

## Life Group Homework

### From Phoniness to Spiritual Authenticity

#### James 1:19-27

##### Let's Get Started

**Definition:** au·then·tic | \ ə-'then-tik

Worthy of acceptance or belief as conforming to or based on fact; conforming to an original so as to reproduce essential features; made or done the same way as an original; not false or imitation.



What is the theme of the book of James?

Give some thought to the following question and jot a few notes down for an opening group discussion. What words or phrases would you use to describe an **“authentic”** disciple of Jesus? Try to come up with at least five words or phrases.

## Let's Go Deeper

### A Proper Reception of the Word of God

Have someone in the group read **James 1:19-21** below:

*19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

After reading these verses carefully, what's the **significance** of James' use of the word "therefore" in verse 21, and what does verse 19 and 20 have to do with verse 21?

Renowned Bible scholar, Alex Motyer (1924-2016) wrote, "*We might wonder why the ever-practical James does not proceed to outline schemes of daily Bible reading or the like. For surely, these are the ways in which we offer a willing ear to the voice of God. But he doesn't do that. Rather, he goes deeper. For frankly, there is little point to schemes and times if we have not got an attentive spirit. It is possible to be unfailingly regular in Bible reading but to achieve no more than to have moved the bookmark forward. The word is read but not heard.*"

**Psalm 119:11** says, "*I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*" Many of us read the Bible often, but not all of us approach our Bible reading with the ambition or intention to hide it in our hearts.

What do you think it means to hide the Word of God in your heart?

How important do you think it is to memorize scripture? Why?

In **John 15:7** Jesus says, "*If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*" When God's Word abides (remains) in us, it can have an amazing effect:

- When God's Word abides, it finds a home in our soul.
- When the words of Jesus abide in us, they take root and form our identity as disciples.
- When the Word of God abides in us, it produces the fruit of the Spirit through a progression of holiness.

Let's take a moment to consider **why** *it is that* the words of Jesus can have this amazing transformational effect. Look up the scriptures below and fill in the blanks:

Read **John 3:34**. The words of Jesus are the words of \_\_\_\_\_.

Read **John 6:63**. The words of Jesus give \_\_\_\_\_.

Read **1 John 2:14**. The words of Jesus help us overcome the power of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Read **James 1:22-25**: *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

In Jesus' day, it was common for Jewish religious leaders and scholars to dedicate hours a day to study and commit large portions of scripture to memory. But to abide in Christ and for the Word of God to abide in us means more than just knowing scripture. **How do we know this?**

Read **Matthew 4:1-10**. What did Satan prove he could do?

Read **John 5:36-40**. What do you see in verse 38? This is an eye-witness account of some of the greatest biblical scholars of the day refuting, mocking, challenging, and questioning the authority and authenticity of Jesus. ***But, according to Jesus, with all their knowledge and Scripture memorization, what was it that they were missing?***

Re-read **James 1:23-24**: *For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.*

In your own words, how do you explain what James is trying to get across in these two verses?

## Let's Live It Out Together

### A Proper Response to the Word of God

Read **James 1: 26-27**: *If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*

Here, James challenges disciples of Jesus to **walk the talk**. He gives three tangible evidences that people should consistently see in us as they observe our speech and our behavior. These three observable characteristics of our Christian character go a long way in the quest to be seen and known as an authentic disciple.

What three evidences of an authentic disciple does James shows us in these two verses?

1. A bridled (controlled) \_\_\_\_\_. Even if you were to study the bible 24/7 and memorize every word, if the Word of God is coming out of your mouth but not abiding in you, James says your religion is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A heart of compassion for ministering to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ when they are in need.
3. A clean testimony and reputation unstained by the w \_ \_ \_ d. (Hint: John 15:19)