



**SERIES: FEBRUARY** – James: Faith in Real Life

**SPEAKER: DAN COKE**

**Saturday, 02/12/2022**

**Scripture:** James 1:22-23

**TITLE:** Eye in the Sky

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. James 1:22-23

I'm an ex-athlete. I love sports. I love watching excellence in sports. Great players are often great students of the game. Great coaches are not only committed to learning, but they seek out new information all the time. But I didn't always have an appreciation for this kind of excellence in sports.

I remember as a freshman in college, realizing that our practices were being filmed by our coaches. In high school, we only watched game film and sometimes that could be hard to watch. But in college and beyond, they film practices. Do you know how much anxiety is created in an insecure freshman athlete as his coaches point a red laser onto the projector screen following the every movement of that freshman athlete? Do you understand how nerve wrecking that was?

Freshman arrive on campus semesters behind the other players and so you regularly look like you don't know what you're doing. And now, they have cameras detailing this for everyone. Coach would always say, "The eye in the sky, don't lie." Now that's significant to our passage.

James warns against self-deception. In other words, an effect of sin is that we can regularly deceive ourselves. Like as freshman, telling your coach that you did the right thing, because you know the play. Only to see later in practice film study, that though you know the play, you were still in the wrong position. Regularly, daily, we can allow ourselves to be self-deceived based on what we think we know. We need humble and honest view of ourselves, like the one that 1 Corinthians 10:13 gives us, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man." The temptation to live self-deceived is common to all and especially to those who put confidence in themselves.

The two things I want you to see here are: that self-deception is a challenge for everyone. And secondly, putting confidence in yourself, or, as the Bible puts it in Philippians, confidence in the flesh. However, the Word of God, like the camera, or the "eye in the sky" as my coaches put it, shows you exactly who you are and how you're supposed to live.

The Word acts as a mirror. It exposes everything. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Guess what? We need this kind of accountability. In fact, the Holy Spirit's structure for accountability for us is: First, the Word of God. Second, other Christian brothers and sisters. Thirdly, the consequences of our sinful actions. In our passage, James begins with taking us to the Word. Again, it reminds me of my coaches asking, "What's your assignment on that play? What cues should you look for?" And finally, "what did you actually see?"

Brothers and sisters, consider your walk with the Lord. What is the Word calling you to do right now? How have you responded? Are you putting into practice what God has said? Or are you pretending and living with self-deception? Look. These questions aren't to condemn you, but to help you grow in Christ. The greatest coach with the greatest eye in the sky is the Holy Spirit. And He wants you to have a humble and honest view of yourself so that you can grow. And He doesn't want you to sweep your sin under the rug until condemnation or pride drives you away from God. No, he wants you to look at Christ, see the love of God for you, and to have you respond by repenting and asking the Holy Spirit to coach you out of the mess you're in. God wants to coach you out the mess that you're in. Repent and look to him. Amen.