

m MASTERCLASS | JAMES

DAILY DEVOTION

DAY 5

READ

JAMES 1:26-27

FOCUS

²⁶THOSE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES RELIGIOUS AND YET DO NOT KEEP A TIGHT REIN ON THEIR TONGUES DECEIVE THEMSELVES, AND THEIR RELIGION IS WORTHLESS. ²⁷RELIGION 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.

REFLECTION from PASTOR MOI NAVARRO

I'm enjoying reading James. He seems to approach life in a practical and real way. It's not confusing, over-complicated, or even mind-blowing, over-our-heads, philosophical, theological stuff. It's simple stuff. It's discipline and consistency, as we live our Christian lives, that brings us closer and closer to God.

A couple of Saturdays ago, I went on a bike ride with my boys. We decided to stop off at the store, grab something for a snack, and mark off a few items on the honey-do-list on the way back home. We were riding into the store parking lot, and as we were getting ready to park our bicycles, a car in front of me slammed on the brakes. I slammed on my brakes, right before the last second, and placed my hand out to stop from hitting the car with my bike. Immediately the guy got out of his car, and he yelled, "Who hit my car?!!" I said, "No one hit your car. Get back in your car." He said, "Nobody tells me to get in my car." For a split second, the whole thing had the potential to end up on the 7 o'clock news. Luckily we were able to deescalate the mood, but I was briefly reminded of what James was speaking of at the end of this chapter.

Our words carry so much power. Power to destroy or to build up. What proceeds from your mouth can be detrimental to another person. It is effortless to say or make statements, even write carelessly on social media without thinking about how it makes the hearer or the reader feel. I often forget who I'm representing, the Most High God.

James talks about Christianity in a practical way: being light in the darkness. Christianity is not just about you saying a little prayer, attending church, and giving financially. It is also about being a help to those that are less fortunate. It's about displaying love as Jesus did. Jesus didn't hang out with the pretentious Pharisees. He spent time with the not cool, the poor, the nobodies, the outcasts in society!

James says, whatever you are going through, consider it joy. To think, "It's joy!" is not to just blindly pretend that you are having a blast of a time in the middle of a difficult season in your life. Instead, it is to base your joy on the promise of what God intends to do in those crazy difficult times. He will always work it out for our good. When I find myself going through difficult times, it's easy to compare myself to others. I have always struggled with minimizing my story or comparing myself to others and feeling like no one will understand me. James wants us to wake up and see that God can be God to all of us in the middle of whatever craziness we are going through. He will never allow us to go through anything that He cannot fix, heal, or use to bring us to a closeness in Him--that is way better than anything we can do ourselves. Hold on to Him and allow Him to walk you through the storms. It's in the hard times that we grow as believers, and the way we respond to challenging situations reveals our maturity. Watch your tongue! I'm still learning this in my life. Let's do this together!

QUESTIONS

- THINK ABOUT ALL OF THE WORDS YOU'VE WRITTEN OR SAID IN THE LAST 3 DAYS. HOW HAVE THESE WORDS BROUGHT JESUS' LIGHT TO THE WORLD?
- IN LIGHT OF YOUR ANSWER TO THE ABOVE, WHAT ADJUSTMENTS DO YOU NEED TO MAKE (IF ANY) TO WHAT YOU SAY/WRITE?