

11. The system for acquiring the thinking of God is a mental attitude of stick-to-itiveness. The mental toughness to stick with it. The basic principle to be remembered is, “doctrine is built on doctrine.”
12. Those who heard the Word taught but have never applied it have rendered themselves stupid. They had the capacity to understand the doctrines academically, but never really believed it.
13. Just as doctrine is built on doctrine so is application built on application. The believer who hears but does not apply is indicated by the phrase, “is a hearer.” The verb is the present active indicative of **εἰμί (eimí)**: “if and it is true.”
14. This establishes the principle that any believer can be a hearer of the truth. Those out of fellowship will hear the truth but nothing transfers. Some who are positive will hear the truth taught but never apply it. Some who are positive will hear the truth, transfer it, and later apply it.
15. As the verse continues, James emphasizes the “hearer” indicated by the singular Greek noun **ἀκροατής (akroatḗs)**: “If anyone is a hearer.”
16. What this believer hears is extremely important. The object of his attention is the noun **λόλος (lógos)**: “Word.” Knowing the Word is primary, but the objective of knowing it is so that it may be applied.
17. This is the hearers’ point of failure for what follows is the negative conjunction **οὐ (ou)**: “not,” followed by the singular noun **ποιητής (poiētḗs)**: “a doer.”
18. The expanded translation of this verse so far reads, “If, and it is true, anyone is a hearer but not a doer.”
19. This same idea is communicated by Paul in:

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been completely and permanently saved through faith; and this salvation is definitely not from the source of yourselves, it is the free gift from the ultimate source of God;

v. 9 not out from the source of works, so that no one should boast.

Ephesians 2:10 For you see we are His **workmanship** [**ποίημα (poiēma)**: **work that is produced by a doer**] having been created in Christ Jesus for the production of divine-good works, which God has prepared in eternity past so that we may walk in wheel-tracks of righteousness. (EXT)

20. Every believer is commissioned as a workman of Jesus Christ by means of inculcation, retention, and application of His Word to life and circumstances. Not all fulfill their calling.
21. Because of the failure to respond to the Lord, believers move into a category of reverse reversionism. First of all we need to define Reversionism:

The act of reversing or turning in the opposite way. As believer we were designed to execute the protocol plan of God. But in reversionism, we turn the other way and cannot be distinguished from our pre-salvation status.

Christian degeneracy is defined as the decline from the normal standards of the protocol plan of God. In the process, the believer is unchecked by rebound by the use of the rebound technique and by other post-salvation problem-solving devices. Therefore, the believer sinks into subnormal categories of personal sinning.

Reversionism is recession from any stage of spiritual growth through negative volition to doctrine. Reversionism is a technical theological term for the results of soul fragmentation: (1) Reaction and distraction, (2) frantic search for happiness, (3) operation boomerang, (4) emotional revolt of the soul, (5) permanent negative volition, (6) blackout of the soul, (7) scar tissue of the soul, and (8) reverse process reversionism.³

22. Reverse reversionism occurs when the believer hears the teaching of the Word, accepts the content academically, but never gets around to applying it in his daily life. He's a hearer, but not a doer. He is saved, but has not grown in grace.

³ "Doctrine of Reversionism," in *Ephesians* (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1988), 412:933ff.

23. These types are prone to get involved in human good because they do not understand how to produce divine good. The way this is often demonstrated is the claim that they want to “be like Jesus” and then personally decide what they assume that would be.
24. Jesus is absolutely clear about this. He never commanded His disciples or others to “be like Me,” but to “Follow Me (**ἀκολούθει μοι [akolouthei moi]**)!” The verb, *akolouthei*, is the present active imperative of the word “follow.”
25. Among the four Gospels, the Lord issued the command to, “Follow Me!” on twelve occasions.
26. Those who show up, listen, and then stand pat are in danger of entering reverse reversionism. Without an advanced doctrinal inventory, the reversionistic decline is rapid.
27. This situation can be held at bay for a while as long as nothing occurs to cause reactor factors to intrude. Once they do, the affected person immediately goes on the warpath.
28. Instead of applying the problem-solving devices that had been clearly communicated, he is caught in a predictable morass of the reversionistic downtrends.
29. Although having heard doctrine taught, its principles were never practiced. Consequently, the wheel-tracks were never facilitated. The cosmic ones that were, having lain dormant for a time, suddenly emerged with a vengeance.
30. James is therefore setting up an analogy. He establishes the principle in the protasis, “If any man is a hearer of the word and not a doer.” This is a first-class condition therefore the protasis is true.
31. The apodosis is an analogy and is introduced by the verb **ἔοικα (éoika)** in the perfect tense used as a present to indicate the analogy will always be applicable.

32. James is writing to Jews, but the principle will always endure throughout the generations. In fact, as we have noted, the combination of “hearing and doing” is a common application in the Jewish mentality.
33. Those who hear the Word taught but do not function under its imperative moods are guilty of two roadblocks regarding spiritual growth.
34. First, they hear the Word taught and accept it academically in the *noús*, but do not buy into the idea that it is required for application. Hearer but not a doer.
35. Secondly, they hear the Word taught and believe it. The principle is transferred by the Holy Spirit to the *kardía*, but their human-viewpoint behavior patterns are so facilitated they are never able to apply it. Hearer but not a doer.
36. Such individuals actually go to church, sit in the pew, and appear to have rapt concentration. But the focus is elsewhere. They do perk up when certain doctrines with which they have an interest are being taught.
37. Some of the categories that sometimes gain their attention are soteriology, eschatology, and angelology but that leaves seven more that are reserved for daydreaming.
38. These types are included in the verb, *éōika* which sets up our metaphor and is translated “is like.” And what he is like is a man indicated by the noun **ἄνθρωπος** (*anḗr*): “nobleman; a man of importance; member of the royal family.”
39. Every breed of cat in the Body of Christ has his moniker: loser or winner, *hoi polloi* or aristocrat, hearer or doer, but all are saved, all are loved by God, and all are royal family.
40. Our “hearer but not a doer” is like a man who “looks,” the present active participle of **κατανοέω** (*katanoéō*): “to observe, notice, consider, contemplate, behold.” To concentrate on our facial features is like having doctrine in the *noús*.

(End JAS1-45. See JAS1-46 for continuation of study at p. 451.)

41. The verb **κατανοέω** (*katanoéō*) indicates focus and concentration. The man is a sophisticate, an **άνήρ** (*anēr*). Sophisticates are, potentially at least, advanced mentally and economically. He is metaphorically looking into a mirror, the singular noun **ἔσοπτρον** (*ésoptron*): “mirror.”
42. Some speculate that the reflection seen by the man is distorted and the subsequent loss of clarity prevents the man from perceiving a clear reflection of himself. This simply is not the case.
43. We will crack the mirror’s riddle by observing the following excerpts and then make their applications in verse 24:

The Word is like a mirror; Paul made this point in 1 Corinthians 13:12. The “hearer-only” is someone who *beholds himself* and sees the imperfections but then leaves and forgets *what manner of man he was*. His look in the mirror reveals something that calls for action, but he never does anything about it. He simply goes away and continues in a sustained state of imperfection. Because no improvements are made, he remains in that state. After a short while, he *forgets* those imperfections since he is no longer in front of this *mirror*.¹

The metaphor of a person looking in a mirror and subsequently forgetting what he or she looks like corresponds to “not doing,” because in hearing the word, one gets a glimpse of truth about oneself, but failure to then do the word makes the encounter purely momentary and external—a mere reflection, not the real thing. When they did look in a mirror, they realized, of course, that they were looking at their own image, but a onetime exposure.²

ἔσοπτρον, *mirror: look at one’s face in a mirror*, James 1:23. See indirectly in a mirror (because one sees not the thing itself, but its mirror image) 1 Corinthians 13:12.³

44. When a person looks into a mirror, he sees his own image, but when he walks away, that image is gone and soon forgotten.

¹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, “James,” in *Ariel’s Bible Commentary: The Messianic Jewish Epistles* (Tustin, Cal.: Ariel Ministries, 2005), 236.

² Dan G. McCartney, *James* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 120–21.

³ Walter Bauer, “ἔσοπτρον,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 397.