**Looking into the Perfect Law of Liberty**

*James 1:21-25*

**Introduction**

1. One of the themes of James is practical faith.
   1. James is a very practical book.
   2. The audience’s faith was being tested by ***“various trials” (1:2).***
   3. Their faith had to endure through these trials.
   4. This faith is a practicing faith – **a faith with works (cf. 2:14-26).**
   5. **In other words, they were being encouraged to remain faithful, or obedient, with a focus on various specific areas.**
2. It is to this end that James exhorted them to be ***“doers of the word, and not hearers only” (1:22).***
   1. God ***“brought us forth by the word of truth” (1:18),*** but unless we continue to ***“receive with meekness”*** that word, IT WILL NOT BE ***“ABLE TO SAVE YOUR SOULS.”*** **(Meekness** – humility – *temper of spirit to accept God’s dealings with us as good, therefore without disputing or resisting.*)
   2. ***“deceiving yourselves”*** – ***“hearers who delude themselves” (NASB)*** – To hear and not do is delusional!
   3. **Why? 🡪 (vv. 23-24)** – Like looking in a mirror to see what needs correcting, and leaving without correcting it – forget what you saw, so you may feel okay, but in fact you are not.
3. **The point (v. 25)** – the only one that is ***“blessed”*** by ***“the perfect law of liberty”*** is the one who ***“continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work”*** required in that law.
4. A consideration of the phrase, ***“perfect law of liberty,”*** that describes God’s word will help us understand why it is necessary to be doers of that word to be blessed.
5. The Perfect Law of Liberty
6. PERFECT Law of Liberty
   1. **Perfect** – *teleios* – brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness. (THAYER)
   2. **Of persons (v. 4)** – fully, or completely, established and equipped in the knowledge, and participation of the things of God.
   3. **Of the *“law of liberty”*** – it is lacking nothing, but providing everything that it needs to supply.
      1. It is that which is able to ***“thoroughly [equip] [a] [man] for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17).***
      2. **1 Corinthians 13:8-10** (temporary spiritual gifts) – it is that which is not piecemeal, but WHOLE, or brought to its end. (**What is left? Nothing.)**
      3. It is ***“the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).***
         1. Anything we need we have from God.
         2. ***“the secret things belong to the Lord” (Deuteronomy 29:29),*** *but the things that are pertinent for us He has revealed in a CLEAR MANNER.*
      4. **Perfect in relation to what the OT could not do** – **cf. Hebrews 8:7, 8; 9:15** (not faultless, could not take away sins)
         1. The OT was perfect as well. It was complete, brought to its end.
         2. **However, its intended end was not redemption, but to bring us to the Redeemer.**
7. Perfect LAW of Liberty
   1. **Law** – not meant to be broken, but followed! (**Every law, in all points**.)
   2. **James 2:8-13** – The COMPLETE law is provided to be followed COMPLETELY.
      1. **(v. 8)** – Claim: we fulfill the ***“royal law.”*** – treated the rich man well.
         1. Did you ***“really fulfill the royal law?”(cf. Leviticus 19:18)*** – **royal** – PREEMINENT LAW *– on which hangs all the law and prophets* (**cf. Matthew 22:37-40** – along with command to love God.).
         2. **Love neighbor as self?** – Did so to the rich man.
         3. However, ***“do not hold the faith…with partiality”*** – showed partiality when treating poor and rich differently.
         4. **You didn’t fulfill it! Why?** 🡪 **(v. 9** – partiality = transgression of royal law) 🡪
      2. **(vv. 10-11)** – Must keep whole law, or guilty of all. (*Law – Royal law – love neighbor as self* ***– includes all things pertaining to our treatment of fellow man***)
         1. **Adultery** – offense against neighbor (failure of royal law)
         2. **Murder** – offense against neighbor (failure of royal law)
         3. **No adultery + Murder** = transgression of royal law (love neighbor as self)
         4. **Fair treatment of rich + partiality shown to poor = transgression of royal law**
      3. **(vv. 12-13)** – keep the whole law as if you will be judged according to the whole law – notice ***“law of liberty.”***
         1. **This means treat rich and poor as equals – no partiality.**
         2. **(v. 13) –** To fail in the law by not showing mercy, mercy will not be shown to you in judgment.
   3. **The COMPLETE law is meant to be observed COMPLETELY. To the end of 🡪**
8. Perfect Law of LIBERTY
   1. **Liberty** – freedom. (From what?)
   2. ***“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).***
   3. **Free from sin** – ***cf. Romans 8:1-2*** – Free from ***“the law of sin and death.”*** (sin leading to death = slave of sin)
   4. This ***“perfect law”*** is a liberating law – ***“the perfect law of liberty.”***
   5. It is that which is ***“able to save your souls” (James 1:21).***
   6. **It makes one who receives it and does what it says *“blessed.”* 🡪**
9. Blessed – is he who ***“continues in it”***
   1. **Blessed** – *makarios*; supremely blest; by extension, fortunate, well off (STRONG)
   2. ***“will be”*** – future (certainly as well “well off” in the present, as you will be in a state of blessedness before God as one who is just)
      1. **James 1:12** – endure temptation – ***“will receive the crown of life”***
      2. ***(v. 21) – “is able to save your souls”*** – already saved in part **(v. 18)** – speaking of future.
      3. **This is the blessedness of being given the reward in the end. Of always being with God.**
   3. Who ***“will be blessed?”***
      1. **(v. 25)** – the one who does not just look in to the law (hear), but after doing so he ***“continues in it…and is…a doer.”***
      2. **He applies what he sees (doer), and he continues always to do so. (ALWAYS LOOKING IN TO SEE WHETHER HE MEASURES UP)**
      3. ***“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified” (2 Corinthians 13:5).***
   4. It is not the hearing that blesses, but the HEARING AND DOING.
      1. **Reading scripture, listening to the bible class, listening to sermons, etc. does not bless you without you applying what is taught.**
      2. DO NOT DECEIVE YOURSELF!
      3. **In order to have LIBERTY from sin and be found with God for eternity, one must hear AND DO what the PERFECT LAW** *(all that is needed, do ALL)* **instructs. 🡪**
10. Modest Apparel – Forgetful Hearer? Or a Doer?
11. When looking into the mirror of God’s word, we begin to realize that in order to be one who ***“continues in it…and is…a doer”*** we must also examine our physical appearances in a physical mirror. **For, God’s word has instruction for our dress, and for good reason – it is a reflection of the quality of our heart.**
12. The Command **(cf. 1 Timothy 2:8-10)**
    1. **Men** – **(v. 8)** – approaching God in holiness – this is an inward matter. (Purity, piety, etc.)
    2. **Women** – ***“in like manner”*** – not in the sense of praying, but with an inward purity, and piety towards God.
       1. **Adorn** – *kosmeō*; to put in proper order, i.e. decorate. (STRONG)
          1. ***“Themselves”*** – certainly the outward person, the body, however, the inner person. 🡪
          2. **(v. 10)** – The idea is an outer appearance which reflects the inner person – the goal? – ***“professing godliness, with good works”***
          3. **To this end we must be adorned in 🡪**
       2. **Modest** – *kosmios*; orderly, i.e. decorous. (STRONG)
       3. **Apparel** – a garment.
       4. **Propriety** – *aidōs*; bashfulness, i.e. (towards men), modesty or (towards God) awe. (STRONG)
          1. ***“shamefastness” (ASV); “shamefacedness” (KJV)***
          2. **Shame in regard to apparel?** – nakedness = shame (**cf. Genesis 3:7, 10; Isaiah 20:2-4; Amos 2:16; Micah 1:11; Habakkuk 2:16)**
          3. **Nakedness** = **cf. Genesis 3:7-10, 21** (**Adam and Eve** – *naked to clothed with* ***“tunic”*** *– scholars agree at least from neck to knee*); **Exodus 28:42** (**priests linen trousers** – *waist to thighs*); **Isaiah 47:2-3** (**Humiliation of Babylon** – *Uncovered thigh*).
          4. **NOTE: Nakedness does not vary from situation to situation. Nakedness is nakedness. (EX: Swimming, summer heat, etc.)**
       5. **Moderation** – *sōphrosynē*; soundness of mind, i.e. (literally) sanity or (figuratively) self-control. (STRONG)
          1. Not in excess, but control.
          2. ***“not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing” (v. 9).***
    3. **Are we hearers who CONTINUE IN what the perfect law of liberty discloses concerning our dress and character?**
       1. **Perfect** – the guidelines are complete. NOT AMBIGUOUS!
       2. **Law** – given to be obeyed. (sin = lawlessness)
       3. **Liberty** – following such is liberating from sin and death. (Through Jesus) (Thus, not following such is to be enslaved to sin and death.)

**Conclusion**

1. Let us constantly examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith, and constantly apply those things that we see.
2. This includes God’s command to dress modestly!