

## ***“Beyond Hearing...to Application”– James 1:22-25***

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*[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, [www.welovethegospel.com](http://www.welovethegospel.com).]*

Take the Bible that you brought with you and meet me in the first chapter of James. And, by the way, if you need a Bible (or need a Bible in an English you can understand), there are free Bibles available at all the exits, so feel free to take one with you when you depart later today.

One of the books that has greatly impacted many of the missionaries and mission-minded folks of my generation<sup>1</sup> is called *Back to Jerusalem*. It was written by three leaders in the underground church of China. When I say “underground” church, I don’t mean that the churches literally gather underground necessarily. That is the term for the churches that have not been sanctioned by the Chinese government and are thus often meeting in secret and at risk of severe persecution.

Toward the end of the book there is a chapter that asks the question are we “Disciples or Just Believers?” In other words, they are trying to distinguish between those who are really following Jesus (i.e., disciples) and those who simply claim they believe in Christ. This distinction is similar to the one Kyle Idleman makes in his more recent book called *Not a Fan*, where he argues that there is a difference between people who follow Jesus and people who are just fans of Jesus.<sup>2</sup> Fans, he argues, are “enthusiastic admirers” of Jesus, “Close enough to Jesus to get the benefits but not so close to require sacrifice”. They want to follow Jesus to heaven without actually taking a cross with them. “Followers” are those who die to themselves, pick up their cross, and live their lives completely surrendered to Jesus Christ, come what may. Both books are getting at the same idea. Many people identify as Christians, claim to be believers, but they’re really just fans and fair-weather fans at that. But true Christians are followers. True Christians are disciples.

In commenting on this, the three Chinese leaders who wrote *Back to Jerusalem*, make this sobering observation:

“True disciples are usually people that few understand. They are viewed as potentially unstable fanatics. Often the same governments that tolerate the existence of mere believers will stop at no ends to completely eradicate any disciple within their borders.”<sup>3</sup>

I suppose these three Chinese leaders would know, since between them they spent more than 40 years in Chinese prisons for their faith before being exiled from the country all together. But here is what I want you to take away from these words. These brothers are telling us that the government in China doesn’t really care about those who are gathering to merely listen to the Word of God, but they will imprison (or perhaps worse) people who go so far as to actually live out the Word. And yet, interestingly, that is precisely what James says we, as Christ-followers, should be known for—doing the Word.

Our text this morning is going to call us to “*be doers of the word, and not hearers only*”. James clearly understands that people don’t go far enough with God’s Word and Gospel. Some don’t listen at all. Some listen in a sense, but don’t accept what they have heard. Some listen and *believe* they accept, but don’t put it into practice. But James is eager to show us that anything short of application—putting the Word into practice—is not really listening. It’s self-deception.

Let’s take a look at what James himself says, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, about these matters. Follow along as I read, beginning in verse 22. This is God’s Word...

*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.” (James 1:22-25)*

To begin this morning, we should remember that this paragraph comes on the heels of the author’s command for us to be good listeners, who are “*quick to hear*” and “*slow to speak*” (1:19). Our focus last time was on moving from merely hearing<sup>4</sup> the Word to accepting the Word. Today we could cast our discussion in similar terms—each of us should not merely hear the Word, but also apply it in our lives. If in verse 19 James was correcting our tendency to act without listening, here in verses 22 and following he is correcting our tendency to listen without pursuing the right course of action. He is calling us to practice the faith we have received. As David Platt explains, “the Word evokes action, and if there is no action from the Word, then clearly there has been no acceptance of the Word.”<sup>5</sup> Being “*doers of the word*” is “the most fundamental Christian outgrowth of good listening.”<sup>6</sup>

In other words, don’t just nod your head in approval when God’s Word calls us to obey some instruction. Obey the Word. Don’t just hear God’s Word instruct you to help the poor. Help the poor. Don’t just affirm that Christians are called to share the Gospel. Share the Gospel. Don’t just claim to intellectually assent to the Bible’s description of purity. Live purely.<sup>7</sup> Don’t just be a hearer of God’s Word. Be a doer. That’s what James is saying. That’s the Christian experience. But that’s not the experience of everyone who claims to be Christian.

Here again Platt is helpful.

“We have created a Christianity that stops at saying Jesus loves you just the way you are and Jesus loves you no matter what you do. Certainly there’s glorious truth to this when it comes to Jesus saving us from our sin, no matter how horrible they are, and Jesus loving us when we have nothing in us to deserve such love. But at the same time, Jesus says things like, ‘You are My friends if you do what I command you’ (John 15:14). And ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep My word’ (John 14:23).”<sup>8</sup>

And, of course, there are other texts in God’s Word that make this same point. One more example will suffice, this one from John’s first letter...

*“And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.” (1 John 2:3-6; cf. Romans 2:13)*

Isn’t that interesting. John says that we can claim that we know Jesus and walk with Jesus all we want, but if our lives don’t bear the mark of obedience to His teachings then we are liars. The truth is not in us. Isn’t that exactly what James says in verse 22? He says, “*be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*” In other words, “you are blind to your true spiritual condition if you claim to have heard and received and accepted this Word, yet you fail to act on it.”<sup>9</sup> Our creed should match our conduct or it’s not really our creed. We haven’t heard properly, until you actually heed.

Unfortunately, nominalism—the idea that people identify themselves with Christianity or a local church without a clear understanding or commitment to the faith—is a huge problem in the modern American church. The pews of our churches are often filled with lots of “hearers,” but not a lot of the “doers” that James speaks of. If that’s a fair assessment, then James would suggest that there are a lot of self-deceived people “who give no evidence of belonging to Jesus other than the presence of their bodies at a church building for two hours a week.”<sup>10</sup> They

may fool the world, but God knows that they are in fact delusional. You are not spiritually born again and healthy just because biblical instruction is vibrating your auditory nerves.<sup>11</sup>

Maybe we could liken it to auditing a class in college. When you audit a class, there is usually not the same degree of commitment. You may do the homework, but only if it's convenient. You may show up in class, but only if nothing else is more appealing that day and you don't want to sleep in. You try to get some of the benefit, without any significant sacrifice, buy in, accountability, or investment. But you don't get any credit for auditing Christianity.

This is really important for people like us to hear. Just because you listen to good sermons, attend Bible studies, and can hold your own in a Sunday School discussion, doesn't mean that you are not deceived. In fact, it could contribute to your deception and false assurance. As John MacArthur has written,

“When people are blessed with regular, in-depth preaching and teaching of Scripture they may become so enamored with their knowledge of God's Word that they become self-satisfied with that knowledge and forsake the effort to live out the profound truths they have come to understand.”<sup>12</sup>

Or at least those profound truths that challenge their personal preferences and conveniences.

All of this reminds us of Jesus' closing words and illustration in the Sermon on the Mount, which James so often seems to echo in this letter.

*“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”* (Matthew 7:24-27)

If you build your spiritual lives and assurance merely on listening to God's Word without putting it into practice, then one day, according to Jesus, your ultimate end will be destruction like a house built on sand. Jesus' point is that no one in their right mind would build their house on such an unstable and unreliable foundation and yet many people, rejecting God's Word, are building their lives on a foundation that is sure to fail them. That's just foolish.

James uses a different metaphor to understand how foolish it is to hear God's Word but not put it into practice. It involves a mirror. Look at verses 23 and 24.

*“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. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.”* (James 1:23-24)

Now in the ancient world mirrors were different than what we are accustomed to. Generally they were made of copper or bronze that had been polished extensively. You could see your reflection, but it was usually dim and somewhat distorted, unlike mirrors today. Nevertheless, these ancient mirrors were still useful because they allowed a person to notice imperfections in their appearance and address them. That is what we use mirrors for, isn't it? We want to see if we have food in our teeth or disheveled hair or whatever. But why do we want to notice that? So we can correct it. So we can do something about it. “What truly matters is not the look we take, but the action we take as a result of the look.”<sup>13</sup>

How silly it would be to possess a mirror, take the time to look at it, but never do anything about what we see. What a waste. But you see, that is James' point. He's being deliberately absurd. By his analogy, the mirror is

God's Word. It helps us to see ourselves clearly and accurately.<sup>14</sup> Sometimes we don't like what we see, but in seeing it there is a chance to repent and, to borrow James' language in verse 21, rid ourselves of "*all filthiness and rampant wickedness*". What a waste it is to have access to the perfect Word, pause to hear it, and then walk away immediately forgetting what we heard, doing nothing with it. He began well. He looked at the mirror. But in the end, he was no better off than one who owned no mirror. His glance did him no good.

Is your hearing of the Word and study of the Word doing you any good? It's not if you are not doing anything with it. It's not if you leave this place and all but forget what we consider by the time you get to your car. Don't forget what Jesus said about the house on the sand. What you do with the Word matters. It shows whether the Word has really been accepted by you and internalized. If the Word is not changing your life, then it's not really entering your life. Unless it becomes a milestone in your life, it will serve as a millstone around your neck in the next life.<sup>15</sup>

By contrast, James describes the true believer like this:

*"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."* (James 1:25)

Note the contrast. James gives us two options. We can deceive ourselves (1:22) or bless ourselves (1:25).<sup>16</sup> And this blessing is not presented as merely some end-time inheritance, but a present-day reality. We are blessed—experience satisfaction and a profound happiness—when we know we are doing what pleases the Lord, even if it costs us something or leads to some temporary suffering. Nothing is more satisfying than knowing that you are at the center of God's will.

Still the language of verse 25 does raise some questions.<sup>17</sup> We have no issue thinking of God's law as "*perfect*". We often describe the Bible as inerrant, sufficient, and absolutely authoritative. It is all of these things because it is perfect. But it is perfect because it comes from a perfect God. It reflects His perfect character. Why do we not murder? Because God gives life. Why do we not commit adultery? Because God is faithful. Why do we not steal? Because God is generous. Why do we not lie? Because God is truth and keeps His promises.<sup>18</sup> You see? The law is perfect because God is perfect. And we understand it most clearly, when we understand it through the lens of Christ, who has fulfilled it and kept it in our place (Matt. 5:17), the law interpreted through the gospel grid.<sup>19</sup>

This Gospel reminds us that we are not saved by our ability to keep the law. That's legalism. Jesus is the only person to ever have kept all of God's instructions perfectly. And the beauty of the Gospel is that His perfect record of obedience is credited to our accounts when we place our faith in Him to save. His death forgives all of our law-breaking. And His perfect obedience is shared with us. This is freely given to us as an underserved gift, by grace, through faith. But just because we are not saved by our obedience, doesn't mean that we don't obey God's instruction. We do. We don't do it to earn God's favor. We do it as an act of worship and gratitude for having been given God's favor in Christ. Paul summarizes these ideas best when he said this:

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."* (Ephesians 2:8-10)

But let's get back to James...The most challenging part of James' description in verse 25 is not the law's perfection, but the fact that he calls it "*the law of liberty*". Is that an oxymoron? We are not accustomed to thinking of law in terms of liberty. We tend to think of laws as restricting our freedom. If there is a law that says I can't bear false witness, then that means I can't say whatever I want. If there is a city ordinance that I can't paint my house neon orange, then my options are limited. If the law says that I can't drive above 30 mph in my neighborhood, then I am not free to drive above that without consequence. So when we hear the term "law," we don't think freedom. We don't think liberty.

Yet Sam Allberry points out something significant.

“Western society tends to think of freedom purely in terms of the absence of restriction. The idea is that if we remove all constraints, we end up with freedom. So the imposition of rules and boundaries is a restriction of freedom, by definition. But in the Bible, real freedom is not the absence of any and every constraint, but rather, the presence of the right kind of constraint. Removing a fish from water does not give it more freedom, but less. It is designed to live in the water, not apart from it. Freedom from water is a removal of constraint, but it is also (for a fish) a complete misunderstanding of what freedom really is. Our own true freedom is only found when we are in the environment which we were designed to flourish in. And that is obedience to God’s word. As we live by God’s word, we experience true life. Only then can we be said to be properly free. God made us. As we follow his word and live in his ways, our lives end up going along the grain of how he has designed us to live. His word corresponds exactly to our nature.”<sup>20</sup>

Yes, of course, every law does restrict in some sense. It limits our freedom. But it also gives freedom. What do I mean? The law against bearing false-witness, as we’ve seen, forbids our kids from saying whatever they want to say when their parents ask them to tell them the truth about something. But when our children tell the truth, it results in parents being able to trust them. That trust leads to more freedom. If the child asks if he or she can do this or that and come home by dinner, the parent is more inclined to say yes. Why? Because the parent is liberated to trust them and they are in turn liberated from the constraints of suspicion, and constant check-ins, and other limitations.

When God’s law tells us not to steal, it restricts what we can take but it ensures that we are not locked up and imprisoned, thereby losing our freedom. It frees our conscience as well. When God tells us to keep the Sabbath, then it frees us from overworking and succumbing to increasing secularization of our lives. When the city tells us not to speed, then it restricts how fast we can drive, but it ensures that we can maintain our freedom to drive by not having our license confiscated.<sup>21</sup> The law leads to freedom.

I love what Bethany Jenkins writes about this in the new *ESV Women’s Study Bible*:

“Being born again does not mean that our problems are over. It simply means that we have the potential to live as liberated people. When we become Christians, God changes our relationship with the law. Instead of being a means of slavery, it becomes a means of liberty. The word that gives us new birth now becomes the agency to grow our new faith. The result is freedom.”<sup>22</sup>

But how? James answers that. It comes first by receiving the Word. We hear it. We accept it. We believe it. That’s verses 19 through 21. But second, as James explains in verse 22, we don’t just hear God’s instructions. We obey them.

“Full freedom includes both negative freedom—freedom *from* interference of constraint—and positive freedom—freedom *for* excellence and vision. When we receive ‘the implanted word,’ we receive freedom *from* sin and *for* righteousness. The word is not fundamentally a list of things we can and cannot do. Instead, it is a message from heaven that gives us the joy of being able to live out our theology. We get to be the ‘doers,’ not the ‘don’t-doers.’ Thus, the more we receive and obey the Word, the more free we become.”<sup>23</sup>

How amazing! Thanks be to God!

Let me close with a memorable illustration drawn from Chuck Swindoll’s book, *Improving Your Serve*. He writes the following:

“Let’s pretend that you work for me. In fact, you are my executive assistant in a company that is growing rapidly. I’m the owner and I’m interested in expanding overseas. To pull this off, I make plans to travel abroad and stay there until the new branch office gets established. I make all the arrangements to take my family in the move to Europe for six to eight months, and I leave you in charge of the busy stateside organization. I tell you that I will write you regularly and give you direction and instructions.

I leave and you stay. Months pass. A flow of letters are mailed from Europe and received by you at the national headquarters. I spell out all my expectations. Finally, I return. Soon after my arrival I drive down to the office. I am stunned! Grass and weeds have grown up high. A few windows along the street are broken. I walk into the receptionist’s room and she is doing her nails, chewing gum, and listening to her favorite disco station. I look around and notice the waste baskets are overflowing, the carpet hasn’t been vacuumed for weeks, and nobody seems concerned that the owner has returned. I ask about your whereabouts and someone in the crowded lounge area points down the hall and yells, ‘I think he’s down there.’ Disturbed, I move in that direction and bump into you as you are finishing a chess game with our sales manager. I ask you to step into my office (which has been temporarily turned into a television room for watching afternoon soap operas).

‘What in the world is going on, man?’

‘What do ya’ mean ...?’

‘Well, look at this place! Didn’t you get any of my letters?’

‘Letters? Oh, yeah—sure, got every one of them. As a matter of fact ... we have had letter study every Friday night since you left. We have even divided all the personnel into small groups and discussed many of the things you wrote. Some of those things were really interesting. You’ll be pleased to know that a few of us have actually committed to memory some of your sentences and paragraphs. One or two memorized an entire letter or two! Great stuff in those letters!’

‘Okay, okay—you got my letters, you studied them and meditated on them, discussed and even memorized them. BUT WHAT DID YOU DO ABOUT THEM?’

‘Do? Uh—we didn’t do anything about them.’”

Everyone we know would agree that this scenario is absolutely absurd. But is that not eerily similar to the way people engage with God’s Word and Gospel. And even if that can pass for the norm in our day, it is no less absurd. What would that conversation look like when the Lord returns?

“Letters, Lord? Oh, yeah—sure, got every one of them. As a matter of fact, Lord, we have had letter study every Friday night. We have even divided all the congregation into small groups and discussed many of the things you wrote. Some of the things were really interesting. You’ll be pleased to know that a few of us have actually committed to memory some of your sentences and paragraphs. One or two memorized an entire letter or two! Great stuff in those letters!”

‘Okay, you got my letters, you studied them and meditated on them, discussed and even memorized them. BUT WHAT DID YOU DO ABOUT THEM?’”<sup>24</sup>

Let’s pray...

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<sup>1</sup> David Platt would include himself on that list. See David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in James* (CCE; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 24.

<sup>2</sup> See Kyle Idleman, *Not a Fan: Becoming a Committed Follower of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Brother Yun, Peter Xu Yongze, Enoch Wang, with Paul Hattaway, *Back to Jerusalem: Three Chinese House Church Leaders Share Their Vision to Complete the Great Commission* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2003), 115.

<sup>4</sup> If James were writing today, he might have characterized reading in the same light as mere hearing. “In the biblical world, most people would only hear the Scriptures read aloud; they would not own copies to read for themselves, so James’s phraseology would have proved natural.” Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell, *James* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 98.

<sup>5</sup> Platt, 21.

<sup>6</sup> Blomberg and Kamell, 97-98.

<sup>7</sup> Platt, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>10</sup> Robert L. Plummer, “James,” in *Hebrews-Revelation* (ESVEC; Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 241. “In studying texts like James 1:19–27, many churches are rediscovering the importance of regenerate church membership. They are becoming convinced that they should not add to the church rolls those who are unable to articulate the gospel or do not give evidence of Christian commitment in their daily lives. Along with regenerate membership comes the weighty but necessary task of church discipline. Persons who severely deviate (without repentance) from holy living or sound doctrine must be removed from the membership of the church in order to awaken them to the truth of their desperate spiritual state and to protect the external witness of the Christian community (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:11–13; Titus 2:8).” Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>12</sup> John MacArthur, *James* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), 79–80. Similarly, Kent Hughes writes, “The mirror ministry of God’s Word, which is rooted in showing us what we are, is essential. But there is also a danger here, because we can be deluded into thinking we have accomplished all God requires by hearing his Word. It is natural to imagine that the accumulation of Biblical knowledge is not just the main thing, but the only thing. Being the kind of person who thrills to open a book, who gets a sensual thrill from turning the pages and enjoys the esoteric language of theology, it is so easy to imagine that by reading books on spiritual subjects great virtue will course through my soul—like the primitives who thought they could imbibe others’ powers by drinking their blood.” R. Kent Hughes, *James: Faith that Works* (PW; Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 74.

<sup>13</sup> Sam Allberry, *James For You* (The Good Book Company, 2015), 48.

<sup>14</sup> It could also be said that the mirror of God’s Word is in which “God allows us to gaze upon Himself.” John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke Volume III and the Epistles of St. James and Jude*, trans. A. W. Morrison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 273.

<sup>15</sup> Hughes, 74.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Luke 11:28.

<sup>17</sup> “This law was frequently called “perfect” (cf. Ps. 19:7) and to it was sometimes ascribed the power to give true freedom (cf. Mishnah, Abot. 6:2). But the context makes us pause before accepting the identification of “law of liberty” with the Old Testament law. Because of the flow of the text, the “perfect law” of verse 25 must be the same as the “word” of verse 22; and the “word,” in turn, is identified as “the word of truth” that mediates spiritual birth (v. 18) and whose reception leads to salvation (v. 21). In light of this, it is necessary to associate “the perfect law of liberty” closely with the gospel. The pervasive influence of the teaching of Jesus on James’ ethics suggests that this “law” may particularly involve Jesus’ ethical demands. James wants to stress to his hearers that the “good news” of salvation brings with it an unavoidable, searching demand for complete obedience. The use of the word “law” to describe this commanding aspect of the Christ “Word” is entirely natural for someone in James’ position (and anticipates in some ways the “law/gospel” distinction in later theology). This “law” includes Old Testament commandments, as 2:8–11 makes clear, but James’ characterization of the Law as perfect suggests that these commandments must be seen in the light of Jesus’ fulfillment of the Old Testament law (Mt. 5:17). And, while still a “law,” this summons to obedience is nevertheless “liberating” because, in accordance with Jeremiah’s new covenant prophecy (31:31–34), it has been written on the heart (cf. “implanted” in v. 21). With the searching, radical demand of the gospel comes the enabling grace of God. When Jesus called people to “come” to him and to take his “yoke” upon them, he promised that “my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mt. 11:28–30).” Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 84.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel M. Doriani, *James* (REC; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 53.

<sup>19</sup> Blomberg and Kamell, 98. They explain, “But for James the “perfect law of liberty” forms the Christian’s guide (v. 25)—not Torah per se, but the Old Testament as fulfilled in Christ and interpreted through the grid of the gospel—in short, the new covenant. This “law” frees human beings from their inability to live up to the demands of Torah and, after Christ’s coming, from any attempt to receive forgiveness of sins except by trusting in Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice. These latter two concepts, so central to Paul and Hebrews (see esp. Gal 3–4; Ro 6–8; Heb 7–10), while not explicitly presented in James, dovetail perfectly with the language of the letter here. Far from driving a wedge between James and other New Testament authors with respect to the issue of law-keeping, this passage demonstrates James’s harmony with additional apostolic testimony on the topic.”

<sup>20</sup> Allberry, 51. Similarly, J. A. Motyer writes, “True freedom is the opportunity and the ability to give expression to what we truly are. We are truly free when we live the life appropriate to those who are created in the image of God. The law of God safeguards that liberty for us. But it does even more, for obedience brings life and power (Lv. 18:5; Dt. 4:1a; Acts 5:32). The law of God is the law of liberty because it safeguards, expresses and enables the life of true freedom into which Christ has brought us. This is the blessing of which James speaks (25), the blessing of a full life, a true humanity. Obedience is the key factor in our enjoyment of it.” J. A. Motyer, *The Message of James* (BST; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 71.

<sup>21</sup> Michael P. Andrus, “When Religion Is Worthless (of I Believe in Christian Living),” a sermon preached on June 15, 2008, and accessed online as of August 8, 2020, at: <https://firstfreewichita.org/sermons/sermon/2008-06-15/-when-religion-is-worthless--or-i-believe-in-christian-living->. Daniel Doriani gives another personal example: “We thrive within faithful, committed marriages. A man thrives when he knows he does not need to wonder, ‘Does my wife still love me?’ A woman has peace when she need not wonder, ‘What if my husband abandons me? Should I nurture my career, just in case?’ What freedom men and women have when they know their spouse is unconditionally committed to their marriage. In the past, when a difficult day led my wife to seek assurance that all was well between us, she typically asked, ‘Do you [still] love me?’ But her phrasing changed a while ago. She does not ask, ‘Do you love me?’ She tells me, ‘I know that you love me,’ and I reply, ‘You’re right, I do.’ This rests in part on the freedom and blessing of living by the law; we know that we love each other faithfully, unconditionally.” Doriani, 54.

<sup>22</sup> Bethany L. Jenkins, “Hearing and Doing,” in *ESV Women’s Study Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 2080.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Hughes, 77.