

WALK THE TALK!

Part One - James 1:21-27

WHAT WE DO SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS

I'd like to share a story with you from the pages of history about a frontier preacher who took to a stray dog of which his two boys had become very fond. The dog was as black as coal except for three very distinctive white hairs on his tail.

One day the preacher saw an ad in the local paper for a lost dog that fit the description of the stray perfectly, right down to and including the white hairs. With the help of his boys the preacher carefully pulled out the three white hairs.

The owner, hearing that a dog that fit the description of his was at the preacher's farm, went looking for his dog. When he arrived the dog showed every sign of recognizing him, so he wanted to take him home.

The preacher asked, *didn't you say your dog had three white hairs on his tail?* The owner, unable to find the identifying hairs, was forced to leave. Later the preacher wrote, I kept the dog, but I lost my boys.

The names of his boys—Frank and Jessie James! We teach and influence others not only by what we say, but by what we do.

James 1:22 says, *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only. Deceiving yourselves.* The NIV reads, *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.* Do what it says. We need to get serious with the Lord and WALK THE TALK, as the book of James tells us. We need to be practicing the faith in everyday life. The book of James is not about church membership, or playing the Christian. It is the acid test of walking out the truth, not just hearing it or speaking it.

James 1:27 says, *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.* (NIV) James is a practical, helpful book and we are going to see what being a doer of the Word means.

We must constantly be deepening our relationship with the Lord Jesus. Without the love of God in the heart of the believer, trials can cause him to become bitter, critical and lose the crown of life. When we are walking out what we speak, we turn trials into personal triumphs. And we should always pursue letting God teach us how to live better, endure temptations, stop feeding and entertaining lust, work at making improvements, lay aside all filthiness, learn to control our tongues, and help the less fortunate. Every Christian should read and be familiar with the book of James. It is filled with helps and truths that

will bring maturity and victories if we walk in God's truth. In the book of James, he emphasizes duty rather than doctrine. He wrote to rebuke the shameful neglect of certain Christian duties.

If you want to learn about the tongue, to know the dangers of an unbridled tongue, read James 3:1-10 which lays it out for you—straight forward and pulling no punches. It tells us that the tongue is a fire, restless evil, and full of deadly poison, and we need the taming through obedience to the Holy Spirit—the seed of righteousness sown in peace. There are other scriptures in the Bible that talks about the tongue, what we speak, and the consequences, but the book of James seems to be the most popular that is shared on the subject of the tongue. If we do not have “watch” over and “control” over our tongue, how can we effectively walk in obedience to God's love and truth?

Being a doers of the Word—what does that really mean? First, understand that “Word” stands for the Written Word, which is the Bible, and the Living Word, which is Jesus. My understanding is that Christians, you and I, are to live by the Bible as brought to us in the person, life and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Living by the Word, brings glory and honor to Jesus.

If you live by the Word of the Bible through Jesus, you must be a person of your word. Many of us have hurtful memories of childhood disappointments as adults have promised that they would do something with or for us and did not followed through; a father promising a son that he would come to his Karate tournament, but never followed through and yet always had an excuse for not attending

Or a mother promising a daughter that she would teach her how to bake her special pie or make the famous pot roast that everyone just loved. It was always *another time*. The daughter is grown and has her own family and those promises were never honored. Is it any wonder that children felt hurt and had drawn the conclusion that he or she could not count on what their parents said?

Therefore being a person of your word is extremely important as a Christian. Trust is an important ingredient in having good relationships; be a person that can be trusted to keep your word. Don't deceive yourself or others by not staying true to what you say. The enemy brings deception to the believer, but you must not accept it. Know the truth of the Word and walk in it and deception has to go. We must be on guard and not be deceived.

Walking as a person of your word builds character and by doing what you say you are going to do, you have credibility. People learn to trust you for they see by your walk that you are capable of being believed, worthy of confidence, and are reliable; a very important trait to have to be a good leader.

If you call yourself a Christian, it will show in your talk and in your walk.

You cannot call yourself a Christian one minute and then the next minute beat your wife and call your children names. You can't call yourself a Christian one minute and the next minute be on the phone criticizing and judging others in the body.

You can't call yourself a Christian one minute and come out of a Christian meeting and cuss out the parking attendant because you aren't getting out of the parking lot quite as fast as you want to. Go back and read what it says in James 1:21, *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.* (NIV) Romans 12:2 warns us, *Do not conform any longer to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.* (NIV) Where do we get our standards for speech, actions, and attitudes? A believer gets them from God's Word. And it doesn't matter if everybody else is doing it. Although this may be true, it is not majority rule and when it comes to living the Christian life, you are to conform to God and His rules, not worldly rules.

Jesus said, *Enter by the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and wide is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.* (Matthew 7:13)

I read this saying several years ago and it has always stayed with me. *One's character is made up of what one does when no one is looking!* Truer words were never spoken.

WALK THE TALK is living according to the guidance and presence of Christ in your life. Clean living may not be in the majority, but it will bring true happiness and is healthy for the body, mind and spirit. Therefore, let us walk in the spirit of love, submit to God and trust Him for the future, develop staying power and experience the power of walking in His authority.

Go and be the salt and light God has called you to be. And always remember that there is power in God's Word and in the Holy Spirit to sustain you and allow you strength to *walk the talk* and bring honor to God through your life. You were called by the Holy Spirit into a life of truth and God's Word has the power to change your life.

In **PART TWO**, we will discuss the ability to see the opportunity to do good, and when you see what needs to be done, do it. We will also talk about putting faith into action and submitting to God.