

Quit Kidding Yourself

James 1:19-27

'The Dangers of Self-Deception'

- If a Christian sins because Satan deceives him, that is one thing. But if he deceives himself, that is a far more serious matter. Many people are deceiving themselves into thinking they are saved when they are not.
- Matt 7:22-23 "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity."
- But there are true believers who are fooling themselves concerning their Christian walk. It is a mark of maturity when a person faces himself honestly, knows himself, and admits his needs. There is no room for the proud when following Jesus. James 4:6 "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
- Spiritual maturity results from the proper relationship to God through His Word! God's Word is truth. We love God's Word until it gets into our stuff!
- James states that we have four responsibilities toward God's Word, and if we fulfill these responsibilities, we will have an honest walk with God and man. Our first responsibility towards God's Word is:
 1. Receive The Word (1:19-21)
- James called God's Word "The implanted word." Jesus compared God's Word to seed and the human heart to soil."

- Jesus described four kinds of hearts: The hard heart, which did not understand or receive the Word: The shallow heart, which was very emotional but had no depth: The crowded heart, which lacked repentance and let sin crowd out the Word: And lastly the fruitful heart, which received the Word, allowed it to take root, and produce a harvest of fruit. The final test for salvation is fruit! This means a changed life.
- Religious works may be manufactured, but they do not have life in them, nor do they bring glory to God.
- Real fruit has in it the seed for more fruit, so that the harvest continues to grow fruit. If the seed of God's Word is to be planted in our hearts, then we must obey the instructions James gave us; which are:
 1. Being Swift to Listen (vs.19) "My dear brothers take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen."
- Matt. 13:9 "He who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Romans 10:17 "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Just as the servant is quick to hear his master's voice, and a mother hears the cries of her baby, so the believer should be quick to hear what God has to say.
Illustration: King David's longing for a drink of water from a well in Bethlehem.

2. Being Slow To Speak (vs.19) "Slow to speak."

- We have two ears and one mouth, which ought to remind us to listen more than we speak. Proverbs 10:19 “When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.”
- Did you know that in the early church the hearers would often time debate with the speaker? There were fights and wars during church.
- When you pray don’t feel like you have fill it with words. Try sitting and calming your heart and mind. That takes time. Have you ever had thoughts go through your mind while praying and it caused major distraction issues while you are trying to pray? Try taking a pad and pencil and right in down so that it gets out of your head. And by the way, it could be the Holy Spirit speaking to you as well. So let me encourage you to stop talking and start listening.

3. Be Slow To Wrath (vs.19)

- Proverbs 14:29 “A patient man has great understanding, but a quick tempered man’s displays folly.”
- When the Prophet Nathan told King David the story of the stolen lamb, the king was angry, but at the wrong person.
- James warns us against getting angry with God’s Word because it reveals our sin to us. Like the man who broke the mirror because he disliked the image in it, people rebel against God’s Word because it tells the truth about them and their sinfulness.

- If we do not receive the implanted Word, then we are deceiving ourselves. Christians who like to argue various points of view may be only fooling themselves. They think that their discussions are promoting spiritual growth, when in reality they may only be cultivating the weeds.