." In other words, any outward religious practice (like going to church, for example) is completely worthless. Instead, you should control your speech like a horse with a bit in its mouth, controlling your words and not letting your words control you.

Speak kind words to someone, particularly to someone with whom it doesn't come naturally!

TUESDAY

Give People a Chance

James 2:1-13

Did you know the satellite dish was the West Virginia state flower? This was one of the *many* West Virginia jokes that I endured over the years when I was living out of state. I usually just laughed it off, but sometimes it got under my skin. I didn't like being judged for where I was from, and some people did. To be honest, though, I'm guilty of the same crime. It's very easy for us to form opinions about others based on all kinds of factors like race, socioeconomic status, even the way people drive. In James 2, we see a call to be loving and merciful to those we encounter regardless of external factors. If we're to love others the way Christ does, we must discipline ourselves to not show favor based on looks, money, or other superficial reasons.

This Sunday, reach out to someone with whom you don't normally have contact.

Glorifying God by producing more maturing followers of Jesus.

WEDNESDAY Live It

James 2:14-26

Practice what you preach! A tall order, but it is oh so important. While this has often been a controversial passage, there is an important message here that the Lord intends for us to hear. In James, the emphasis is placed on what the believer is doing with their faith. According to James, merely claiming to have faith is not enough. Genuine faith is evidenced by works. Now, I think it is important to point out that James did not say that works are essential to faith, or that faith is unimportant. His argument was that works are evidence of faith. Is your faith evident? If not, what do you need to do to change?

Put some feet on your prayers, what can you do to help a fellow believer today?

THURSDAY

Getting Wise

James 3:13-18

Have you ever encountered a gentle person? There was a man at a church I attended years ago, and every Sunday morning, he would always greet me with a smile and say hello. Over all these years I've never forgotten that. In James 3, we read that the marks of wisdom are "pure, peaceable, and gentle." One of the differences between wisdom and knowledge lies in the ability to apply that which you have learned. Scripture shows us that the application of such knowledge will lead to not only mercy and good fruit, but the removal of jealousy and selfishness. Are peace and gentleness virtues you'd like in your life? Then start praying for wisdom.

Make praying for wisdom a daily practice, and start right now!

FRIDAY

Overcome Strife

James 4:1-8

Do you know what one of the most common reasons for church splits is? Doctrinal issues? Nope. The Music? Nope. One of the most common reasons church splits is because of the time of the worship service. Even though there is no biblical mandate as to what time the service is to occur, there can still be a huge strife created if the "sacred hour" is moved a few minutes. So how do we keep this strife from occurring? According to James, one of the symptoms of strife is prayerlessness. So instead of pridefully trying to have it our way, let's prayerfully ask God to do it His way.

Don't like how things are going? Pray! Ask God to change the circumstances or change you!