

**Spiritual Wholeness**  
**“Obedience to the Word (Part One)”**

**Introduction:** The section before us today (and next two weeks) is held loosely together by the theme of Obedience to the Word—a key aspect of Spiritual Wholeness. (Text and Chapter 2)

**Three Key Words Dominate the Discussion**

- Logos (word)—humbly accept it and do it (1:19-27)
- Nomos (law)—demands the Word makes and three ways it must be practiced
- Erga (works)—shows how faith and works are inseparable

NOTE: These are successive subjects and all fit into the broader theme of Spiritual Wholeness, constant, consistent, singleness of purpose, even in the face of trial.

SO—as a KEY COMPONENT of Spiritual Wholeness let’s look at OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD

Begins with:

**I. Bringing our emotions into line with the Word of God.**

*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20 NKJV*

**A. The bookends of this subject**

1. “So then my beloved brethren...” (19)
2. “Therefore...” (21)

**B. Commands to align emotions**

1. Swift to hear
2. Slow to speak
3. Slow to wrath

NOTE: Uncontrolled emotions will lead to “heat of the moment” words.

IMPORTANT: This would be especially true in an environment of unfair/unjust treatment. Unjust trials.

**C. Frequent theme of Proverbs**

*In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise. Proverbs 10:19 NKJV*

*He who has knowledge spares his words, And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. 28 Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; When he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive. Proverbs 17:27-28 NKJV*

- D. Don't be hotheaded or have uncontrolled emotions
- E. Uncontrolled emotions do not produce spiritual wholeness

*For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:20 NKJV*

- 1. Righteousness (dikaiosyne)
- 2. To Paul (later) free gift, imputed
- 3. To James—life of righteous living, justice, spiritual wholeness
- 4. Borrowed from Jesus

*For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:20 NKJV*

**TRUTH:** So OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD begins with submitting our emotions to the Word (Every thought captive, hid in heart)

*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NKJV*

*Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. 2 Peter 3:1 NIV*

Obedience to the Word INCLUDES

## II. Allowing the Word that saved us to transform every aspect of our being. (21-27)

*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21 NKJV*

### A. The WORD that saved us

- 1. Implanted Word (engrafted some translations)

*Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. James 1:18 NKJV*

Brought forth by the Word

2. Jesus taught power of the Word in Parable of Soils (Mark 4)

*But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." Mark 4:20 NKJV*

B. Salvation is not one and done (able to save your souls v. 21)

Implies a future component

1. Word that saved us
2. Cannot dispense of it after salvation

C. In this passage there is progression (1:21-27)

1. Word of truth (brought us forth) v. 18
2. Impartation of the Word able to save us v. 21 (complete)
3. Word in v. 21-23
4. "Law of Liberty" v. 25
5. Supposed to be "doers" of the Word (22, 23, 25)
6. Religion that counts before God

D. Word transforms every aspect of our lives by DOING IT!

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. James 1:22-25 NKJV*

1. Section of v. 22-25 framed by "doing"

- a. V. 22 "But, be doers of the word."
- b. V. 25 "Blessed by what he does."

2. Hearing is NOT unimportant—but not enough

*But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" Luke 11:28 NKJV*

(Borrowed from Jesus)

3. To be a hearer/not a doer is to deceive oneself and put oneself in danger of judgment

*"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." Matthew 7:24-27 NKJV*

NOTE: Right before this Jesus said

*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV*

4. Can't accept it to save us and not let it transform us

#### E. Analogy Revealed

*For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. James 1:23-25 NKJV*

1. Mirror—polished metal
2. Danger of finding what needs to be changed

(ILL-hair out of place/blood on neck)

3. Forgets the impression the Word made in my life!
4. Called to "look into it!"

*To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1 Peter 1:12 NKJV*

*But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. John 20:11 NKJV*

#### F. Law or Liberty? (25)

1. Not Law of Moses—no liberty, in that
2. Jesus fulfilled Law and re-interpreted it—2 Great Commandments
3. Law of Liberty

*Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech — 13 unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. 15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. 16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 NKJV*

- a. Law of Moses—impossible
- b. Law of Liberty—Spirit in us/love of Christ in us
- c. It transforms us if we “look into it.”

Obedience to the Word Includes

- Emotions in line with it
- Every aspect of our being transformed by it

### III. Insisting on an appropriate response to the Word of God.

*If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. James 1:26-27 NKJV*

#### A. Review progress

1. Accept the Word
2. Do Word
3. Do Law

#### B. Three ways we do the Law

1. Bridle the tongue
2. Demonstrate concern for the helpless
3. Avoid worldly living

ALL THREE RETURN TO LATER

**Conclusion:** Failure to respond in obedience to the Word makes our “religion” useless

1. Mataios—meaningless, vain

*And saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them. Acts 14:15 NKJV*

2. Religion without obedience to the Word is as useless as idolatry