

“Doers of the Word”
James 1:21-27

James now gives his readers the practical application of God’s perfect gift and being begotten by His will. Since man’s wrath does not bring about God’s righteousness, all evil must be laid aside. Further, the word (Greek *logos*; John 1:1) of God must be humbly received, so it can accomplish the process of sanctification (Rom. 1:16; 1Thess. 4:3; Heb. 4:12; 1Pet. 1:23-25).

The present tense command is now given to be **doers** (Greek *poietes*, a performer) rather than merely a hearer. Like a mirror, the word of God shows our true condition (Heb. 4:12). James likens the one who is a hearer and not a doer to one who forgets what their appearance is like after stepping away from a mirror. Jesus told the parable of the father and his two sons to illustrate that mere profession of the right words was not obedience to the Father’s will (Matt. 21:28-31). The men in another parable **heard** the words of Christ, but the one who **did** (Greek *poieo*) His sayings had his house built on the solid rock (Matt. 7:24-27). The difference between the sheep and the goats on Judgment Day is what they **did** or **did not do** (Matt. 25: 31-46), because it was an illustration of their hearts’ condition (Matt. 15:1-20).

The apostle Paul’s use of the action words “put off” and “put on” illustrate the negative and positive aspects of being a **doer** of the word. We are to put off the **old** man of anger, wrath, lying, etc. (Col. 3:8-9). We are to put on the **new** man of God’s image (Col. 3:10). We are to put on tender mercies, kindness, love, etc. (Col. 3:12-14). We are to teach and admonish one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16). Finally, whatever you **do** (Greek *poieo*) in word or deed, **do** all in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:17). We are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 13:14), walking as He did (1John 2:6). The apostle John warns his readers that whoever **does** (Greek *poieo*) not righteousness is not of God (1John 3:10)!

Chapter one concludes with more illustrations of being doers of the word. Outside religiosity is betrayed when the tongue is not controlled (Matt.12:36-37), for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Prov. 16:32; Luke 6:45). Orphans and widows were particularly vulnerable and not highly esteemed in ancient times so they required much care. Their necessary care fulfills the command to **put on** while keeping oneself unspotted from the world entails the **putting off** (1John 2:15-17).

