

Just Do It! James 1:19-27

Introduction

- Just Do It or JDI for short is a trademark for Nike which was coined in 1988.
- This aggressive add campaign helped Nike increase their share of the shoe market from 18 to 43% from 1988 to 1998.
- How might this approach, Just Do It, help the Church in its mission to become and make disciples? I wonder?
- In our text today, the Apostle James has something to say about this!
- He's just talked about persevering in trials and temptations for the sake of the Gospel saying, "*Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.*" – James 1:12
- And then, in our text, he says something conspicuously similar to, Just Do It!

Just Do It...Being and Making Disciples

1. Listen to God's Word – vs. 19-21

*“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: **Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,** ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹ 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.**”*

- Here we are encouraged to listen to God's word.
- Listening is different than merely hearing.
- Listening seeks understanding of the other. Here, the knowledge and understanding of God.
- There is a further aspect of listening we don't find with mere hearing.
- Accepting God's Word!

- 1 Thessalonians 2:13 *“And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, **you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.**”*
- These words have the power and authority of God himself.
- These words “work” in us!
- Imago Christi – the Word of God helps transform us and others into the image of Christ.
- Listening to God’s word helps us be and make disciples!

2. **Do God’s Word** – vs. 22-25

*“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.**”²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.”*

- James indicates there is more than just listening to and accepting God’s word.
- We must also do it!
- As our faces define us, God’s word defines the disciple.
- It foolish to think we would walk away from God’s word by not doing it!
- And yet, that’s exactly what happens.
- Jesus encountered this or he wouldn’t have needed to tell the disciples to “consider carefully how you listen.”
- By listening he means, not just hearing but also doing.
- *“No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light.”* – Luke 8
- God’s word is light, and the disciple does something useful with it!

- Doing God’s word helps us be and make disciples!

3. **Practice True Religion** – vs. 26-27

“Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. ²⁷ 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.”

“The story is told of a man who went to the priest and said, ‘Father, I want you to say a Mass for my dog.’ The priest was indignant. ‘What do you mean, say a Mass for your dog?’ ‘It’s my pet dog,’ said the man. ‘I loved that dog, and I’d like you to offer a Mass for him.’ ‘We don’t offer Masses for dogs here,’ the priest said. ‘You might try the Lutheran Church down the street. Ask them if they have a service for you.’ As the man was leaving, he said to the priest, ‘I really loved that dog. I was planning to offer a million-dollar stipend for the Mass.’ And the priest said, ‘Wait a minute. You never told me your dog was Catholic.’”

- This text reminds us to keep what we say and do congruent!
- If our “religion” is simply talk, it is worthless!
- True religion practices what it preaches.
- Often taking care of the marginalized and minimized goes hand in hand with remaining unpolluted by the world.
- Why? Because the world does not care for the marginalized and minimized.
- Pure and Faultless religion listens, accepts and does the word of God!
- Practicing true religion helps us be and make disciples!

Closing

“Since making disciples is the main task of the church, every church ought to be able to answer two questions: What is our

plan for making disciples? Is our plan working?” – Dallas Willard

- What is our plan?... YOU, you're our plan!
- How is our plan working?... You tell me!
- AMEN!