

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

### IN ONE EAR AND OUT THE OTHER

James 1:22 “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only . . .”

There were a few families in the last congregation I pastored that had a tradition following the worship service to return home to eat their noon meal together. The conversation at the noon meal was a discussion of the sermon for that day. These discussions were apparently often long and deep. Before forgetting the sermon, they wanted to be sure that they not only heard the sermon but took it to heart.

Is this not what James 1:22-25 is concerned about? James knew well human nature. Perhaps he had even had some personal experience with hearing God’s word and then failing to put it into practice. Regardless, this issue is one that is high on the Devil’s list of ways to “mess” with your faith life. He knows how easy it is to be afflicted with the syndrome of “in one ear and out the other.” The faster Satan can get you to forget what God’s word says the more opportunity he has to attack your faith.

Jesus spoke to the issue of “hearing and doing.” He said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21) John wrote concerning this topic, “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:18) In other words, St. Paul wrote, “test everything; hold fast what is good.” (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

Faith is not an intellectual thing. Oh, yes, through hearing God’s word your brain processes His words. But faith is much more than knowing the dictionary meanings of each of the words. The purpose of God’s word is to energize your heart not only to believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior but also to put into practice what God’s word has taught you. James says in the next verse that a person who hears, but does not put into practice what God’s word says is like a person who looks into a mirror, sees his image reflected back and then looks away and immediately forgets what he looked like. (James 1:23)

Remember, as you look into the mirror you are a redeemed child of God, purchased by the blood of Jesus. Hear His word. The Holy Spirit has embedded it in your heart. You will be blessed! James writes, you will be blessed when you not only hear what God's word says but put it into practice. (James 1:25)

Prayer: Lord, give me ears to hear you word and that I take it to heart. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Preserve Your Word, O Savior, To us this latter day,  
And let Your kingdom flourish; Enlarge Your Church, we pray.  
O Keep our faith from failing; Keep hope's bright star aglow,  
Let nothing from truth turn us While living here below.

Preserve, O Lord, Your honor, The bold blasphemer smite;  
Convince, convert, enlighten The souls in error's night.  
Reveal Your will, dear Savior, To all who dwell below,  
Great light of all the living, That all Your name may know.

Preserve, O Lord, Your Zion, Bought dearly with Your blood,  
Protect what You have chosen Against the hellish flood.  
Be always our defender When dangers gather round;  
When all the earth is crumbling, Safe may Your Church be found.

Preserve Your Word and preaching, The truth that makes us whole,  
The mirror of Your glory, The pow'r that saves the soul.  
Oh, may this living water, This dew of heav'nly grace,  
Sustain us while here living Until we see Your face.

Preserve in wave and tempest Your storm-tossed little flock;  
Assailed by wind and weather, May it endure each shock.  
Stand at the helm, our pilot, And set the course aright;  
Then we will reach the harbor In Your eternal light.  
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