

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** How to Understand the Bible

**SERMON REFERENCE:** James 1:21-25

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1752

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide this outline produced from a sermon preached by Adrian Rogers while serving as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. This outline is intended for your personal, non-commercial use.

In order to ensure our ability to be good stewards of Adrian Rogers' messages, Love Worth Finding has reserved all rights to this content.

Except for your personal, non-commercial use and except for brief quotations in printed reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—without the prior permission of the publisher.

Copyright ©2021 Love Worth Finding Ministries, Inc.

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) We will never be growing Christians without a knowledge of the Word of God.
  - i) But it's not enough to just know Bible facts.
  - ii) We must know the Lord of the Word.
- b) We need to understand the Bible.
- c) James 1:21-25
  - i) In this passage, we find four ways to better understand the Word of God.
  - ii) James 1:21
    - (1) This is written to Christians.
    - (2) Why is the author telling Christians how to be saved?
      - (a) Salvation comes to us in three tenses:
        - (i) Past tense
          - 1. The past tense of salvation happens when we receive Christ as our personal Savior and are saved from the penalty of sin.
          - 2. We will never have to die and go to Hell because our sin has been washed whiter than snow with the blood of Jesus Christ.
        - (ii) Present tense
          - 1. This is salvation from the power of sin.
          - 2. Even though we will not go to Hell, the devil has not ceased working on us.
            - a. Sin still has its allurements and its attractions.
          - 3. Not only do we need to be saved past tense, but we also need to be saved present tense from the power of sin.
        - (iii) Future tense
          - 1. When Jesus comes again, we will be saved from the possibility of sin.
      - (3) The Greek word for "soul" is the word "psyche."
        - (a) This is our mind, emotion and will.
        - (b) Our mind, emotion and will need to be controlled by the Word of God.
          - (i) Then, we will live in victory.
  - d) John 17:17
  - e) The Bible says that we are to receive the Word of God.
    - i) James 1:21
    - ii) There are two words in the Greek language for "receive:"
      - (1) One means "to grasp, to reach out, take, to get."
        - (a) This is not the word used in James 1:21.
        - (b) We can't just reach out and snatch the Word of God.
          - (i) Sometimes a person will determine to study the Bible like he studies history or geography.
            - 1. He gets a concordance and lexicons and takes his mind, will, determination and intellect and sets out to master the Bible.

2. He may learn the word or facts, but he will never understand it.
    - (ii) This is self-promoted taking; it is grasping.
      1. It is going into the Bible to extract the truth.
    - (2) The other word means “to welcome.”
      - (a) This is the word used in James 1:21.
      - (b) It means to receive as though you would receive someone into your home, as you receive a guest.
    - iii) If we are to understand the Bible, we must learn to welcome the Word.
      - (1) We must open our hearts and minds and welcome the Word.
  - f) We don’t just reach out and take God’s Word.
    - i) We lift up our hands to Him and receive the Word by faith and by grace, and let God’s Word come into our hearts.
    - g) Today’s message will share four ways to welcome the Word.
- 2) WELCOME THE WORD WITH A REPENTANT HEART (JAMES 1:21)
- a) There is a moral qualification to understanding the Word of God.
    - i) Not primarily an intellectual qualification, but a moral qualification.
    - ii) It is not enough to know Greek and Hebrew and have a Bible dictionary.
  - b) James 1:21
    - i) “Superfluity of naughtiness” literally means “that which remains,” “that which is left over.”
      - (1) It means residual sin.
        - (a) When we get saved and become a new Christian, we are very much like Lazarus who came out of the grave.
          - (i) John 11:43-33
          - (ii) When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he came forth dressed in the grave clothes of the old life.
            1. The stench of the old life was upon him.
            2. Jesus told them to loose him and let him go, to take off that which remains (the superfluity of naughtiness).
        - (b) Luke 15:20-22
          - (i) When the prodigal son returned to his father, he came back dressed in rags.
          - (ii) The father told them to put a new robe and shoes on him, and take off the old rags (that which was left over).
    - ii) As Christians, we are saved and on our way to Heaven, but we have some superfluity of naughtiness; we have something that remains.
      - (1) We do far more repenting after we’re saved than we did when we were saved because we have learned so much more about ourselves and about the Lord Jesus since the time we were saved.
    - iii) The word “filthiness” in this passage means “ear wax.”
      - (1) If we want to hear, then we must clean out our ears.
      - (2) The sin in our lives is like wax in our ears.

- (a) We need to get rid of it.
  - c) The reason many of us don't understand the Bible when we read it and the reason God's truth does not come into us is because we have hangover sin, that superfluity of naughtiness.
    - i) We have spiritual wax in our ears.
  - d) It is absolutely important that when we study the Bible that we make a full confession of sin and ask God to search our hearts.
    - i) Psalm 139:23-24
    - ii) We need to get our hearts right with God.
- 3) WELCOME THE WORD WITH A RECEPTIVE HEART (JAMES 1:21)
- a) Welcome the Word with meekness.
  - b) Meekness is a teachable spirit.
    - i) To be meek is to be teachable.
    - ii) God wants to take us under His control and make us sensitive to His commands.
      - (1) That is a meek spirit; a receptive spirit.
  - c) If you want to learn the Word of God, ask yourself these questions:
    - i) Are you clean?
    - ii) Are you meek?
      - (1) Do you have a teachable spirit?
  - d) John 7:17
    - i) It is the will that must be surrendered.
      - (1) Not primarily the mind but the heart, the will.
- 4) WELCOME THE WORD WITH A RESPONSIVE SPIRIT (JAMES 1:22)
- a) James 1:22
    - i) Once we get our hearts clean and surrender our will, we then obey what God tells us, if we would understand the Word of God.
    - ii) If we do not respond to what we hear, then we are self-deceived.
  - b) The problem with many people in our churches today is that they never apply what they hear.
    - i) They are like a sponge.
      - (1) They sit, soak and sour.
    - ii) We must give out what comes in.
  - c) The Lord Jesus calls the person who hears the truth but doesn't act on it a fool.
    - i) Matthew 7:26
  - d) Luke 11:28
    - i) It is not enough to simply hear.
  - e) The best way to understand the part of the Bible you don't understand is to obey the part you do understand.
    - i) Mark 4:25

- ii) Why should God show anyone more truth until they have acted upon the truth that God has already shown them?
  - f) A study of the Bible gives us knowledge about God; obedience gives us knowledge of God.
    - i) Obedience makes God real to us.
  - g) John 14:21
    - i) If we don't keep His commandments, then we don't love Jesus.
    - ii) When we love Jesus, then we shall be loved by the Father.
- 5) WELCOME THE WORD WITH A REFLECTIVE SPIRIT (JAMES 1:23-25)
- a) In this passage, James calls the Bible a mirror.
    - i) It reflects.
      - (1) When we go to the Bible and look at the Bible, it looks back at us.
      - ii) We see ourselves in the Word of God.
      - iii) A mirror shows us ourselves.
  - b) Read the Bible with a reflective spirit; let the Bible read you.
  - c) James imagines two people in this passage:
    - i) He imagines one person who just glances in the mirror.
      - (1) James 1:24
      - (2) Some people are too casual in their study of the Word of God.
        - (a) They just glance in the mirror and then go their way.
          - (i) They are like the man who just glances in the mirror and never straightens his tie, never combs his hair or gets the smudge off; he just goes his way.
      - ii) The other type of person does not give a casual glance but a careful gaze.
        - (1) James 1:25
          - (a) The word here for "look" means a careful gaze; it means to look penetratingly into the Word of God.
            - (i) This is the same word used to describe John at the resurrection when he and the other disciple came to the tomb and the stone had been rolled away.
              - 1. John 20:5
              - 2. John did not give a glance; he looked with all intensity possible.
- 6) CONCLUSION
- a) When we study the Word of God, we need to bring our heart, mind and everything to it.
  - b) If we will receive the Word with a repentant spirit, a receptive spirit, a responsive spirit, and a reflective spirit, then it will burst aflame in our lives.
  - c) Psalm 119:105
  - d) If you want to understand the Bible, then you need to know the Author of the Bible.

- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16