

Dear Friend,

We have all heard many sermons from the book of James about how important it is to be a "doer of the Word" and not a "hearer only."

Jas 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

I have taught many times the dangers of "hearing only." Jesus said in Luke chapter 6 that a person who heard His sayings but never did them is like the man who built his house on the sand, but when the storms of life came, his house quickly fell because it was not built upon the rock. What is the rock? Doing His sayings (doing the Word).

Recently while I was again reading the book of John, I'm pretty sure I found the source of James' teaching. It is from something Jesus said when people were doubting whether what He was teaching was true or not. I'm paraphrasing but basically they were saying, "We know you have not been to schools of higher learning. How can we trust that the things you teach are really from God or not?" Notice the answer Jesus gives them:

Joh 7:14-17 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. (15) And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (16) Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. (17) If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

I underlined two phrases ... if any man will do ... he shall know. It is only when you begin DOING the Word that you truly begin KNOWING the truth. This is the source from which James wrote his epistle. It is only the DOER of the Word that comes to the knowledge of the truth. Hearers only inevitably become deceived.

For example, I grew up hearing the doctrine of "Christ and Him crucified" nearly every week in church. I heard it ... and heard it ... and heard it ... but simply "hearing the truth" never changed me. It was only when I became a "doer" of what was being taught by confessing my sins and receiving Jesus as my Savior that I was "blessed in my deed." Had I never been a "doer" of the Word, I could have kept "hearing" it my whole life and been deceived to think I was a Christian when in truth, I had never been born again. Talk about deception!

This same principle applies to every area of life. Jesus said to not only forgive those who trespass against us, but to go one step farther and actually pray for our enemies and do good unto them:

Luk 6:27-28 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, (28) Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

I well remember a situation more than thirty years ago where I felt somebody had really done me wrong. I was holding a grudge against them. While reading the bible the Holy Spirit began dealing with me about forgiving that person ... and actually praying for him. I resisted for a while but eventually I became obedient and started (reluctantly at first) praying for that person. It was only as I became a "doer" of the Word that my heart began to change for that person. After only a few weeks all of the

bitterness was gone from my heart. A genuine love and affection replaced the gall of bitterness. How wonderful has been the freedom from unforgiveness these many years. (I sometimes wonder if I would be in such good health today if I had continued to hold unforgiveness and bitterness in my heart for all those decades.)

Jesus said "believers shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." For years I was very intimidated from being a "doer" of those words. All of us tend to think, "What? He would heal through my hands? Doesn't He know how messed up I am? Surely He doesn't expect me to lay hands on the sick and expect them to recover." But I have found out over time, the more I become a "doer" of that Word, the more results I am seeing all the time. Sure enough, Jesus says what He means and means what He says.

In every area of life, I have found the same principle to be true. At some point, we all have to stop being "hearers only" and become "doers" of the Word. I could fill pages with my own personal testimonies of how by "doing" the Word I have come to "know" the doctrine is truly of God. Let us all strive to become doers of the Word and not hearers only. Let us trust God even more and step out on the water of the Word. By "doing His will" we "shall know the truth!"

Sue and I love you and appreciate you. We thank God for your generous and giving heart. God bless you!

Your friend and co-laborer,

GARY