

How to Avoid Self Deception in Your Walk With Christ

For most of my adult I life, I believed James 1:22-25 didn't apply to me. I had convinced myself that I was a "doer" of God's Word and not simply a "hearer."

After all, I went to church. I tithed. I listened to well-known preachers and agreed with what they said. Here and there, I told people about Jesus.

Wow, did I buy into Satan's lies. And he did a fantastic job of selling it, too.

Over the past year of my transformation as a believer, however, I slowly began to realize that I was the epitome of James 1:22, which says, "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 observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does" (MEV).

Every Sunday I would hear a good sermon at church, and every Sunday it would be the same. I got fired up and knew I was going to have a great week after being filled with a good word and great fellowship. But then something would happen in traffic or my children would say something that shouldn't have upset me but did, or I would worry about our family finances, and my joy would dissipate.

Immediately, I had forgotten what kind of man I was. I was a "hearer" of the Word and not a "doer." Immediately, I had become exactly like the sower in Matthew 13:20-22, "But he who received the seed on rocky ground is he who hears the word and

immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, eventually he falls away. He also who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, but the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful" (MEV).

As a believer in Jesus Christ, you've heard the good news of the gospel. Most know of God's promises of provision and protection, and most know they have the ultimate victory in Jesus. Yet when trials and tribulation come, and they deceive themselves into believing that God doesn't really care for them. They deceive themselves by thinking he's distant and isn't listening to their problems. The word is choked from them as the weeds have grown among the good seeds that were planted.

In other words, if I hear the word of God but do not do what it says, I am treating the Word as if it were useless. I am deceiving myself about the very nature and purpose of the Word of God.

"... for the hearers of the law are not justified before God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Rom. 2:13, MEV).

So what can you do to make sure this doesn't happen to you, that you don't become a "hearer" only and deceive yourself?

* Realize that trials WILL come in this life, and let your faith be tested, because it produces patience (James 1:3-4). It's all part of the growing process.

* Get connected with a small group at church. I'm not saying that you can trust everyone, but find people within that small group to discuss your life issues—people with whom you can be transparent and vulnerable.

* Pray that God will teach you how to be a "doer" of His Word

and not simply a “hearer.” Pray that you will know better than to deceive yourself.

* Adhere to Proverbs 3:5-6 and trust God “with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding.” Don’t be one of those nominal Christians who simply won’t allow that.

* Continually seek wisdom. Don’t just read your Bible every day, study it. Realize that the Bible reveals God’s wisdom to us (Prov. 2:10).

* When you make sinful or mistaken choices, learn from them, repent and recover. God will be right there with you.

Rather than be the sower from Matthew 13:19-22, don’t you want to be the sower from verse 23? “He who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit. Some produce a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown” (MEV).

Bearing fruit is what your walk with Christ is all about. It’s all about being a “doer.”

And as I always like to say, “there is that.” {eoa}