



SERIES: JANUARY – BECOMING SPIRITUALLY FIT

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

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Scripture: James 1:24-25

TITLE: Don't Skim the Instructions

I've shared my lack of enthusiasm for building projects. Putting together furniture and buildings just drives me crazy. Partly because I have to continually stop to look at the instructions. You see, I can't just look at them once and get to work. Because if I do, instead of assembling a table, I get a pile of junk. Instead of constructing a shed, I build an unrecognizable object.

I immediately forget what I read, and the result is devastating. James would say we need to be people who continually look at God's instruction manual for similar reasons.

Here is what James says in James 1:25-26 (CSB).

For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was. But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does.

James has been contrasting the difference between doers and hearers. He's been talking about living life as a Christian compared to the life of a non-believer. And here, he continues it with an illustration.

James said in verse 23 that the person who looks at God's Word and immediately lives life for him or herself is like a person who looks into a mirror and forgets what they look like. However, the person who looks intently—this isn't a casual glance. It's not a quick read of the instructions. It's a deep, thorough examination and study to understand and commit to heart.

What does this do? It provides the knowledge and ability to know God's Word, which provides freedom. By engaging in God's Word, we are prepared and motivated to live according to the book. It's the opposite of me and instructions. I glance at the pictures and immediately start swinging the hammer. This is not the right way.

Instead, we are to engage in God's Word and live it out. When we do, we are living out God's best and are blessed because of it. Being blessed doesn't mean being free from trials, frustration, rejection, or persecution. But there is favor and reward in this life and in the life to come.

Engaging in God's Word does not guarantee perfection in life, but the best way forward is to be consistent in a life well-lived.

So here's my challenge for you today: Commit to Bible engagement. It's easy to skim and to check the box for devotions or Bible study. But to do it right and to live out the effects, we must commit to engaging in God's Word. This means reading it. It means reflecting on it. And then

responding to it. We know with certainty that consistent Bible engagement results in life transformation. Which we all want.

When we engage the Bible, we are prepared to win the day.