

James 1:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Analysis

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

James commands believers to lay aside (apothemenoi, ἀποθέμενοι) all filthiness (rhyparian, ῥυπαρίαν) and the superfluity of naughtiness (perisseian kakias, περισσείαν κακίας), receiving with meekness (prautēti, πραΰτητι) the implanted word (ton emphyton logon, τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον) able to save their souls. The imagery evokes removing filthy garments before receiving seed, highlighting repentance preceding receptivity.

Reformed theology emphasizes that the Word, planted by the Spirit at regeneration, continues to sanctify as believers humbly welcome its commands. Pride and moral filth choke the Word; meekness opens soil for growth. Holiness is not optional but intrinsic to salvation's outworking.

Historical Context

Diaspora Christians navigated morally corrupt cities where filthiness was normalized. James, writing as Jerusalem's pastor, reaffirms the Jewish call to ritual purity now fulfilled in moral purity. His instruction parallels Paul's call in Ephesians 4:22-24 to put off the old self and receive the Word.

The implanted Word language would resonate with Jeremiah 31's promise of the

law written on hearts. James assures persecuted believers that even without temple access, God's Word dwells within them as they respond in humility.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What spiritual clutter must you put away to receive God's Word effectively?
2. How can you cultivate meekness when approaching Scripture?
3. What obedience is the Word currently prompting that you have delayed?

Interlinear Text

διὸ	ἀποθέμενοι	πᾶσαν	ῥυπαρίαν	καὶ	περισεΐαν	
Wherefore	lay apart	all	filthiness	and	superfluity	
G1352	G659	G3956	G4507	G2532	G4050	
κακίας	ἐν	πραΰτητι	δέξασθε	τὰς	ἔμφυτον	λόγον
of naughtiness	with	meekness	and receive	which	the engrafted	word
G2549	G1722	G4240	G1209	G3588	G1721	G3056
τὰς	δυνάμενον	σῶσαι	τὰς	ψυχὰς	ὑμῶν	
which	is able	to save	which	souls	your	
G3588	G1410	G4982	G3588	G5590	G5216	

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 4:22 (Parallel theme): That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Ephesians 1:13 (Salvation): In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

1 Peter 2:11 (Parallel theme): Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

John 6:63 (Word): It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Psalms 25:9 (Parallel theme): The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

Hebrews 12:1 (Parallel theme): Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

1 Peter 2:1 (Parallel theme): Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

James 4:8 (Parallel theme): Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Hebrews 2:3 (Salvation): How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

Hebrews 4:2 (Word): For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.