

Walking the Walk

By Christine Anderson

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

James 1:22

As I was studying this passage, I came across this amazing illustration by Chuck Swindoll from his book *Improving Your Serve*:

Let's pretend that you work for me. In fact, you are my executive assistant in a company that is growing rapidly. I'm the owner and I'm interested in expanding overseas. To pull this off, I make plans to travel abroad and stay there until the new branch office gets established. I make all the arrangements to take my family in the move to Europe for six to eight months, and I leave you in charge of the busy stateside organization. I tell you that I will write you regularly and give you direction and instruction.

I leave and you stay. Months pass. A flow of letters are mailed from Europe and received by you at the national headquarters. I spell out all my expectations. Finally, I return. Soon after my arrival I drive down to the office. I am stunned! Grass and weeds have grown up high. A few windows along the street are broken. I walk into the receptionist's room and she is doing her nails, chewing gum, and listening to her favorite disco station. I look around and notice the waste baskets are overflowing, the carpet hasn't been vacuumed for weeks, and nobody seems concerned that the owner has returned. I ask about your whereabouts and someone in the crowded lounge area points down the hall and yells, "I think he's down there." Disturbed, I move in that direction and bump into you as you are finishing a chess game with our sales manager. I ask you to step into my office (which has been temporarily turned into a television room for watching afternoon soap operas).

"What in the world is going on, man?"

"What do ya' mean...?"

"Well, look at this place! Didn't you get any of my letters?"

"Letters? Oh, yeah – sure, got every one of them. As a matter of fact...we have had letter study every Friday night since you left. We have even divided all the personnel into small groups and discussed many of the things you wrote. Some of those things were really interesting. You'll be pleased to know that a few of us have actually committed to memory some of your sentences and paragraphs. One or two memorized an entire letter or two! Great stuff in those letters!"

"Okay, okay – you got my letters, you studied them and meditated on them, discussed and even memorized them. BUT WHAT DID YOU DO ABOUT THEM?"

"Do? Uh – we didn't do anything about them."¹

[From: Charles R. Swindoll, *Improving Your Serve* (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), pp. 170,171.]

According to James, if we read God's word, but don't put it into practice we are deceived. I don't know about you, but that thought turns my stomach. We are so good at talking the talk, but how good are we at walking the walk? Isn't this one of the main reasons people don't like Christians - because they think we are hypocrites?

We have no excuse – we live in a country that allows us to attend church and meet with other believers. We can own as many Bibles as we can afford to buy. We have access to books, magazines, radio programs and websites all dedicated to helping us live out our faith. We spend time attending Bible studies and weekend retreats. We KNOW what we are supposed to be doing, but are we doing it?

How do you think the world would respond if Christians actually followed Christ's teachings? What if we spent more money taking care of the poor than on our own entertainment? What if we learned to be content with what we have instead of chasing after the pleasures of this world? What if we offered forgiveness and mercy to people who don't deserve it? What if we stopped judging everyone and everything and instead started to love others as Christ loved us? Do you think they would still be able to call us hypocrites?

We are God's representatives on this earth....how are we doing?

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