



Faith Is An Action



BIG IDEA

Your faith will not do anything for you until you do something with it. James warns that hearing God's Word can feel like growth when nothing has really changed. The blessing is not in what we hear or understand, it's in what we do with it.



ICE BREAKER

1. Have you ever walked away from a mirror and later realized you missed something, like spinach in your teeth? What happened?
2. What's something you know is good for you (a habit, a skill, a routine) that you've heard a lot about but haven't actually done?
3. What helps you follow through when you know what you should do?



MAIN POINTS

Hearing the Word is not the same as doing the Word. James says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22). He compares it to looking in a mirror: a mirror shows you what's true, but it can't fix anything, so walking away unchanged makes no sense. Hearing a sermon can feel like growth because we feel encouraged or even convicted, but feeling something and actually changing are not the same thing. We may be the most informed Christians in history, yet one of the least obedient.

A glance won't change you, leaning in will. The word James uses for "looks intently" (James 1:25) pictures someone stooping down and examining, the same word used when the disciples bent down to look into the empty tomb. Many of us only glance at Scripture, like checking the verse of the day, but God wants His Word to examine us (Hebrews 4:12). Some of us glance because we're afraid of what we'll see, like putting off a doctor's appointment. The challenge is to examine Scripture so that Scripture can examine you.

The blessing is in the doing. James says the person who looks intently and does what the Word says "will be blessed in what they do" (James 1:25). That blessing includes relationship (John 14:15, "If you love me, keep my commands"), transformation (Romans 12:2), and God showing up in power. Eleven disciples stayed in the boat and one got out; Peter walked on water not because he heard Jesus say "Come," but because he did what Jesus said. Obedience isn't a vending machine, but God-sized things are reserved for those putting their faith into action, not just those listening.

Obedience grows out of a healthy fear of God. Pastor Shan shared how John Bevere once asked Jim Bakker, from prison, when he fell out of love with Jesus. Bakker answered, "I loved Him all the way through it, but I didn't fear God." We can love Jesus, sing to Him, and even cry in worship, yet walk away from the mirror unchanged. Fearing God means respecting His authority enough to actually do what He says, and the next generation is watching whether

	we model it. Like Elijah, who was obeying God on an altar instead of sitting in the crowd, maybe we're asking God to send fire while He's asking us to build the altar.
 DISCUSS	1. Where have you been "glancing" at Scripture instead of leaning in? What gets in the way? 2. Which of the blessings of doing (relationship, transformation, God moving in power) are you most hungry for right now? 3. What do you think it means to fear God, and how is that different from being afraid of Him? 4. Is there something God has already told you to do that you've been putting off?
 NEXT STEP	Jesus First: Set aside real time this week. Pick a time, a place, and a book, and read James at least five days (reading Scripture four or more days a week makes a real difference). Each time, ask God two questions: "What do you want me to know?" and "What do you want me to do?" People Always: Share what God shows you with someone else and invite them to help you follow through. Serve your spouse, change your language, or encourage someone, and let them hold you accountable. If you have kids in your life, teach them to love and fear God by letting them see you do what the Word says. Made for More: Take the step you've been putting off, whether that's praying, getting baptized, running from a temptation, or serving. The blessing is in doing what you hear.
 SCRIPTURE	James 1:22-25 Hebrews 4:12 John 14:15 Romans 12:2
 NEXT WEEK SNEAK PEAK	Join us next weekend as Pastor DJ continues our Faith That Works series in James with "What Is in a Word?" from James 3:1-12. Invite someone to join you and don't miss the journey ahead!

Questions or Feedback? Email Groups@CentralAZ.com