

The Power Of A Single Verse: James 1:20

In my Christian walk, there have been many single verses that came to my spiritual rescue time and time again. Even in my spiritual infancy, when I wasn't yet established in Scripture, single verses I had written down or memorized cut through my darkness and exacted deliverance. Praise God! As I grew in my walk with God, He showed me that these single verses needed to be understood in their natural habitat—that is, in context. So, to begin this study, let's read James 1:20 (my first chosen single verse!) in its original context:

James 1:19-27

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 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. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

James 1:20

(KJV) For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

(NIV) because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

This section of James is dealing with the subject of carnality. Anger stems from our fallen flesh. As a newly saved, and newly married Christian man, I was on fire for Jesus for sure, but also still living in my former flesh. My anger issues became apparent when I would consider my past and not my identity in Christ. I would hurt myself and lash out at objects, even punching walls! My rage was also triggered when my new bride would make a negative comment to me and I heard my verbally abusive mother's voice. I reacted violently—thankfully never hitting her—and irresponsibly. Ah, just a baby in Christ.

The pastor who was discipling me as a new Christian suggested memorizing God's Word to have God's Truth close and present in my heart and mind when I needed it most. This spiritual discipline was and still is transformational in spiritual warfare and my walk with God. I'm still excited about Scripture!

James 1:20 called to my flesh each time I declared it: "Darren, your kind of anger does not bring about the righteous life God intends for you." I know the Word of God is the

Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17) because of its effectiveness in cutting off my selfish anger at the root—time and time again, until that character flaw died a slow, painful death. I no longer struggle with anger and rage. I am a new creation:

2Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

I have to emphasize that the sanctification by God of my character did happen over time—with the refining work of the Holy Ghost and the Word of God. But know this: God is fully committed to sanctifying us in His truth during our sojourn on this earth:

John 17:17

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

By meditating on James 1:20 in context, we learn from James 1:19 that we can control carnal rage by being “swift to hear” and “slow to speak.” God’s Word, when we meditate on it in context and obey it, stops sin in its tracks.

My encouragement to you is to have single powerful verses at the ready in your heart and mind, as well as the passages in which these verses live.

*STUDY POINT: Write out ten single verses that have come to your spiritual rescue time and time again. Relate the stories pertaining to each verse. Send your stories to us at www.reverenddarren.com

We would love to hear your Scriptures and stories!

And...wield the Sword!

Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland