

James speaks of the law no one can fully keep and contrasts that with the law that gives freedom.

The old law: The term “law” was used to mean a variety of things. (The first five books of the bible and the things in them - the 10 commandments, Old Testament teachings of do’s and don’ts, stories we should learn from etc.) These were entrusted to the Jews because of sin. (See Gal. 3:19a) It gives all of us an understanding of right and wrong. It is very important to understand the difference between right and wrong. However, no human is perfect and has always kept all of it. When we don’t keep it we call this sin. Romans 6:23 says “The wages of sin is death.” But the story does not end there. The rest of the verse says, “But the gift of God is eternal life”. God gave us a new law to complete the old law.

The new law: Christ came and did not sin. His life was an example to us and his death on the cross paid the payment required for our sins. Our salvation can now be based on what Christ did rather than what we do. Acts 13:38-39 “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39 Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. Romans 10:9-10 says “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord”, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.” If you have done this, you are saved and dear friend, do not doubt that.

However, God still calls people to do things. And he promises that when you do that thing, that thing will be blessed. It might be biting your tongue before you “clear” a situation with a little lie, it might be splitting your sandwich with someone, and it might be a life calling. Doing the thing does not earn your salvation and not doing it will not erase your name from the book of life, but it may very well bring you unspeakable joy.

James 1:25 (NIV) 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.

If the "perfect law" that James challenges us to "look intently into" is Christ (the word made flesh)... what does it mean to "continue in it"? How does the perfect law give freedom? How is that different from the old law? Sometimes when we read/hear God's word and/or think on Christ's work on the cross, we feel a tug to **do** something. Have you felt any tugs while hearing the book of James today? James 1:25 "...not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do." What do you feel called to do? Does the thing bring freedom or does it feel like a dreaded obligation that you have a sense will bear no fruit? I would encourage you to consider that possibly some obligational tugs are led by the Spirit and some are not. If it does feel Spirit led, is something else holding you back? What is it? Both good and bad things hold us back. James calls Christians to action but challenges us to sift through our motives at every turn (Why would we say that? Why would we spend our money that way? Why would we respond to someone slipping in physical or spiritual health that way?). The things we do... Are we doing them to build God's kingdom or our own? The things that build His kingdom are the things that are of eternal value. Take some time to listen to His Spirit in the light of all you have heard and read. Sift through your motives and then with motives adjusted, move forward in that listening mode. Believe that you will be blessed in that thing He has called you to do!

Blessings to you,

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