



DON'T JUST THINK ABOUT IT!

March 2018

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

James 1:22-25

The poem IF by Rudyard Kipling had a lasting impression on me from the age of 19 when a kind emergency room doctor had me read it out loud. Slowly, because I had been given an injection to sedate me. Ever since, I have kept that poem close, ready to refer to when I found myself in trouble. Yes, writers of today can inspire us, echoing words found in the Bible.

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A line that has come back to me repeatedly is this: “If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim.” Taking that to heart has helped me avoid lying around thinking too much. It has helped me avoid the depression that often results. Whenever I found myself thinking too much about something I’d like to do, the poem inspired me to stop thinking but actively do instead.

The Scripture above has a message similar to Kipling’s. “*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*” The author of the letter, tells us that if we don’t, we will soon forget. But if we remember and put into action what it teaches, we will be blessed in what we do.

I gathered some of the best tidbits from a sermon on this Scripture by Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892). This revered preacher from so long ago had a wonderful way with words:

“Now, notice that this hearer who is blessed is, first of all, an earnest, eager, humble hearer . . . he hears of the gospel and he says, “I will look into this. There is something here worth attention.” He stoops and becomes a little child that he may learn . . . Such an individual hears intently and earnestly, laying his soul open to the influences of the truth, desiring to feel its holy power, and to practice its divine commands.

“Now, dear friends, our text does not say that such a man is blessed *for* the deed, but it says that such a man is blessed *in* the deed. He who does what God bids him shall not be blessed *for* it, but he shall be blessed *in* it. The happy result will come to us in the act of obedience.

“May God grant you grace henceforth whenever the gospel is preached, to stir yourself up with the energy which God’s Spirit infuses into you and say, “I will do it. I will not dream about it or talk about it or question about it or say I will do it and put it off, but now at once the act commanded shall be done.”

Are you listening to what God’s word is telling you? Are you finding yourself spurred to action? Don’t just think about it. . . .

. . . DO IT!

Find the joy that obeying and doing will bring you. You won’t be sorry.

marja