

THE TESTINGS OF YOUR FAITH

Mike Taylor

www.TaylorNotes.Info

PART 2: THE TEST OF RESPONSE TO THE WORD



James explains the importance of not only hearing (reading God's word) but also doing what it says. Forgetting what we've read is called the "mirror effect."

This effect can also happen when we are overloaded with more daily information than what we can process. The result is the same.

Today, many Christians aren't forgetting God's word, as much as they are being distracted and overloaded from trying to process too much information (email, texting, regular mail, Internet ads, TV ads, news, sports, media, etc.).

Information overload happens when the volume of potentially useful and relevant information available exceeds our processing capacity and becomes a hindrance rather than a help.

- Ninety percent of all the information in the world today has been generated over the last two years, and there has been more information created in the last ten years than in all human history.
- Additionally, our cell phones are constantly interrupting our train of thought when we leave them on.
- The typical Internet user is exposed to 1,707 banner ads per month.
- Some people spend about 1/3 of their time just dealing with emails.
- In the US, people who text send or receive an average of 35 texts per day.

A. CENTRAL QUESTION

How can we remember what we just read, especially when reading God's Word?

B. JAMES 1:19-27 (NIV)

Hearing the Word (1:19-21)

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.²¹ Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which



can save you.

- 1:21 “get rid of” as one would take off filthy clothes.
- 1:21 Word (λόγος) planted in you.” Either an instinctive knowledge of right and wrong, or the word implanted by God at salvation.

Doing the Word (1:22-25)

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.
²³*Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it-- not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it-- they will be blessed in what they do.*

- 1:22. “Do not merely listen.” It is like someone who simply audits a class but makes no commitment to achieve a grade. “Do what it says.” Repeated action becomes a habit.
- 1:23-24. “A man who looks (*katanoēō*) at his face in a mirror.” He is like a person who looks in a mirror (polished metal, not glass like today) and sees all of his uncombed hair, his grimy face, and dirty shirt but goes on his way and does nothing about it. The words, “his face” in the Greek actually means “the face he was born with.” That which a man sees in God’s Word is a revelation of himself as he is by nature. 1:24. “Forgetting” often happens because we are so distracted by too much information today.
- 1:25 “perfect law.” It’s perfect because it is given by God, cannot be improved upon, and if obeyed it produces maturity.

True, Practical Religion (1:26-27)

Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”
(Jas. 1:19-27 NIV)

- 1:26 “religion” not the beliefs as much as the outward expressions of what one believes.
- A person joins in with certain religious liturgical practices but doesn’t care for those who cannot care for themselves in times of distress (orphans and widows).

Orphans and widows often had neither a direct means of support nor

automatic legal defenders in that society. They were powerless.¹

C. THREE WAYS TO RETAIN MORE OF WHAT YOU READ

1. Visualize the text.
2. Outline the text.
3. Draw a diagram of the text.

D. APPLICATION: HOW TO RESPOND TO THE WORD

1. Reduce: Trying to remember a long section of biblical text can be very difficult to remember, so reduce the selected section down to one to three paragraphs.
2. Repeat: James 1:25a, "But whoever looks intently." Select a passage in the bible you'd like to examine intently, then read it at least three times.
3. Reflect: James 1:25b "...not forgetting what they have heard." Whenever possible, try to diagram or outline what you just read. A "picture is worth a thousand words, and easier to remember than text."
4. React: Jas. 1:25c "but doing it." Jot down some actions you'd like to take but don't get overwhelmed with identifying too many actions. Look for verbs in the text because they often suggest actions to take.

Sources used in this study

Brooks, Keith L. *James: Belief in Action*. Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1962.

Fickett, Harold L. *Walking What You're Talking*. Ventura: Regal Books, 1988.

Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005.

New International Version. *Life Application Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House and Tyndale House Publishers, 1991.