

# GOD



# LIFE

LIFE GOD'S WAY, ACCORDING TO

# + JAMES +

# 2



## YES, NO & MAYBE

1. One of the people sitting next to me is not a good listener.
2. I check myself in a mirror at least three times a day.
3. I have given myself a thorough spiritual examination in the past 2 weeks.
4. To God, religion is more about doing things than learning things.
5. The world has polluted me.



## DIG DEEPER

● **READ James 1:19-27** (NIV)

*19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. 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.*

*22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.*

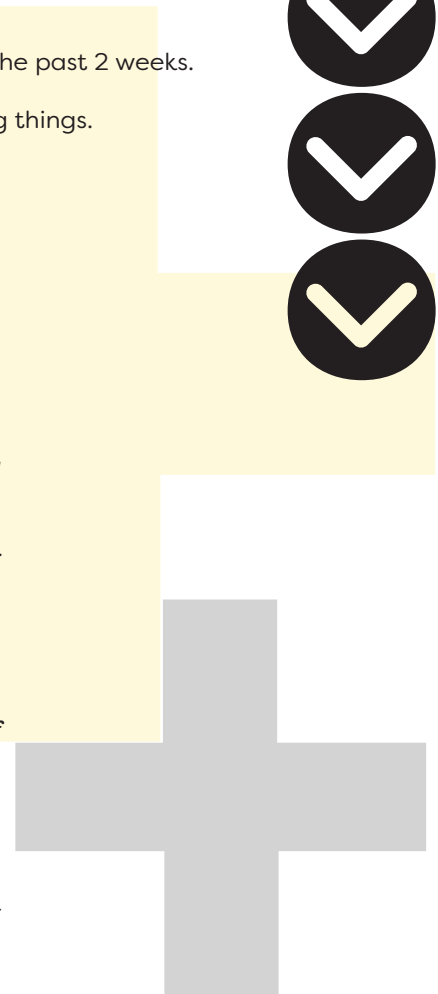
*26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. 27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.*

**+ 19 quick to listen, slow to speak.** - Be slow to speak! The worship services of those days often featured people interrupting the speaker to share their own 'insights'. And sometimes those 'insights' were 'outsights'—out of touch with reality! But there is another way in which we need to be slow to speak, namely, to ourselves. In other words, when the Word of God is being declared, we must be on guard against the tendency to be inwardly raising objections.

● What does it say about God's character that this would be important to Him?

**+ 21 all moral filth.** - This term often means "a wax build-up in the ear." It may refer to unholy living which impairs a believer's hearing of God's word. However, its primary usage was "dirty," as in dirty clothing (cf. James 2:2) which would relate to a believer's lifestyle.

**+ 23 a man who looks at his face in a mirror.** - [esoptron] a word from classical times; a mirror was a polished bronze or brass mirror. We all know that lots of things can go wrong with our faces!



# NOTES

## DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

And we depend on mirrors to tell us what is wrong. A man does not want to go out in public with blood on his collar from shaving. And a woman doesn't want to be seen with lipstick on the end of her nose. So we look in the mirror.

- But what would you think about a person who looks, sees a problem and then fails to correct it? What would be the point in that person looking in the mirror?

**+ 25 whoever looks intently.** - The word 'looks' comes from a Greek word which suggests far more than a casual glance. Curtis Vaughan says it 'has the sense of looking carefully, closely, or seriously into a thing'. He adds, 'It speaks of stooping down so as to see an object more clearly or to know it better. The word is used in John 20:5 of the beloved disciple stooping and looking into the empty tomb. Thus the word seems to denote a minute, searching inspection.' And such careful scrutiny is not occasional but habitual. James says the thoughtful gazer into the Word 'continues in it'.

- What promise does God give to those who look intently at his word?

**+ 25 law that gives freedom.** - Satan works very hard to portray sin as the greatest freedom and God's Word as the greatest bondage, but just the reverse is true.

- In what ways does God's law give you freedom?

**+ 26 keep a tight rein on their tongues.** - The word 'rein' tells us how James regarded the tongue. It is like a powerful, rearing horse, which can take us on a wild ride if we do not hold the reins tight. Kent Hughes says, 'If you've ever sat on 1,500 pounds of restless bone and muscle and then hung on at full gallop, you have the idea.' James was saying to each of his readers, 'You have a horse in your mouth!'

**+ 27 orphans and widows.** - In Roman society children were frequently abandoned or exposed. A child whose father did not raise it up was exposed outside the house or in some public place. Anyone who wished might claim it. An absent father might order his pregnant wife to expose her baby as soon as it was born ... some Romans abandoned their legitimate children because they were poor, and others because they wished to bequeath a decent fortune to their surviving heirs. The poor abandoned the children they could not feed. These two groups of people were the most helpless in that time. So James was calling for his readers to show compassion to the most helpless.

There is something here that we must not allow to slip by. James was writing to people who had troubles of their own! And yet he tells them that they must not forget to show compassion to others!

- What does it say about God that His definition of pure religion is including care for people who are hurting and have gone through tragedies.

**+ 27 polluted by the world.** - The word polluted/filthiness is used only here in the New Testament. Its adjective form is used in 2:2 to refer to the shabby clothing of a poor man. Lack of involvement and heavy involvement in the world are both inappropriate.

- Based on Jesus' example of being "in the world, but not of it," how can we reflect God's character here?



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## MY PRAYER...

1. How am I slow to listen and quick to speak?
2. How can God increase my compassion for those who need it?
3. What new aspect of God's character does He want me to know?