

James 1:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Analysis

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. The blessed hearer looks intently (parakypsas, παρακύψας) into the perfect law of liberty (nomon teleion ton tēs eleutherias, νόμον τέλειον τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας), continues in it, and becomes a doer who acts. James fuses Torah language with gospel freedom: the law fulfilled in Christ liberates rather than enslaves when obeyed by grace.

The verbs emphasize perseverance; the one who stays (paramenas) in the Word experiences blessing in doing. Reformed theology affirms the third use of the law: guiding believers into joyful obedience empowered by the Spirit.

Historical Context

James addresses believers wrestling with Mosaic law's role. As Jerusalem's leader, he affirms the law's continuity in moral demands while celebrating liberty from ceremonial bondage—harmonizing with Paul's teaching in Galatians 5. Diaspora Christians needed assurance that obedience to Christ's law leads to true freedom, even under oppression.

The term "law of liberty" counters the accusation that James is legalistic; he presents obedience as liberation from sin's tyranny, not capitulation to legalism.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does viewing God's commands as the 'law of liberty' reshape obedience?
2. What disciplines help you look intently and continue in the Word?
3. Where might you need to persevere in doing despite cultural pressure?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	παρακύψας	εἰς	νόμον	τέλειον	τὸν	τῆς
G3588	But	whoso looketh	into	law	the perfect	G3588	G3588
	G1161	G3879	G1519	G3551	G5046		
ἐλευθερίας	καὶ	παραμείνας	οὗτος	οὐκ	ἀκροατῆς		
of liberty	and	continueth	therein he	not	hearer		
G1657	G2532	G3887	G3778	G3756	G202		
ἐπιλησμονῆς	γενόμενος	ἀλλὰ	ποιητῆς	ἔργου	οὗτος		
a forgetful	being	but	a doer	of the work	therein he		
G1953	G1096	G235	G4163	G2041	G3778		
μακάριος	ἐν	τῇ	ποιήσει	αὐτοῦ	ἔσται		
blessed	in	G3588	deed	G846	shall be		
G3107	G1722		G4162		G2071		

Additional Cross-References

Luke 11:28 (Word): But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

John 13:17 (Parallel theme): If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

1 Peter 2:16 (Parallel theme): As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

James 2:12 (Word): So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

Galatians 5:1 (Parallel theme): Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (Parallel theme): Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Timothy 4:16 (Parallel theme): Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Proverbs 14:15 (Word): The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

Romans 11:22 (Parallel theme): Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Romans 8:15 (Parallel theme): For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.