

# This is the Hard Part

We have more ways to hear God's Word than any generation before us. Me? I have three Bible apps, several audio bibles, and e-bibles on my phone. That phone also sends me a chime and a verse every morning at 6:00. I have a great church family with access to daily resources, great Sunday worship and a Sunday School class.

Hearing the word?

No problem.

I can nail that every day and twice on Sunday. But then James reminds me, "But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." I shudder a bit when I read James 1:22. Being a voracious hearer of the word but not a doer of the word is utter craziness, but I'm so good at the "hearing of the word" part! It's my jam. But doing the word trips me up every day. Now that I'm in my 60's, you'd think I would have arrived. I haven't. The difficulty is in the doing.

## What is Easy?

It's so much easier to label than to love.

It's so much easier to be entertained than to be involved.

It's so much easier to hoard than give.

It's so much easier to fear than to have faith.

It's so much easier to win the internet with half truths, mocking memes, and snarky comments than it is to step into the middle of another real person's trauma and offer grace through our acts of Christian charity and mercy. We often build walls to keep us away from the people He called us to love and reach.

## What is Difficult?

Our words are deadly serious: *“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”* (Jesus Christ, Matthew 12:36)

This is a difficult saying that I have to remember every. single. day.

Because we don't have much time, it's important that we become acutely aware of our spiritual illnesses and give them up quickly. We should be throwing off the chains of dead religion with hilarity and abandon so that we can enter into the narrow, eye-of-the-needle Gospel.

## What is Impossible?

Like the flabbergasted disciples said after another of Jesus' revolutionary challenges, “Then how can anyone be saved?” I completely relate to their astonishment. But how amazing would it be if we all were a different kind of crazy! For instance, when Jesus said, “love your enemies,” what if we actually loved everybody—even our enemies, to the extent that our enemies would actually look at us and say, “Wow, those crazy people love me!” What if we listened to people like Jesus listened to them instead of feeling like we had to win debates and put people in our own neat little categories? Our magnificent obsession would be to see how much time, money and encouragement we could give away. We would be more compelled to “go” than we'd be to “stay.” We'd seek to serve more than to be entertained. Our heroes wouldn't be found in the Marvel universe, but missionaries in mud huts and rice fields half a world away. We'd have the audacity to believe that all things are possible. And when we have that kind of faith, they absolutely are.

# What about you?

Do you long to see your ideological villains embarrassed and humiliated? Do you enjoy the rhetorical violence of politics? Do you love it when you get the applause or become the preferred? Do you relish the time you spend on the pews of your amen corners? Are you constantly designing your argument or apologetic strategy before listening, *really listening* to people?

If you read the Word and stop there, you are safe, at least for a few years. If you obey the Word, you are a revolutionary. Every revolution begins in the soul. Revolutions are dangerous, unpopular, and messy but in 10,000 years from now, you will have no regrets.