

Better Connected – Matthew 7:24–27 & James 1:22–25

INTRO

We live in a world of endless content. Podcasts. Sermons. Reels. Book summaries. Bible apps. And yet Jesus says that growth isn't about how much we hear—it's about whether we do what we've heard. James says the same thing: listening without action leads to self-deception.

This week, we'll dive into two powerful and sobering passages that challenge us to move from information to application, and we'll explore how community helps us build lives that change the world.

SCRIPTURE – Have someone read Matthew 7:24–27 (NLT)

"Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock..."

Discussion Questions – Matthew 7

- What stands out to you in the parable of the wise and foolish builders?
- According to the commentary, both houses appear strong—until the storm hits. What kinds of "storms" (relational, emotional, spiritual, financial) tend to reveal your true foundation?
- Jesus ends the Sermon with a call to radical obedience. Why do you think Jesus insists on doing, not just believing or admiring?
- Why do you think some people enjoy Jesus "in small doses"? What are the risks of living that way?
- In what ways can this group help each other build a foundation strong enough to withstand anything?
- Prompt: How do you see the value of group reflected in this parable? Why are circles (small groups) such a vital part of living out Jesus' teaching?

SCRIPTURE – Have someone read James 1:22–25 (NLT)

"But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves..."

Discussion Questions – James 1

- James compares someone who hears but doesn't do to a person who looks in the mirror and forgets what they saw. What makes that image both humorous and convicting?
- According to the commentary, James is not criticizing casual listeners—he's confronting those who listen attentively but never act. Why is that distinction important?

- Verse 25 describes the person who looks intently, continues, remembers, and acts. Which of those steps is most difficult for you—and why?
- James calls this truth “the perfect law of liberty.” How is obeying God actually a pathway to freedom, not restriction? (See Galatians 5:22–23 if helpful.)
- Deep Thought: “Theoretical knowledge of spiritual truth is never commended in Scripture. In fact, it is discouraged and condemned.” – Burdick
- Why is it so easy in our culture to confuse exposure with transformation? How does group life help close that gap?

WHAT GROUP IS (AND ISN'T)

- Group isn't a class, a therapy session, or a social club
- It's where:
- You make genuine friends
- You learn how to love God and people better
- You grow in faith
- You learn about steak sales 😊
- You figure out if you're the crazy one (AIO!)
- Prompt: Which of these has been true for you in group so far? What's something new you want to experience in group this season?

OUTRO

We don't drift into obedience. We choose it—together. The goal isn't to be perfect. The goal is to take the next faithful step. This week, let's commit to not just hearing but doing... and let's help each other build lives that can weather every storm.

- Next Steps:
- What's one thing you feel prompted to do based on these scriptures?
- Is there someone in your life who needs to hear this truth? How can you encourage or walk with them?
- How can this group help you follow through?
- Let's not just believe what Jesus said. Let's do something with it.