

April 15, 2018 - James 1:22-27 - "Indifference- Encumbers the Church"  
Purifying and Strengthening the Church Series.

### Introduction:

A very interesting incident took place at the University of California at Berkeley. The University had a termite problem so they order information to be given to the maintenance department. They were shoved into a closet and never distribute. A maintenance man went into a storage room and found this stack of pamphlets called "Control of Termites". He discovered that termites had eaten through the stacks of pamphlets. The university knew how to solve the problem of termites, but they didn't act on the knowledge they had. All too often that's the way it is with us believers. We know what the Word of God says but we don't act on that knowledge. Indifferences can impede the church. **Revelation 3:14-16**

**"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spue you out of My mouth.**

I believe that indifference becomes the detriment of relationships, marriages, children, corporations, and even churches. (Indifference rubs off.)

### I What is Indifference?

a) A good definition of Indifference is – it implies neutrality of attitude from lack of proclivity, preference, or prejudice. Another definition says, responding in a way that it does not matter. A lack of interest in or concern about something; an indifferent attitude, apathy is the lack of feeling or emotion. What is spiritual indifference? James describes it for us... **James 1:[23-24]**

1. We are to be doers of the Word. Now, this isn't a suggestion. James isn't saying, I suggest that you obey what God says in His Word. This is a commandment. We are commanded to do what God has told us to do in this Word. We are to be doers of the Word. Doers are servants to God and others. A servant is one who quietly and humbly submits to and serves the desires of others regardless of personal recognition? - Phil. 2:2-10

This is the path Jesus took. If we're striving to be like Him, no task is beneath us, no person is below us, and no legitimate sacrifice is too great. Someone once says, "In the kingdom, the way up is down!" From Jesus' point of view, servant-hood is the path to significance.

2. Notice James goes on and says, **Now be doers and not hearers only.** What is a person who is a hearer only? He is a person who knows what the Word of God says but he doesn't act on it. There is a vast difference between having knowledge about something and acting on that knowledge. We are responsible to respond to what we hear or we are guilty of indifferences and that is disobedience.

### II The Problem with Indifference vv. 23-24

1. Indifference doesn't produce change. If we never change we will never mature. When we refuse to meet God's requirements we cannot grow spiritually. God wants us to produce fruit

in our lives and mature conforming to the image of Christ. We can be indifference about, serving, caring, witnessing and nurturing relations with family, friends and members.

2. James spells it out in verses 23-24. He says, "**For if any be a hearer and not a doer (He knows but doesn't obey), he is like a man beholding his natural face in a mirror...**" Now a mirror refers to a highly polished piece of metal. In that day you'd look into it and could see yourself in that highly polished metal. He's talking about your face as it really is. The man is like a man beholding his natural face, then he explains why he's like this man. For he looks in the mirror and sees himself as he really is, then as he looks into that mirror, if there are any imperfections, he sees them. If there are any blemishes, the mirror shows them. If there are any flaws, the mirror shows them. But what does this man do?

3. He sees these blemishes, imperfections and flaws, but doesn't do anything about them. He beholds himself, goes his way, and then forgets. We have an old saying, out of sight, out of mind. This is exactly what happens to this man. He sees those imperfections then goes his way, and since he doesn't see them anymore, out of sight, out of mind, but those faults are still there. He didn't do anything to remove them. Now the mirror represents the Word of God. The Greek word for "forgetteth" means given over to oblivion, nothingness, stupor and apathy.

4. What we are doing is looking into the mirror of the Word of God and as we look, the Word of God shows what we really are. We don't like to be shown sometimes, that natural. We see our moral blemishes. We see our moral flaws. But what happens? We see them and we don't do anything about them. We go on our way and out of sight, out of mind, and the Word of God is out of our hearing. We forget all about them and our lives remain the same. There is never any maturity for Christ. You know that is tragic because...James 4:17

5. In many lives, the same is true for the Word of God- the Bible. You have a Bible you read it but unless you get plug in to it and apply its then it's like a mirror that you just walk away from and forget about it.

Are we taking the time to learn and understanding and put into practice what we know or are we indifferent about it all. This is an issue that James addresses in his letter; in James 1:24, he emphasizes the DANGER of never taking time to use the tools we already have.

6. The danger of taking every opportunity we can to allow God to speak to us, to teach us, to inform us-but never, ever taking the opportunity to ACT on what we've heard. The words here in James are quite clear: If we live our lives this way, we are deceiving ourselves. That is to say," we think we are righteous but we really are not. We think we are spiritual but we are not....The way to overcome indifference is by recognizing this truth.

### III Overcoming Indifference Improves our Spiritual Appearance. Vv25

1. In v. 25, James says "The man who looks intently into the perfect law..."is blessed. What is the perfect law? The Bible it's perfect, you can't improve on it. You can't make it any better than it already is. It's as good as it can possibly be. It cannot be better. It is perfect. It's called

the perfect law of liberty. . Now our spiritual appearance will be improved in two areas when we apply its truths. It will improve our character. We will become more and more and more like the characteristics of the Lord Himself. Not only is our character improved but also our conduct is improved.

2. As we look into the mirror of the Word of God, we realize we're not able to do it. But through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit we start to do that. "Uh oh, this is something I'm doing and the Word of God says not to do it." And our conduct becomes more and more conformed to the standard of God and to the Word of God. Our spiritual appearance as far as our character and conduct are being improved and more and more like the character and conduct of the Christ.

### Conclusion:

Joel Comiskey in his book "Leadership Explosion" make a profound comment, "While the church has done a good job of training people to go directly to God, by and large, it has failed to train people to minister." Too often folks are waiting for someone else to do it.

What, would happen if God's people were to become indifferent—indifferent to the gospel, indifferent to the signs of the times, indifferent to things that are going on in the world? What if they even became indifferent to one another? Perhaps we have adopted the attitude that we could care less. To be indifferent and lukewarm is to be taken by the enemy. Page 35- SYG

Satan wants to trap God's church. What does a person do when he is setting a trap? Does he just set the trap out in the open and say, "Hey, come on; get in this thing"? No! He camouflages it, hides it so, you are caught before you know it. You did not intend to get in that trap. You really did not want to make that mistake; but, dear friends, somewhere along the line, you took your eyes off of Jesus and indifferent settle in.

That concept is implied by this short proverbial story.

Once upon a time there were four men named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. But Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it. But Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about it, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, and Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody and Nobody did the job that Anybody could have done in the first place.