

of God's truth, but act upon it. This action is a prerequisite for the blessing mentioned in the remaining portions of this verse.

In this passage James is simply shedding light on a spiritual truth by using a natural object. A mirror has three purposes;

The Three Fold Purpose of A Mirror

Examination - 'Observing his natural face in a mirror' Reading the truth of the fallen human condition in the Word of God.

Restoration - 'Continues in it' Recognizing that he has been bought with a price and washed in the blood of Christ.

Transformation - 'Is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work' Becoming transformed from glory to glory into the same image of Christ by sharing the freedom that He brings.

Examination

To examine something is 'to look closely and intently in order to learn about and to gather information from'. We are to examine God's Word. When we read of the truths presented, we are to investigate them, to search them out so that there may be understanding of them, in order to practically apply them to our lives.

Restoration

By continuing in a study of God's truth restoration can then be brought about. Truths of Scripture will open up a man's fallen nature. We are to daily spend time meditating and reflecting on the scriptures.

Joshua 1:8 - This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Psalms 119:97 - Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

Philippians 4:8 - Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever

things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy— meditate on these things.

Transformation

The Word reflects the glory of God as though in a mirror (2 Cor 3:18). If we want to know what the glory of God is we are to look in the Word. This gives us a picture, though not a true image of God's glory. We will never fully comprehend this side of eternity, although we are to spend our lives being transformed into His very own image. The King James uses the word 'changed' which derived from the original Greek uses the word from which we get metamorphose – a constant changing and evolving. How does this transformation take place?

When we look at the Word and respond in obedience by doing what it commands us. We need to have the Word written on our hearts. Second Corinthians 3:3 tells us that under the new covenant Christ writes His word on our hearts and not on tablets of stone. No longer is salvation an external matter of laws written on stone and with ink, but now it transfers to salvation being internal – a state of the heart.

this one will be blessed in what he does. – A correct response to God's word will bring blessing. Some use this verse to say that we are blessed for our good deeds. This verse however, does not indicate that a man will be blessed **for his good works**, but in spite of his failings.

Therefore it is not just knowing God's will but doing God's will that will cause the blessing to be given. When we obey the truth of God's word we then can begin to know the power of the truth. Christ said to His disciples that if they would hold to and obey His teachings then they would know the truth, and the truth would set them free. The truth of God's word brings about the true freedom found in the Law of Liberty.

The conclusion to chapter one is given in verses 26 – 27 as James gives us a practical example of walking in the perfect law of liberty – of being an effectual doer of the Word instead of being a vain and useless "hearer only"

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Last time we were admonished to be

QUICK to hear

SLOW to speak and,

SLOW to anger.....because the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

1:23. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; - James uses a natural mirror to give meaning to a spiritual truth. The purpose of a mirror is to bring before a man's eyes his reflection. The mirror will show his faults and his imperfections, as well as his features.

The holy word of God will bring to light a man's spiritual reflection. The Word will show his strengths, his weakness and his imperfections. God's Word is a true mirror – it reflects the condition of men's souls without reservation or partiality.

1:24. for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

God has strict warnings about those who know what the Bible teaches but do not act on its teaching. There are many people who know the truth, yet they do not do it. The scriptures speak a sobering but clear warning;

Romans 1:32 - who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Matthew 7:21 - Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

James 4:17 - Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 - Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that

the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

A mirror is of no use unless we act on what it reveals.

1:25. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. – Our relationship to the Lord will be measured by our response to what the Word of God indicates.

But he who looks – The word 'looks' has a special significance when studied in its original form. The word is derived from two Greek words – para meaning 'aside' and kupto which is 'to bend forward.' Therefore when these two words are put together it denotes simply 'to stoop and look into'. It is to 'peer within.' In order for one to stoop and peer within, one must have to stop and specifically observe in order to perceive and discern what is being viewed. Therefore a Christian must make a conscious effort to stop and study his reflection in the Word of God.

Perfect Law of Liberty – The law of liberty is the law of love. It is the law that Christ commissioned. It is the Law of Christ.

However, we need to be careful here to discern what the "law of liberty" is and is not. Christ's love frees us from our sins so that we can freely love one another. Galatians 5:13 says that we have been called to liberty in order to fulfill all the law by love;

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!"

So, the "law of liberty clearly is not a license to sin – it is not a liberation obedience and holy living. It is a liberation from the power of sin so that we can love one another as Christ loved us.

At the beginning of his ministry Christ entered the temple and proclaimed his mission. He was clear and precise about His purpose and what the Father had sent Him to do. Luke 4 records the time when Christ spoke from the scroll of Isaiah, 'To proclaim liberty to the captives.' Christ's ministry was one of liberation and freedom. It was a gift that He was allowed to give and He gave it freely to all that would accept it. The New Testament writers continued the proclamation of the gift. Paul writes that because of the Law of Liberty, a believer can be free;

- 1) From sin (no TO sin)
- 2) From lawlessness and be a slave to righteousness (Rom 6:18-23)
- 3) From the law as a system of salvation (Galatians 4:21; 5:1; Romans 6:14; 7:5-13; 8:2; 1 Cor 15:56)
- 4) The demonic powers of darkness (Col 1:13)
- 5) From polytheistic superstition (1 Corinthians 10:29; Galatians 4:8)
- 6) From the burden of Jewish ceremonialism (Galatians 2:4)
- 7) From the remaining partial bondages to indwelling sin (Romans 7:14, 23)

This law of Christ is a higher law than previously given to Israel. It is a law for the New Testament church. The following four points should be noted about this Law of Liberty.

- 1) It is God's new law in Christ, given and revealed by His Spirit.
- 2) It is a perfect law. It cannot be improved upon. Christ has given us perfect liberty and freedom.
- 3) Through obedience to it, man can fulfill his purpose in God.
- 4) It is perfect liberty and perfect freedom. There is nothing hindering it.

Psalm 119:45 – 48 - And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

2 Corinthians 3:17 - Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Galatians 5:1 - Stand fast therefore in the liberty where with Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

and continues in it – Vine's definition of this word lets us see that it is to remain by or near. There is further thought to say that the man must continue and persevere in what he does. This ties in with James' earlier teaching of considering it as being blessed when following God in trying times. We are to continually reflect on the Word of God and how it applies to our life. Do our lives mirror the teaching of God's truth?

and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work – As the man who glanced into the mirror and forgot what he looked like, a committed Christian would not only look into the mirror