

"A Famine in the Land"

Amos 8:11 and Selected Scriptures
4/6/08



Introduction: How well do you receive the Words of the Lord?

Spiritual desire is one mark of a true believer.
To avoid Spiritual Famine, ask God to give you a desire for His Word!
1 Peter 2:2 - *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

- ***When our hearts seem uninterested in God's Word what should we do to "end the famine"?***

I. Ask God to give you <u>Ears to Hear</u> His Word (Matthew 13:9-17)

II. Ask God to give you a <u>Heart to Accept</u> His Word (Matthew 13:1-8; 18-23)



Which kind of Heart do you have for God's Word?



III. Ask God to give you a <u>Will to Obey</u> His Word (James 1:19-25)

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Introduction: I am not one who believes that God speaks today with new revelations through visions or dreams (although He has in the past and will in the future). However, I had a dream one night this past week. In my dream I saw myself preaching in a church where the people were totally disinterested in hearing the Word of God. Many slept while others were severely preoccupied with other interests; but no one cared to hear the Word of the Lord. As I woke up from this dream Amos 8:11 came to my mind.

Amos 8:11
Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

The book of Amos, penned perhaps in 755 B.C., is a warning to the Nations (especially Israel) of God’s coming judgment and wrath.

Amos was a southerner from the village of Tekoa (about 12 miles south of Jerusalem).

The name “Amos” means “to bear a burdon.” He preached in the days of Uzziah (King of Judah 791-740 BC) and Jeroboam II (King of Israel 793-753 BC) during a time of great prosperity, affluence, abundance of food and peace. Israel was seemingly at the pinnacle of it’s power.

It is during such times of security that people tend to become distracted from God and corrupt in their morals and social ethics. Such was the case in Israel.

Amos was not a vocational prophet nor the son of a prophet (he was a keeper of sheep and a dresser of sycamore figs; His vocation was about flocks and orchards- 7:14-15), but he was called of God into the ministry as a layman to preach God’s Message of impending judgment. It’s as if God is saying, if I do not have a prophet to preach my Word, I will raise up a layman to do the job.

Amos preached and the idolatrous people of the day would have none of it. They basically told him to get out of town (7:12) and not to preach any more at Bethel (which originally meant the “House of God”). So he went home and under inspiration wrote his message for all to read.

Through Amos, God gave a warning of what would happen to those who reject the Word of the Lord. Because Israel had the opportunity to hear it and turned their back on it, Amos tells of a future famine of the Word of the Lord. “*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD”*

The word “famine” speaks of a food shortage. Interestingly, the Bible is called food.
Job 23:12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my <u>necessary food</u>.
1 Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere <u>milk</u> of the word, that ye may grow thereby:
Hebrews 5:14 But strong <u>meat</u> belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
Matthew 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by <u>bread</u> alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

To a great degree there seems to be a famine of God’s Word today. Very few churches are committed anymore to the clear, uncompromising teaching of God’s Word. Where the Bible is taught, there seems to be settling in a general apathy towards it.

How well do you receive the Words of the Lord?

Some do not receive it because they don’t believe the Bible is from the Lord:

<u>Eight Rational Proofs</u> for Inspiration

1. **<u>Unity</u>** - The Bible was written by means of 40 different writers, in three languages (Hebrew and Aramaic - O.T.; Greek - N.T.), over a 1,500 year period, and yet the Scriptures have only one theme: namely, Jesus Christ and His salvation of mankind through His sacrificial and substitutionary death (See: Lk. 24:25-27; Jn. 5:39, 46; Acts 10:43, 18:28; I Cor. 15:3).

2. **<u>Prophecy</u>** - Fulfilled by Jesus at His first coming (Mt. 5:17; Lk. 24:27; Jn. 19:24)
EX: Ps. 22 - written about 1,000 B.C.
Is. 53 - written about 750 B.C.

3. **<u>Honesty</u>** - Shows people as they really are. The Bible's heroes are not "sugar-coated!" Rather, the faults of even the greatest are brought out (Abraham, Moses, David, Peter). The Bible also describes sin as it is; heaven and hell as they are; and God as He is (example of the tension between election and free will - If man wrote the Bible, he would have relieved it).

4. **<u>Durability</u>** - The Bible has lasted through the ages, though attempts have been made to exterminate this Book as no other (EX: Jer. 36:1-2, 27-28).
Voltaire, the French infidel, said: "Another century, [and] there will not be another Bible on earth." After his death, his printing press was used to print Bibles!

5. **<u>Power</u>** - To change (transform) lives.

6. **<u>Freshness</u>** - George Mueller said: "I read through the Bible 100 times, and each time it is <u>new</u> to me."

7. **<u>Scientific Accuracy</u>** –
The earth is <u>round</u> (a circle) – Is. 40:22
The earth <u>hangs on nothing</u> – Job 26:7
The life of the flesh is <u>in the blood</u> (Gen 9:4; Lev. 17:11)
Circumcision on 8th day – Lev. 12:3
Universal flood
Uncountable multitudes of stars – (Gen. 15:5, Jer. 33:22)
100 billion stars in our Galaxy alone!
Plants and Animals reproduce only after their <u>Kind (Species)</u> Gen. 1 etc

8. **<u>Historical Accuracy</u>** – Proven by – Recent Achaelogical discoveries (cities discovered customs proven etc.)
Proven by – Comparing the Bible with other Historical writings contemporary with the Bible
Ex. Josephus- cp. Acts 12 – Herod's speech and Death
With Josephus. Antiquities Book XIX chap. 7:2-5 & 8:1-2

Spiritual desire is one mark of a true believer.
To avoid Spiritual Famine, ask God to give you a desire for His Word!
1 Peter 2:2 - *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

- ***When our hearts seem uninterested in God's Word what should we do to "end the famine"?***

I. **Ask God to give you <u>Ears to Hear</u> His Word** (Matthew 13:9-17)

Deuteronomy 29:4 - Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.
Ezekiel 12:2 -Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.
Mark 4:23 - If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.
Revelation 2:7 - He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Compare Rev. 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22; 13:9)

Everyone has ears, but not everyone has *"**ears to hear**"*. That is, not all people are open and receptive to God's truth.

The Bible's Teaching on Illumination:

1. Illumination is needed by the unsaved.

a. The unsaved ("natural man") is without spiritual understanding. He views spiritual things (as revealed in the Bible) as foolishness (I Cor. 2:14).
b. The unsaved man has a blinded mind (II Cor. 4:4)

2. Illumination begins at salvation.

a. Heb. 6:4 - "once enlightened"
b. Heb. 10:32 - "ye were illuminated"

3. Illumination is a work of the Holy Spirit
(I Cor. 2:9-16)

a. The Holy Spirit reveals God's Word only to believers (I Cor. 2:9-10)
b. The Holy Spirit reveals the "deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10)
c. The Holy Spirit convicted men of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:8).
d. The Holy Spirit is our guide into all truth (jn. 16:13).

For those of you who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, listen intently to what the Spirit is saying in His Word.

See: Matthew 13:9-17

Note: V. 9

v.10 - The disciples knew that the multitudes did not understand the messages. Because they were concerned that their Master's words be received and that the people not miss the lessons, they question Jesus.

"Unto them" - The disciples noticed that Jesus did not speak plainly in public like He did to them, so they were curious as to the reason.

"Parable" - was an analogy taken from everyday life used to illustrate a spiritual truth. The word literally means "to cast alongside." It describes a teaching method whereby the teacher, in order to explain a truth, would place a story of example alongside of the truth in order to make the truth clear.

A parable required explanation in order for it to be rightly understood. For a particular reason, Jesus would often leave the crowd "hanging" -- that is, he would not give them the interpretation of the parable, like He would to His disciples (EX: V. 18ff).

He would speak parables in public, then would explain them in private.

***Do you really want to see and hear?**

What is the condition of your spiritual health?

Observe the contrast of attitudes toward the truth:

A. Some want the Truth and some don't! (v. 11-12)

(The reason for parables)

V. 11

The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" - formerly hidden truths about God's Kingdom, which are now revealed.

"But to <u>them</u> it is <u>not</u> given" - Jesus is saying, "I am speaking in parables because it is not permissible for them to comprehend the truth I am giving."

In effect Jesus is saying that parables are given more to <u>conceal</u> truth than to reveal truth.

The Lord was actually being <u>merciful</u> by concealing the message from those who really didn't want to hear it! Reason: To hear the Truth is to become accountable for that truth. They would have <u>heightened their condemnation</u> every time they heard a clear presentation of the gospel yet rejected it.

The parables would either "<u>turn some people off</u>" or <u>incite the interest</u> of others who would inquire as to the meaning.

Many times we come up against a difficult passage of Scripture. It is at times like that, that we should seriously beseech God for the right interpretation.

The parables were given to:

--Stir up the interest of those who were diligent enough to seek out the meaning and
--To prevent the understanding of those who could "care less" about the meaning.

Throughout life, a person either gains or loses. He either misses out on great opportunity or cashes in. This is a law of every realm:

--It is the law of nature: "The early bird gets the worm"

--It is the law of man: Energy and effort are rewarded with productivity. Those who labor, are diligent and persistent, see, hear, and learn. They are in a position to get more and more. But the disinterested, neglectful, and lazy lose out.

V. 12
God throughout history used language as a form of judgment: Examples -

1)The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11) (Gen. 11:6-8 -*And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.")*

2)Foreign languages spoken to Israel (Is. 28:11-12 - *"For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.")*
Cp. Dt. 28:19-50; Is. 33:19

3)The sign gift of tongues (I Cor. 14:21-22 - *"In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.")*

"Whosoever hath" - hath what?

Whosoever hath eyes willing to see, ears willing to hear, and a heart willing to accept (cp. v. 13-16).

Whosoever hath a willingness to absorb, believe, embrace, and apply the truth, Jesus says, I will give that person more truth.

In a parallel passage, Jesus said: *"Unto you that hear shall more be given"* (Mk. 4:24)

Again, He said, *"Take heed how ye hear: for whosoever hath to him shall be given. . ."* (Lk. 8:18).

Do you know who the Lord can teach? He teaches those who have a desire to learn, a hunger for truth, a zeal for spiritual wisdom. They are willing to believe and obey the truth they learn.

"Whosoever hath not" - Whoever does not have a receptive eye, ear, and heart will lose the truth they were given (this is a description of verse 4 - The unreceptive heart that would not take in the seed (*"Word"*) had the seed taken away!)

"One of the most tragic sights in all the world is to see people sitting under the most glorious message, and fall asleep or be listless, inattentive, disinterested, or willfully hardened and close-minded" (The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible, Matthew, Vol. 1, p. 296).

The Lord can teach those who are faithful stewards of the truth He has already entrusted to them. (EX:" The Parable of the Talents - Mt. 25:14-30 *V. 29)

B. Some don't want the Truth (v. 13-15)
(The problem of defective eyes, ears, and hearts)

V. 13

--How does one see, yet not see?
[They saw Jesus yet did not see Him for who He was]

--How does one hear, yet not hear?
[They heard Jesus speak, but did not hear what He said]
[Their ears heard sounds, but never understood the message]

V. 14

This prophecy, given to Isaiah to forewarn him of the hardness of the people he was to preach to. He was to preach to israel, yet they would not comprehend or know what he said.

V. 15

"Waxed gross" = lit. to <u>thicken</u>. It describes a callousness which results in a dullness of feeling.

Their hearts became impregnable; could not be penetrated.

"Dull of hearing" - to become hard of hearing; to become practically deaf to the truth. (ILLUS: those Jews who heard Stephen, stopped their ears - Acts 7:57).

It's a sad state to be able to hear, yet to not get the message.

"Their eyes they have closed" -

--They chose to not see the truth.
--They deliberately decided to remain spiritually ignorant.
--They of their own will made up their minds that they didn't want to see God's way.

NOTE: To ignore the truth will not change the truth. EX: Children will often play the game of blocking their eyes and thinking that you can't see them, or that you are not there.

People can avoid the Word of God and His ways in 101 different ways, yet that will not alter it or make it go away.

"Lest at any time" - for fear that something they don't want to see might s lip into their spiritual vision, and they might have subsequent feelings of <u>guilt</u> or <u>responsibility</u> because of that which they saw, they keep their eyes shut.

"Converted" - to turn around; to change your direction of going away from God, to going toward Him (Is. 55:6-7 - *"Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon")*

Many are afraid of being "converted." They are afraid of having to lose out on their own way. Some are fearful of giving up their sin. Some are fearful of becoming "religious."

However, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

All you lose is:

--Your present status as an "orphan" -- you become an adopted son
--Your present status as an "alien" -- You become a citizen of God's kingdom
--Your sin, guilt, and eternal condemnation (Rom. 8:1)

"And I should heal them" - They had everything to gain!

ILLUS: of someone who has the symptoms of a serious illness, but is afraid to find out what it is, or is afraid to go to the doctor.

Jesus is the Great Physician who can heal the sin-sick soul.

He wanted to remove their spiritual cancer. He wanted to replace their defective heart with a new one. He longed to give sight to their eyes and sound to their ears, but they did not want it!

C. Some want the Truth! (v. 16-17)
(The blessedness of open eyes, ears, and hearts)

V. 16

"Blessed" = fortunate

How wonderful it is to sere and hear; how much more wonderful it is to see and hear the Gospel of God; to discern God's plan of salvation; to comprehend His Word

Your eyes and ears are either blessed, or they are not. The opposite of blessedness is to be under a curse.

Many saints of the Old Testament longed to see and hear the Messiah. They hoped that theirs would be the generation that would have the great privilege of welcoming the Christ. (I Pet. 1:10-11 - *"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."*)

What an awesome privilege I have had. I am so fortunate to have heard the gospel as a 16 year old boy, to attend a fundamental Bible-centered church, to enjoy a Bible college and seminary that were committed to God's Word without compromise.

ILLUS: of Olympic athletes who had an "I want it" attitude and won!

Even believers need to search their hearts to make sure that there is an <u>openness</u> to receive the Word, and to make sure there are no <u>obstacles</u> to prevent the Word from being understood.

II. Ask God to give you a Heart to Accept His Word (Matthew 13:1-8; 18-23)

What is the difference between someone who looks forward to reading their Bible, and someone who never or seldom wants to?

What is the difference between someone who loves coming to church and hearing a message, and someone who would rather stay home and play?

What is the difference between someone who gets something every time he reads or hears the Scriptures, and someone who is unchanged and even unchallenged whenever the Word is read or heard?

What is the difference between the two?

ANSWER: The condition of their hearts

Your heart is the door to your spirit; it is the gateway to your "inner-man."

This is why Solomon said: "Guard your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Your heart is that invisible part of you that thinks, feels, and chooses. (It is the culmination of intellect, emotion, and will).

Your heart is that which loves and hates, chooses to do right and wrong.

"The LORD looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).

The Sower = A messenger of God
The Seed = The Word of God
The Soil = The heart of man

Why is the Word comparred to a seed?
- The Word, like a seed has life in it (Heb.4:12)
- The Word, like a seed must be planted (I Cor. 3)

The Word, like a seeed will take root & produce fruit if the soil is cultivated. (Tenderized & watered - Rom.10:17)

Examine the condition of your heart!

Which type of soil characterizes your heart?

A. HARD - Hearted (v. 4, 19)

***This soil characterizes the rebellious man** (one who does not want to hear it at all).

Jesus is describing a heart that "has never been softened by remorse, never broken up by conviction of sin" (MacArthur, p. 357)

The "hard-hearted" person has this attitude: "No one is going to tell me what to do!"

"Harden not your hearts" (Heb. 3:8)

"He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed" (Prov. 29:1).

Some say, "I pray! I don't need church or Bible reading." --- "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9).

This is the teen who goes to church because his parents "make him."

You can't grow anything in ROCK!

B. FAINT - Hearted (v. 5-6, 20-21)

***This soil characterizes the non-committed man** (one who is emotionally interested but not committed).

"The same sun that hardens the clay will melt the wax."

The sun ("persecution") can either help the true believer to grow, or reveal that the profession of a false believver was not real, genuine, or sincere.

The "faint-hearted" person has this attitude: "It's not worth it!"

The stony heart says, "Living for Jesus is good [Okay] as long as it doesn't cost me anything." It's fine as long as all my friends are doing it. But if I ever get "made fun of" or actually opposed, I know this is "quitting time."

V. 20

"Anon with joy" - right away or immediately with much emotion.

This quick response to the gospel was svery promising (especially when comparred with hard soil). The superficial, "surface" response was characterized by "joy" (enthusiasm, an emotional high, great feelings, but no depth. "The gospel truth has not penettratedhis heart but only the edge of his mind, and it is therefore as immediately renounced at it was immediately recieved." (MacArthur, p. 358)

This is the one who professes faith, gives a tear-jerking testimony, is all "on fire" for Christ, and then fizzles away when things get hot, never to be found again! [EX: Ron Stravel, Satanic cult leader]

This is the person who likes learning about the Bible in a class, chapel, or in church, so that he can get an "A" on his test, or please his teacher, or have the answers to give out to others (Ex: cults, other religions), but he himself does not totally believe it or obey it.

There is a need to abide in Christ and His Words in order to produce fruit (Jn. 15:1-8).

C. HALF - Hearted (v. 7, 22)

***This soil characterizes the easily distracted man** (one who is preoccupied, other things are more important).

The "half-hearted" person has this attitude: "This is boring!"

The thorns rob the water and minerals in the ground and choke out the sunlight from reaching the crop.

V. 22

"The care of this world" = The pre-occupations and anxieties of this present age.

--More worried about your career (job)
--More worried about your fame (status)
--More worried about paying your bills (Mt. 6:33)
--More worried about your marriage, world events, etc.

"Worry" will keep you from reading Bible and benefitting from it.

"The deceitfulness of riches" -

--Money is a deceiver (Mt. 19:23; I Tim. 6:9, 10, 17)
--Things preoccupy

The happy man is the one who has enough to live, but not enough to fall in love with it.

Something new (novel) and exciting can easily distract the half-hearted.

Why? Because they have one foot in the world while attempting to keep one foot in the Word (you can't do it - I Jn. 2:15-17).

You can't grow anything in GARBAGE!

D. WHOLE - Hearted (v. 8, 23)

***This soil characterizes the tender man** (one who has a sincere and good heart - Luke 8:15).

The "Whole-hearted" person has this attitude: "Give me more!"

V. 23

The good ground:

1."Heareth" (note: all "soils" heard the word - v. 19, 20, 22)

2."Understandeth" - comprehension depends upon the condition of your heart.

People don't understand for one of three reasons in their heart:

1)They don't want to
2)They don't put in the effort
OR3)They want to do other things (distracted).

3."Beareth fruit" - the result of understanding the Word!

Have a soft heart while you are young. If not, it will become more calloused as you get older [Old people are "set in their ways"}

The most dangerous position to be in is to be "set in your ways" -- because God can no longer teach you.

What we need is thirsty soil!

--Not cement which can take no water (hard heart)

--Not rock-filled shallow soil which can only drink a little (faint-hearted)

--Not thorn infested soil which has its water robbed (half-hearted)

--But fertile, cultivated soil which will soak in the seed and water (whole-hearted)

Mt. 5:6 - "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

"God knoweth your hearts" (Lk. 16:15).

Although I cannot see your heart, I can know your heart by your fruit.

V. 23

"Fruitfulness" =

1)Doing things pleasing to God (Jn. 15:8)

2)Doing things you can bring to Heaven

[That your fruit should remain (last) - Jn. 15:16]

a.souls (Mt. 9:37-38)

b.service for the saints (Mt. 25:34-40)

The problem is often not the preaching (or preacher) but the condition of your heart.

The problem is never the Word of God, but is the condition of your heart.

SEE: Jer. 4:3-4

"Break up your fallow (untilled) ground . . . and take away the foreskins of your heart . . ."

Our prayer needs to be:

"Take me"
"Break me"
"Mold me"
"Make me . . .
a tender-hearted Christian"

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. 51:10).

III. Ask God to give you a <u>Will to Obey</u> His Word (James 1:19-25)

V. 19 "Swift to hear" - eager and attentive, ready to receive and assimilate the message heard.

"Slow to speak" - does not mean slowness in speaking; but is an exhortation to restrain hasty, wrong reactions to what is heard.
Ex. of early church - epistle was publicly read.
Others could interact and share. I Cor. 14:26-33

God has given us <u>2 ears</u> and <u>one</u> mouth!

"Slow to wrath" - a common wrong attitude of one who is convicted by the Word and doesn't want to accept it.

<u>RECEIVE</u> THE WORD - HUMBLY (v. 21).

REMOVE SINFUL HINDRANCES.

V. 21 "Lay apart" = to take off, strip off. Word was used of taking off dirty clothes.

"Filthiness" = dirtiness; moral defilement.
"Filthiness" = a medical term used of <u>built-up ear wax.</u>

"Superfluity of naughtiness" = excess of wickedness (evil).

Ex. When we got saved, we put off the "big" sins. We emptied the cup which was full of sin. Now God calls on you to <u>wipe off</u> the <u>remainder</u>. --- those internal sins of wrong attitude.

Sin prevents you from (soaking in) taking in God's Word.

"All" - "God is never satisfied with partial purity, partial goodness, partial righteousness." (Gaebelein, p. 50)
And any known sin in your life will block your reception of the Word.

V. 21 "Meekness" = mildness, gentleness (it's a fruit of the Spirit). It is a humble and gentle attitude which expresses itself in a <u>patient submissiveness</u> to that which you don't want to hear, or like to hear.

"Meekness" - the kind of man whose feelings and emotions are under control.
He is one who opens his heart with <u>teachableness</u>.

"Engrafted" - implanted.

God's word like seed has been planted into your heart. Is it growing and producing fruit? **See Mt. 13:1-9**

"Save your souls" = deliver you life! Rescue your life.

"Soul" (psucha) is the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life. "Spirit" (pneuma) relates to God.

By receiving (accepting) the Word, you are guaranteeing a life without ruin, spiritual tragedy.

OBEY THE WORD - INTENTLY (v. 22 - 27)

"Doer" - present tense = continual action. (a habit of life).
A key word in Deut. : DO Obey the Law!

It's easier to know what is right than to do what is right.

To learn and not to do is not to learn. Unless a message is acted upon, it is never learned.

Illus. - Spiritual obesity. Fat and lazy Christians (who know everything and do nothing).

"Arm-chair Quarterbacks - have all the answers but never play the game.

Ex. - The failure in Christian schools today is that the kids have no outlet to live what they have learned.

Knowledge puffs up (proud attitude) Love builds up (proper action).

V. 22 "Deceiving" = to misjudge, miscalculate. To miss the point.

You miss the whole point of God's word if you know and don't do. This is the height of foolishness.

Deceived because he thought he really benefitted. Illus. Wise man (a doer) and foolish man (one who does not do Christ's sayings). Mt. 7:24 - 29.

THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE "HEARER ONLY"

V. 23 - "Hearer" = an attender at a lecture (ex. Acts 17; Paul at Mars HIll - Greeks wanted only to hear new things).

Applic. : Going to church is not to see and hear a performance. It is to equip you to serve. You are the performers!

"A man beholding" = Gk. word for male in contrast to female. Women are more sensitive by nature. See flaws more easily. (spend more time in front of the mirror)

The Bible is like a mirror. It reflects defects, needs, areas that need change.

A hearer just likes only his ears tickled. II Tim. 4:3

Why are some people content to hear the Word and not do it?

1. They are self-deceived (v. 22). Illus. of intellectuals who lack common sense (not practical). They are deceived into thinking that knowing equals righteousness.

This is not true! Ex. The devils believe (know about God) and tremble (Ja. 2:19).

It's your actions that will one day be judged (these are undeniable).

2. They are careless.

--They take too quick a look (v. 24)
--They look without any intention of changing

Or he may:
--look with someone else in mind
--look with good intentions but never get around to doing them.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE "DOER" (v. 25 - 27)

l. He is conscientious (v. 25)

a. He is a serious reader.

"Looketh into" = to bend over and look intently. To stoop down to see exactly. To examine it minutely. (ex. Bereans).

"Looketh" - the word was used in secular Greek when referring to those who were bent over looking out their windows at someone else's party.

Ex. Jn. 20:5,11 - Disciples bent over and looked intently into the empty tomb.

b. He is a steady reader.

"Continueth" = remain, stay

c. He is a submissive reader.

"Doer" - He puts it into practice.

The way to prevent forgetfulness is by practicing what you know. We remember very little of what we read, a little more of what we hear, a little more of what we see . . . most of what we practice.

Blessing is only in doing!

(the reward comes only to the doer)

Ex. of learning to ride a bike, drive a car, play trumpet, play a sport, etc. -- You can read all the books you want; you don't gain the blessing of learning how until you do it!