

13. The Bible is crystal. If you are filled with the Holy Spirit then any thought, decision, or action authorized by New-Testament Scripture is sanctified as a good work.
14. The more doctrine you have facilitated in your stream of consciousness then the number and quality of your good works increase accordingly.
15. James refers to this procedure as “becoming doers of the Word.” Those that are “hearers of the Word,” but stop there, do not get around to becoming “doers.”
16. The doer of the Word applies what he knows under the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. This is the act of applying doctrine to experience.
17. What follows next is an illustration of the believer who hears doctrine, but rarely, if ever, gets around to applying it.

**James 1:23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; (NASB)

1. In verse 21 we noted the believer is to receive the “implanted Word” which is able to “deliver your souls from danger.”
2. In verse 22, we were advised to prove ourselves among those who apply the “implanted Word,” but not among those who hear the Word but do not apply it.
3. In verse 23 the modus operandi of the believer who is a “hearer but not a doer” will be illustrated. What will be discovered are those who only hear doctrine taught but then do not apply what they have heard. This is the malfunction of Operation Z.
4. All show up, listen, and take in doctrine, but for those who are only hearers, doctrine does not cycle into the *kardía* because it is only academically understood; without conviction it remains in the *noús*.
5. One must approach the study of the Bible with humility. It contains information that was originally transferred from the mind of God to human receivers and authors. We have described this as the System of Divine Didactics

6. In the Church Age, the content of the Bible is communicated by men who have the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. Their first obligations are to exegete the Bible's Hebrew and Greek passages and translate them into English.
7. 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."
8. 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.
9. 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."
10. 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.
11. As the verse continues, James emphasizes the "hearer" indicated by the singular Greek noun **ἀκροατής (akroatēs)**: "If anyone is a hearer."
12. 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.
13. This is the hearers' point of failure for what follows is the negative conjunction **οὐ (ou)**: "not," followed by the singular noun **ποιητής (poiētēs)**: "a doer."
14. So far our sentence reads, "If anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer." This describes a believer to whom the Bible is literature, not a serious life-altering guide issued by God.
15. This is reversionism. The believer hears the teaching of the Word, accepts it academically, but does not apply it in his life. Instead, he is guided by personal assumptions or by the influence of others.

16. Although having heard doctrine taught, its principles were never practiced. Consequently, wheel-tracks of righteousness were never facilitated. Instead, wheel-tracks of wickedness, having lain dormant for a time, suddenly emerge as reverse process reversionism.
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. Those who hear the Word taught, but do not function under its imperative moods, are guilty of two roadblocks regarding spiritual growth.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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.
23. These types are included in the verb, *éoika* which sets up our metaphor and is translated “is like.” And what he is like is a man indicated by the noun **ἀνὴρ** (*anḗr*): “nobleman; a man of importance; member of the royal family.”
24. 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*.

25. The verb **κατανοέω** (*katanoéō*) indicates focus and concentration. The man is a sophisticate, an **ἀνὴρ** (*anēr*). Sophisticates are, potentially at least, advanced mentally and economically. He is metaphorically looking into a mirror, the singular noun **ἔσοπτρον** (*ésoptron*): “mirror.”
26. The riddle of the mirror must be accurately discerned. We do so by observing the following excerpts from which we will make our 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*.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

**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.<sup>4</sup>

27. When a person looks into a mirror, he sees his own image, but when he walks away, that image is gone and soon forgotten.
28. This is a metaphor of the mirror of the soul. In the *noús* the believer is able to acquire academic comprehension of a biblical truth and even transfer it by faith over to the *kardía*.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, “James,” in *Ariel’s Bible Commentary: The Messianic Jewish Epistles* (Tustin, Cal.: Ariel Ministries, 2005), 236.

<sup>3</sup> Dan G. McCartney, *James* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 120–21.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

29. But when the subject changes or class is dismissed, that information is illustrated by the act of walking away from a mirror, the information is not fully metabolized as a path of least resistance.
30. Some believers treat the Bible as a mirror. They open it up, follow along with the study, then walk away “immediately forgetting” what they just learned.
31. The one who looks into the mirror and walks away quickly forgets what he saw and turns his attention to other issues.
32. The person who looks into the Word and understands what is communicated, but then, forgets its message is a hearer, not a doer.
33. Principle: Hearing must precede doing if the doing is to be accomplished under the filling and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
34. Those who are doers without first hearing fall into the same trap. Their efforts are human viewpoint at best and evil at worst.
35. The sequence of producing divine good and invisible historical impact is: hear first, believe by transference, retain by facilitation, and apply under the power of the Holy Spirit.

**James 1:23** For if, and it is true, anyone is a hearer of the Word in the *noús* and not a doer from the *kardía*, such a person, is like a nobleman who looks contemplatively at his facial features in a mirror; (EXT)

**James 1:24** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of a person he was. (NASB)

1. The verse opens with the same word for “looking” that we just noted in verse 23. In that verse it was a present active participle of *katanoéō*, to *contemplate* one’s face.
2. This same word kicks off verse 24 but here *katanoéō* is an aorist active indicative. The aorist’s use here is culminative which stresses the cessation of an act or state. Its essential nature is summarizing and concluding.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 559.