

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; in *all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: James 1:22- But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 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; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 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. 26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

Quote: Like sincere love, saving faith is evidenced by the actions that it prompts.

Hearers of the Word who are not doers of the Word are guilty of self-deception of the worst kind. Recognition of truth without an obedient response is rebellion that can range from the passive indifference of some "simple" or naive professing Christians to the passionate impudence of some scorners and fools. It can involve sins of omission—"to him who *knows* to do good and *does it not*, to him it is sin."¹ It can involve sins of commission—doing that which disobeys a command of God, or knowingly violates our conscience or someone else's.² The Christian life is not a matter of what a person claims to have experienced; it is about how he or she lives *in light of the Word of God*.

Saved Doer or Self-Deceiver?

John admonishes believers, "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we *keep His commandments*. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. *By this we know that we are in Him*. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to *walk just as He walked*."³ The perfect righteousness of Christ given to believers at our conversion will result in *practical righteousness*. "In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: *Whoever does not practice*

righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother."⁴ "The true believer, the hearer and doer of the Word, proves his faith in three ways: In relation to himself, he is willing to *apply the Word without deception*; in relation to others, he is willing to *apply the Word without selfishness*; and in relation to the world, he is willing to *apply the Word without compromise*."⁵ James states, "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." The word, look, "means to bend over and carefully examine it to discover its deepest and most complete meaning."⁵ For Christians, reading and heeding the Bible is a vital prerequisite to God's blessing. Our essential self—mind, will, emotions—will be energized by the Spirit as we prayerfully seek to obey the Word. We must acknowledge God's truth in our head. We must assimilate God's truth into our heart. We must faithfully apply God's truth to our daily habits, and thereby "author" it into our history.⁶ The question is not whether we can "act like a Christian" periodically; it is a question of whether we have been given the "heart" of a Christian permanently. That can only be discerned over time through a change of habit...and sometimes a change in "habitat!"⁷ Nothing is more important for a Christian than a heart-commitment to God's Word and consecration to *personal holiness* that is evidenced through *practical righteousness*. We demonstrate the practical righteousness that accompanies a new heart by how we talk, how we minister to those who are desperate with no ability to offer anything in return and how we keep ourselves from that which is an offense to God. "A person who does not have compassion for others, who is not concerned about living righteously, and whose satisfaction is found in his sin, cannot be a true disciple of Christ and a child of God."⁵ He or she is self-deceived by thinking that the "sugar pill" of religion has addressed the in-born wickedness of his or her heart.⁸ Does your life-style offer consistent evidence that God has radically changed you from the inside out through faith in Christ?⁹

1 James 4:17 2 Galatians 6:7; Romans 14:14-23 3 1 John 2:3-6 4 1 John 3:10 5 J. MacArthur 6 John 17:17; Psalm 119; Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14 7 Psalm 1 8 Genesis 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9 9 Ephesians 2:8-10