

Hearing and Doing

Key Verse: *“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*

—James 1:22

Selected Scripture:
James 1:19-27

OUR KEY VERSE ADMON-ishes us to action—be “doers of the word.” The Scriptures variously exhort us to bear fruit, to walk in the narrow way, to deny ourselves, to take up the cross of sacrifice, and to follow Jesus. These all imply action on our part. Being only a passive hearer of the word is insufficient to give proof of our devotion to the will of God. Just as we are to work on our inward development as Christians, the Heavenly Father is also engaged on our behalf. The Apostle Paul speaks of this dual effort: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”—Phil. 2:12,13

Our hope rests upon the promises of God, but for that hope to remain strong and to grow, we need always to be on the alert to meet certain important requirements. The Apostle Peter says that we have been given “exceeding great and precious promises,” and that by these we might be “partakers of the divine nature.” However, as Peter continues, for this to occur we must give all diligence, and add to our faith the qualities of virtue, knowledge, self-control, cheerful endurance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.—II Pet. 1:4-7

To further emphasize the importance of both hearing

and doing, the apostle then uses the small but important word—"if." He says, "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (vs. 8) Two verses later he adds, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." (vs. 10) Faithfully carrying out these "ifs"—that is, being doers of the word—will result in an entrance being ministered unto us "abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (vs. 11) The Master also spoke in this fashion, saying, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." However, this will only hold true, he adds, if "ye bear much fruit."—John 15:7,8

If, by the grace and promises of God, we are to attain the divine nature, it will be necessary to give full diligence. It will not do to be halfhearted, nor part-time runners for the prize. We cannot divide our interests between the things of God and the things of the world, nor between the interests of the New Creature and the interests of the flesh. Paul wrote, "This one thing I do." (Phil. 3:13) This is the only approach to the Christian life which will result in victory, and the only attitude of heart in which to be, if the Lord is to fulfill his promises to us. We cannot afford to be unduly concerned about even our temporal needs. The Lord knows about these and promised: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—Matt. 6:33

What a blessed prospect is assured us by the Heavenly Father's wonderful promises if we fully seek to "hear" and "do" his will. Truly the Lord has given us "good doctrine." (Prov. 4:2) Let us yield ourselves to its transforming influence and be made ready for that blessed entrance into the kingdom, where we shall "be like him," and "see him as he is."—I John 3:2 ■