

READ

James 1:19-27

Matthew 7:24-27

CONSIDER

Have you ever had situations where you agree with what the Scripture teaches is important and you felt like acting on it right away, but somehow left it aside and forgot what should be done about it?

The theme of “faith in action” is described in the book of James (half-brother of Jesus) where he was writing to the scattered Jewish Christians that genuine faith transforms lives, exposing hypocritical practices, and encouraging them to put their faith into loving action. The central theme of the epistle is that genuine faith will inevitably produce good deeds as outlined in his advice on Christian life in (1:1-27). It is a how-to book on Christian living when facing confrontation and challenges, with a call to commitment. Our character is shaped by God to be a whole person in enduring hardship, seasoned, experienced, well developed, and fully trained. Hardship would provide opportunities for growth. Ask God for wisdom to help you solve your problems or to give you the strength to endure them. Be patient as God will stay close and help you grow. We must not be wavering in His words, but have complete faith and confidence in Him that He will align our desires with His purpose.

In terms of our temperament, James warns against anger erupting when our egos get bruised. “I am hurt”, “My opinions are not being heard.” These are outrages of normal reaction to anyone who disagrees with us. Selfish anger would not help anyone when we feel offended or neglected or fail to win an argument. Another case would be talking too much and listen too little, tending to think our ideas are more important than others. When people talk with you, do they feel that their viewpoints and ideas have value? Ask God for forgiveness in sin’s control, and that we are no longer slaves to our selfish desires, as we are free to obey God (James 2:12). Inward change must affect outward conduct, such as taming of the tongue (James 3).

It is important to listen to what God’s Word says, but more important is to obey and do what it says. Observation of other’s behavior would provide measure of effectiveness in how much people take in God’s teaching in the Scripture. Do we put into action what we have listened and studied?

Deacon Sam Chan

PRAY

Dear Lord Jesus, guide me today that as a follower of you, the pathways to be a mature Christian in Christ in my deeds and speech; help me see what would be the most essential characteristics I should practise in my life-time in how to listen to you and others, and practice it in order to be a spiritually mature Christian. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

DIVING DEEPER

Matthew 5:24-27 says that hearing Jesus' words and practice them is just like a wise man who builds his house on the rock. The person who does this is a hearing and responding disciple, not a phony, superficial one. Carrying out His words in obedience would form a solid foundation in faith, helping us to stand the storms of life.

Do you hear God's words when help is needed and follow Him for guidance, rather than feeling helpless with fear and anxiety?

People without God's words would feel life without purpose, just like building a house on loose sand, heading for destruction. Can you help others who are without life purpose, in seeing where their lives are headed? Can you help pointing out the consequences of ignorance of ignoring Jesus' message and help them see the goodness of following Him?

How can we live closer WITH GOD in our lives?

How are we being TRANSFORMED to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we DO this week?