

MATURING WELL

If I want to mature as a disciple I need to conquer a few milestones.

(James 1:19-27) My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it - he will be blessed in what he does. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

1. Wear My MUZZLE

(19) Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak.

(26) If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

- A. I have to learn to carefully control everything I say.

(Matthew 12:34b-36) Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

- B. Controlling my speech is harder than taming a wild animal.

(3:7-8) All kinds of animals... are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue.

- C. Even a few words can determine my course in life.

(3:3-4) When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.

- D. My words can literally ruin my life.

(3:6) The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire.

- E. Controlled speech is a mark of my maturity.

(3:2) We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

2. Wash My MORALS

(21) Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent...

- A. I am to get rid of the immorality in my OWN life.
- B. God defines what is moral and immoral in Scripture.
- C. God expects me to live my life by His moral code.

(22) Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

3. Watch My MASTER

(20b) ...the righteous life that God desires.

(25) The man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it - he will be blessed in what he does.

- A. I am to watch Jesus – and DO as He does.

(John 13:15) "I have set you an example that you should DO as I have done for you."

(1 Peter 2:21) To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps.

- B. I want to start becoming aware of Jesus' example.
- C. I want to trust Jesus enough to follow Him ANYWHERE.