

James 1:16-27—Do the Word: Care for Orphans

- Ehrman—If God wrote a book, wouldn't you want to read it?
 - WRONG—If God wrote a book, you shouldn't just want to read it but DO IT!
- Orphan Care—not just about a popular social justice issue but a core BIBLICAL issue
 - Christian Discipleship—living life under the lordship of Christ in the Kingdom involves this!
- Raynor adoption—we adopted after having 2 biological children; birthmom!
 - Questions—why would you do that? Do you know she's not the same color as you?
- **Value the Word Completely (16-18)**
 - James highlights God's common goodness to all and his particular goodness to His people by giving us life through his Word.
 - **A Good Father (16-17)**—NOT evil, tempting us, but GOOD blessing us with good gifts
 - Common grace (17)
 - Rain falls on just and unjust; even the most wicked people experience his goodness
 - **His Life Giving Word**
 - Psalm 119—huge long psalm all about the Word of God...tons of mentions of God as GOOD. God's Word, given to us, is a sign of his goodness.
 - We have a good Father—He's a dad who talks to his kids!
 - Saving grace (18)
 - By his own will—God does this alone
 - Brought us forth—He gives NEW LIFE
 - By the Word—this is the instrument used to do the work
 - Firstfruits—regular NT idea: we experience now a taste of the full redemption that will one day come as all creation will be swept into God's full salvation! (Romans 8)
- **Receive the Word Humbly (19-21)**
 - **James drills into the heart—madness vs. meekness!**
 - Quick speech and Quick anger do not please God (19-20)—Before focusing on the word (21-27) James wants to bring into focus the HEART that ones needs to properly receive and obey the Word—heart of repentance and humility (social media!!!)
 - **Repentance (21)—put off filthiness and wickedness**
 - Change clothes—take off the filthy clothes and put on the new ones—a clean/pure heart!
 - **Humility (21)—receive with MEEKNESS the implanted word**
 - Wilberforce—humility is the key to being a student of the Word—transformation begins with a posture UNDERNEATH the Word, allowing it to correct and form us!
 - Apart from the Word, which humbles us, reforms us and empowers us, we are tempted to be either ABUSIVE or PASSIVE, BULLIES or COWARDS.
 - To fight injustice requires a heart of humility, motivated and empowered by the Word.
 - **Save (21)**—comprehensive notion: been saved, being saved, will be saved—justification, sanctification, glorification all done by God through his Word!
- **Do the Word Passionately (22-27)**
 - James draws a distinction between hearing the Word and doing the Word—maturity is not about what you KNOW but about what HOW YOU LIVE!
 - Travel Channel—for people who watch TV, not people who actually travel!
 - A person who does not DO the Word has not actually ACCEPTED the Word!
 - Danger—DECEPTION—believing one thing about yourself that is NOT actually true—right-standing with God.
 - **The Word Changes us (22-24)**
 - 23—the Bible is our mirror—Bible is most important mirror in the world!
 - 25b—blessed in doing—EASILY CHARMED BY THE WORD BUT NOT CHANGED!
 - **The Word Liberates us (25)**
 - The Word points us to the gospel where freedom lies—the truth will set you FREE!
 - **3 Ways to Do It**—essentially a roadmap for the rest of the book.
 - **Controlled Tongue (26)**—our mouths reveal our hearts (Matt 12:34)
 - 3:9—with our tongues we bless the Lord AND curse people made by him

- **Compassionate Ministry (27)**—more to come
- **Clean Life (27b)**—also picked up in chapter 4
- NOTICE: James puts PURITY and THE POOR together! Not normal
 - Typical: Conservatives = purity...Liberals = poor—Jesus puts them together.
 - Conservative Churches—all about holiness and never help poor—unacceptable
 - Liberal Churches—rejected Bible on holiness but all a/b SJ—unacceptable
 - Faithfulness = pursuit of holiness (not legalism) and social justice/care
 - This means we will look weird and different in culture! James is calling for the formation of a new society!
- **Compassionate Ministry (27)**
 - “Before God the Father”—our God is compassionate, father to fatherless—reflect HIM!
 - “Visit”= means involvement and care—God visited barren, breadless and bruised in OT
 - **Why Orphan Care?:**
 - **Obedience**—James can make this HUGE statement bc the entire OT argues it!
 - Title of God = “father of the fatherless”—nickname gotten by reputation! It reflects his nature and character
 - **Because God Visited Us as Orphans**
 - John 14:18—I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.
 - Galatians 4:1-7—But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.
 - No natural born children of God—if you are a child of God, you were adopted!
 - The church is a big family of adopted brothers and sisters
 - Not God’s children bc of our amazing merits but God’s amazing mercy!
 - Not everyone called to adopt; not all orphans are adoptable; we are ALL called to imitate God!—**Eph 1:5—ADOPTED...Eph 5:1—imitate God as beloved children!**
 - Gospel = we identify with orphans and widows! We ought to have most compassion
 - **We aren’t better than the poor—we are the poor**
 - **Not better than the blind—we are blind**
 - **Not better than the lame—we are lame**
 - **Don’t deserve to sit at King’s table but we are here—proper response to grace is GRACE!**
 - “In their affliction”—the afflictions of orphanages, broken homes, addicted birth mothers, etc.—this is the broken affliction that orphan care sends us into!
 - **Worship**
 - Matthew 25—what you do for them, you do “unto me”
 - The orphan has a face and name and it is the face and name of the Galilean Carpenter, Jesus!
 - We may not end the orphan crisis but all we do has value when done in Jesus’ name!
 - **Ways to do Orphan Care:**
 - General Rule—pursue a life of compassion and wisdom
 - **Pray**—“God, what do you want me/us to do?”
 - **Start Small**—talk to someone who has adopted/is involved. Read a book.
 - **Support Good Orgs**—127WW, IJM, Human Coalition
 - **Speak Up**—use your platform to speak for the voiceless—coaches, teachers, leaders, lawyers, etc.
 - **Adopt**—have you considered it? Get info from someone
 - **Foster**—contact agencies; explore certifications; donate supplies
 - **Sponsor an Orphan**—through 127WW
 - **Care for Functionally Fatherless**—are there any of these around you? Love them. Involved
 - **Give**—help fund adoptions; give to Harvest adoption fund; buy meals for adoptive families
 - **Visit**—go visit orphanages locally and abroad—Uganda Trip (meeting today)

- **Move**—Go live among poor/orphan locally or abroad
- **Leverage Your Skills**—Pigs and Fish in Kenya...doctors...kids...business...meds