

# HEARERS/DOERS

---

## THE LESSON: JAMES 1-2

*To give to all thy people increase of grace, to hear meekly thy Word,  
 and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit,  
 We beseech thee, good Lord.*

If you are familiar with the “summary of the law” in the Prayer Book, then these verses will sound familiar to you: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:4).

When Jesus was asked what the most important commandments were in the Hebrew scriptures (that is, the Old Testament), this was the first one he pointed to. This verse is sometimes called, “the Shema” because the first word, which we translate as “hear” comes from the Hebrew word “shema”. Our English translation, however, doesn’t fully capture the meaning of the original Hebrew, because “shema” carries with it not just the idea of hearing or listening, but of then *obeying* what you have heard. We are called to hear the word of God with a receptive heart that responds to what we have heard with *action*.

Christians believe that our salvation has been accomplished through the work of Jesus Christ, *not* through anything we ourselves do. As St. Paul wrote, “by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). Yet genuine faith is shown to be genuine when it produces an active response, showing that we have heard *and* are moved to obey.

## AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER))

Jesus said to his disciples: “Follow me” and they did. Spend some time this week reflecting on those simple words. Are there changes that he might be asking you to make in your life? Are there ways in which he may be calling you to serve others? By the end of the week, decide on one practical step you can take towards greater obedience in following Jesus.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

*O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (THE COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER, BCP PAGE 194)

# HEARERS/DOERS

## JAMES 1-2: **HEAR THE WORD, THEN OBEY IT**

**1** <sup>2</sup>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing...

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

<sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup>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. <sup>24</sup>For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup>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...

**2** <sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled”, without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup>So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

<sup>18</sup>But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup>You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! <sup>20</sup>Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup>You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; <sup>23</sup>and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. <sup>24</sup>You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup>And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? <sup>26</sup>For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.