

# Great News Radio & WLUJ Family of Stations

*A Ministry of Great News Media*

---

## Do Not Merely Listen - Do What It Says

Friday, July 3, 2026

Pastor Rick Mulkins, Judge Chris Donnelly, and a Room of Friends

James 1:22-27

Welcome to the Mark & Friends Program Resources page. Here you'll find today's broadcast, a printable transcript, Scripture references, key takeaways, memorable quotes, and additional resources to help you grow in your walk with Jesus.

Choose how you'd like to enjoy today's program: listen, read the transcript, download a printable copy, and share today's message with a friend.

### Program Summary

On this Friday edition of Mark & Friends, Mark Burns is joined by Pastor Rick Mulkins, retired Judge Chris Donnelly, Deanne, and a room of friends for a continued study through James chapter 1.

The conversation centers on James' call to be doers of the Word, not merely hearers. The group discusses how God's Word acts like a mirror, revealing what needs to change in us and calling us to live out what we have heard.

The broadcast also emphasizes the difference between religion and relationship, the freedom found in God's perfect law, the need to guard our speech, and the practical call to care for widows, orphans, and those in need.

### Key Takeaways

- God's Word is not meant merely to be heard; it is meant to be lived.
- The Bible acts like a mirror, showing us where our lives need to better reflect Christ.
- Healthy conviction draws us toward God, while condemnation tries to pull us away from Him.
- God's commands are not burdensome; they are guardrails meant to protect and bless us.
- True faith is expressed through action, including care for widows, orphans, and those carrying burdens.
- Following Jesus is not simply about religion; it is about a personal relationship with Him.

### Scripture References

- **James 1:22-25** - Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.
- **James 1:26-27** - True religion includes guarding the tongue, caring for widows and orphans, and remaining unstained by the world.
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** - Salvation is by God's grace through faith, not by works.
- **John 8:36** - If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
- **John 10:10** - Jesus gives abundant life, while the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy.
- **John 13:34-35** - Jesus commands His followers to love one another as He has loved them.
- **Psalms 34:3** - Magnify the Lord together and exalt His name.

### Quote of the Day

*"It's not a religion. It's a relationship."*

## Scripture Callout

### James 1:22

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

## Broadcast Notes

- This program continues the Friday study through the book of James and focuses on the final verses of chapter 1.
- The discussion compares hearing God's Word to looking in a mirror: the goal is not simply awareness, but transformation.
- The group emphasizes that freedom is not found by rejecting God's law, but by walking within the loving guardrails God provides.
- The conversation moves from personal conviction to practical service, especially caring for widows, orphans, and those in need.
- The program closes with a clear Gospel invitation, reminding the listening friend that Christianity is about a relationship with Jesus.

## Practical Applications

- Choose one truth from today's broadcast and intentionally put it into practice.
- Before speaking today, ask whether your words will honor Christ and encourage someone else.
- Look for one practical way to serve a widow, an elderly neighbor, or someone carrying a burden.
- Spend time in James 1 and ask God to show where you are hearing His Word but not yet doing it.
- Reach out to someone who may need encouragement and offer a simple act of kindness.

## Today's Challenge

Ask God to show you one area where you have been hearing His Word but not fully obeying it. Then take one clear step today to do what He says.

## Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Word, which reveals truth, brings freedom, and points us to Jesus. Help us not merely listen, but obey. Guard our words, soften our hearts, and show us practical ways to love and serve others in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Complete Transcript

07 03 2026

We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here. Fellowship is sweeter,

Knowing you're here. It's so good to see you. We hope that it's fair.

Everyone loves you. We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here.

We're glad you're here. Fellowship is sweeter, Reading from the book of James, chapter 1, verses 22 through 25.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word, but does not do what it says, is like a man who looks at his face in the mirror, and after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does. That's James, chapter 1, verses 22 through 25. And that was the voice of Tad Jagitsch on today, the Friday edition of Mark and Friends.

Oh, magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together. It is Friday, finally Friday, July 3rd, 2026.

Wow, the 4th of July tomorrow. 250 years. 250 years.

And maybe earlier this week you enjoyed that conversation with Pastor Robert J. Morgan on his book, A Hundred Bible Verses That Made America. It was a fascinating testimony and sharing time, and all pointing towards the ways so many of our founding fathers knew Christ and followed the Bible, and looked at the Judeo-Christian framework, and helped write our Constitution, our Bill of Rights, and so much of our history is around some of their Christian beliefs and values, and the fact that we are created equal in God, and that God desires all of us to have a relationship with Him. So I hope that as you join us today for the Friday edition of Mark and Friends, we'll continue with our study through the book of James.

Last week, we got through about one and a half verses, almost two full verses, talking about being quick to listen, and slow to speak, and slow to become angry. Well, this week, how about just the beginning? Do not merely listen to the Word and so deceive yourself, do what it says. Well, Pastor Rick Mulkins is again joining us with the First Lady, Deanne.

We appreciate her ministry here in Springfield, at the First Baptist Church in Springfield, and their commitment to teaching God's Word, to modeling it to those that attend their church services, and when they're out and about in the community. As Deanne mentioned last week, she loves to speak and share and praise the name of Jesus, but she also learned to be a good listener, and God values that as we get to listen and understand and empathize with people. Well, she does that well, as most of the friends in this room do well, too.

And so they're joining us again. I think there's about 15 of us, some of us in an overflow room, and you'll see a photo posted at Great News Radio and also at WLUJ, and for that matter, at the Prime Life Times and also my Mark Burns Facebook page, so you'll see a good picture of some of those that are attending, as we join together on Fridays through this great book of James. So, Pastor Rick, do not merely listen to the Word.

Is that for all of us to take to heart? Absolutely. You know, when I was thinking while you were reading that verse, did Nike adopt that slogan? Because by definition, Nike means just do it. And I think that's what James is telling us.

Don't just be a hearer of the Word, but we must apply it to our life. I've always told our church, faith plus action is going to issue results in our life. And so if we want a change in our life, we've got to actually do what it says.

Again, that's what we're reading here. He says don't merely just listen to the Word, but do what it says. And by doing so, that's where the change comes in hand.

And we talked about that on a previous program. That's what Christ wants us to do is have a changed life. I'm thinking, and so deceive yourself.

So that kind of implies we can be deceived or we can be foolhardy or we can be kind of naive to the fact that, hey, practice what you preach. Well, unfortunately, but I've known people that they know the Word, but they don't really apply it to their life. And I mean, they can sit down and dialogue with you and share all these scriptures, but there's no application in their life.

And so they're deceiving themselves. And that's the bottom line. That's the unfortunate thing.

That's not what God wants us to do. Well, I also see a progression in this. Last week we talked about the listening, but this is saying just listening now isn't enough because a lot of times our first impulse is to just run our mouths.

And this is going, okay, shut up and listen. Now learn something when you listen. Now do what you learned.

Yeah, that's true. That's good. And then, yeah, verse 23.

Anyone who listens to the Word but does not do what it says is like a man. And this is for ladies too, not just us men. Don't say, see, husband, I'm right about that.

Look at that. Do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in the mirror and after looking at himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. This whole book of James, we've talked about this, Pastor Rick.

It's kind of like the Proverbs. I think Deanna talked about it. It's like the New Testament Proverbs that there's just nuggets in all these words in these various verses.

The Word of God is like the mirror. And when we look into the Word of God, that is where we get the conviction, by reading the Word of God. And you're not lining up with the Scriptures.

And that's why it's saying mirror, look into the mirror. What are you looking at? And so our identity must be in Christ. And we should have the application.

We should live what we read in the Bible. Our lifestyle should be like the Bible, like the Word of God. That's what I see.

I see people and they do more religion. It's a religion that they follow, not application to their own lives. And if you look at the definition of religion, it means basically what can God do for me.

And really Christianity is what God already done for us. He paid the price in full. It's not about, like you were saying, Deanna, it's not about a religion.

It's about Christianity. It's about what Christ had done. That's awesome.

I know, Chris, earlier this week we had you on Testimony Tuesday and you talked about some of that relationship with Christ. But what was the big difference maker to put it into action? You were in your 30s. You were a judge at the time.

But when did it become much more practical to really follow the ways, to follow the truth? Well, all of us are being sanctified. We get it. We get rid of some sin patterns through the power of the Holy Spirit.

That's fantastic. But now the next struggle becomes the next struggle. So early on I could see my life was not what it should have been.

Particularly I've got to point out my family life. My wife and I were hanging by a thread. And my oldest son was 15 and he was rebelling.

And within six months one of us would have killed the other one. And my money was on me. I think I'd have killed him.

But that changed pretty quickly. And that's how the Lord encouraged me. You mentioned about God changes us if we do what he says.

I noticed the change came, thankfully, pretty quickly. And so because it did, it encouraged me. It's like, wow, I'm on to something.

It's like, yeah, God, you're on to something and bringing me. But the idea of leading me to keep doing this now, keep doing this. And so that's what really got my attention was when I started living how God wanted me to.

Just started to walk the path. Not go real deep into it, but change happened pretty darn quick. Amen, that's good.

Hey, Rick, I'm going to throw this out with you being our pastor here. When it says do what it says, there are a lot of people tuned in today that are following the rules and doing the right things. But that's not what gets them into heaven.

Not following the rules or doing things. No, not at all. It's that recognition of what Christ did for us.

But do we respond by doing the right things because we love him? Is that really the motivation behind following? Yeah, absolutely. The Bible goes on to say, also in the New Testament, that God's commandments are not burdensome. And unfortunately, there's people that they try to live a good moral life.

But the Bible says in Ephesians 2, 9, it's not about that. It's about God's grace. And it's Jesus Christ that we're able to have eternal life.

Again, people sometimes they think because they're doing things that are right, it's what it's supposed to be. But of course, it's not good enough. It's all about Jesus.

So again, when we look at the text, we see that if we're going to live a life that's pleasing to the Lord, we must do what the word of God tells us to do. You know, that makes me think when we see this where it says you look into the perfect law. This is advice to believers.

Unbelievers are not going to be looking in the law going, how can I live? They're going to be like, I'm going to do whatever I want. This is for people going, okay, God's got the answers. Now, how can I find them? Yeah, that's why I think they have made a great point.

We're looking into the mirror. When we look in Scripture, we're looking in a mirror. And we see ourselves.

And that's why we'll never put this book down because I need to learn more about me because I need to learn more about God and become more like him. And the more I look into the mirror, I see, oh, there's that imperfection that needs to be changed. And that's why being in God's word all the time is so helpful.

And it's encouraging. We are conforming to Christ in his ways. Yes, it takes time, but we should always be conforming.

You know, I don't think that we'll ever reach that goal here in this lifetime. But God still wants us to continue. You know, when he shows us things, we're to repent of it.

But that's our best life. You know, when we're conforming, it's like, oh, look what I've done. No, you haven't done anything other than doing the smart thing, doing the thing that's best for you.

Gosh, what a concept, right? I like this part, and I underlined it in my Bible, immediately forgets. I can't even tell you the hundreds, maybe thousands of times I've heard a great Sunday message. There was healthy Holy Spirit conviction.

And healthy conviction always draws you to God. Condemnation from the evil one takes you away from God. So I love healthy conviction when something's pointed out.

But I can't tell you how many times there was healthy conviction. Oh, yes, I get this truth. And how immediately I almost forgot it.

And so that's kind of one of those struggles where we just have to keep persevering that sanctification. It's a process, and it may take years. But, listening friend, when you have healthy conviction, you know, maybe write it down or think about it.

It is so easy to forget or get consumed and be distracted by other things. Chris, I find it really interesting here, and I think you could almost apply this to your profession, you know, is when they look intently into the perfect law, it gives them freedom. I don't know if you could expound a little bit more on that.

Well, you have to go out of your way to find trouble. I was confronted many times with people who get DUIs. And I asked them, like, what happened that night? Oh, it was an accident.

You know, I made a mistake. I said, no, you didn't make a mistake. I said, you set out to drink.

You drove your car to the bar. You had what you knew were too many. And then you thought, I'm okay, and I'll drive home.

So you accomplished exactly what you set out to do, to drink and drive. You've heard this countless times. Don't drink and drive.

You've heard this a million times. But yet, you decided you're the exception. And that's what we do.

Well, I'm the exception, God. I know what your rule says, but I think I'm the exception under my circumstances and in my unique place. I think I'm an exception, God, to your rules.

Really? You stop looking in the mirror, and you start looking elsewhere. Yes. And a lot of times people, they think, well, God knows my situation.

And they think he's going to give them a pass card because of that or a grace card. But no, I mean, God's word is a word that convicts us. And conviction is permission to repent.

And so when we're convicted, that's our opportunity to make a change. And the Scripture says, when the Son sets you free, you're free indeed. And that's what people have to realize, you know, that when we are living a life of sin, we're not living in freedom.

We're living in bondage. And so that's the things that we need to recognize. And I underline two more words, but the man who looks intently.

So there's intentionality. There's perseverance. You're digging.

You're finding those nuggets. You're searching for them into the perfect law. Some might say, law is unfair.

Law is no good. Or law is troublesome or whatever. Well, there's the perfect law that God gives, and that does give freedom.

It's the boundaries. Don't they always say about parents that good boundaries help the children feel loved, even though you would think, but it's preventing them from going beyond a certain border or whatever. No, they're meant to show love.

Well, think of it this way. It's like, does anyone resent guardrails on the road on a mountain? No. No, they're great things.

They're trying to keep you safe. I mean, that's what the perfect law is. God's, like, trying to keep us safe from the evil one.

He's trying to steal, kill, and destroy. No, guardrails. Stay in these guardrails, and you'll be just fine.

You can go anywhere you want. Just stay in the guardrails. That's a very good analogy.

I like how this addresses the modern mindset of the law is oppressing me. I'm not free to go do whatever I want. Try and live without the law.

Good luck with that one. Yeah, that's true. Yeah, when my kids were learning how to drive, it's like, okay, you stay on the right-hand side of that line.

You don't go out there and go, well, I can go wherever I want. I'll be fine. You're not going to get two blocks.

And then you may come home in a bag. Yeah, that's true. We will have young people coming to the Lord, and then we'll tell them, you know, you need to be in fellowship with other believers, you know, and you need to be growing and reading the Word.

But there are people that we can't minister to because what they do is they go their own way. And when they go their own way, it'll be a month or two, and they'll be out back in the world. And that's exactly what happens.

And they don't realize that if they would stay on the right path that leads to life, then they would have life and have it more abundantly. Well, this even says that. You will be blessed in what you do if you do it.

So somebody should look at this and go, you know what? My life kind of stinks. I would like to get blessed. How can I get that? Well, work backwards in this.

That's true. And actually, by definition, the word blessed means happy. You want to be happy? Yeah.

It's Jesus Christ. He's living a life that's pleasing to Him. That fullness.

That fullness. Hey, let's see. A few more verses.

We can finish out chapter one. I know we've been in this chapter for some months now. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue.

Oh, conviction. Yes. He deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

Yes. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. We all know about the widows and orphans, but this part, and keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Yeah. Yeah. That's what I was just talking about, you know, because they think that they can stay in the world and then be in the church also and walk with Jesus and the world and you can't do it.

It doesn't go together. You know, they have to leave the things of the world. They do.

They do. And like Chris mentioned earlier, if you look at Satan, it's found in the book of John. His mission statement is what Chris said, Satan come to kill, steal, destroy.

We have a mission also. It's not to kill, steal, or destroy, but it's give people the opportunity to have the abundant life by turning to Jesus Christ. So as we walk down the streets or wherever we may go, we have the opportunity to change a person's life because all we got to do is share what God's done in our life.

And by doing so, it's not about just being religious. It's about keeping ourselves pure. So we're untainted from the things of the world.

And that's very, very important. If you want to really be a Christian that's on fire for God, there are certain things we do, but there are certain things you do not do. So it's very powerful.

And one of the things to do is to keep a tight rein on his tongue. Absolutely. Usually I can talk to someone who professes to be a Christian, within about 60 seconds I can pretty much tell if they are or they are not because they start using vocabulary that goes south, you know.

But again, I mean, that's something we need not do. We need to make sure that we're speaking sound speech and things that edify, not destroy. Yeah, I mean, there isn't anything, a terrible witness, a terrible witness.

You know, one moment you're talking about Jesus and the next moment you're cussing out the guy next to you. You know, I mean, that's... Is that wrong? Exactly. Yeah, that's wrong.

Or some of you have maybe heard or known of a friend where, really? He or she's a Christian? Oh, I know. I would have never thought that. Wow, that's kind of bad.

That's bad. That's a bad witness. Yeah, anyone who considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

Worthless. That is a strong statement. It really is.

But close out on this verse 27 because it's a great one and I think it's a calling for all of us as you're being equipped today to share that good news message of Jesus wherever you go, as you go, whether it's to work or your hobby or interacting with neighbors or friends, religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. Amen. And that's powerful because that's acts of service.

What God wants us to do is be zealous about people. If we look at the Bible in totality, there's 613 commandments in God's Word. It's reduced to 10.

We find that in the book of Exodus chapter 20, Deuteronomy chapter 5. But really, it goes on further. It's reduced to two. Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength.

Love your neighbors as you love yourself. And that's what we're supposed to do. We're talking about the widows and the orphans.

We're supposed to go about loving God's people. Jesus says, you all know, John 13:34-35. He says to his followers, a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another even as I have loved you.

So that's a lot of weight right there is to go and love God's people. And that's kind of carried out in this one. It says you go look after the orphans and the widows.

Yeah. You're not looking in the mirror studying yourself all the time. That's true.

You're going to go do something for somebody else. Do something. And you know, in your church, if they don't have a program for widows, there's a couple things that I would kind of recommend to do.

You know what? Those widows, you can check on them. You yourself, you can check on them. You can send cash to them.

Take a box of food or something else just to them to bless them. And I mean, we don't have to have a program in the church to do that. I think it's all of our responsibility to take care of orphans.

Because we're the extension of Jesus. Right. We're his hands, his feet, his eyes.

We're all that. So we go and do exactly what God has commissioned us to do. Go and do it.

And don't let it be a burden to you. Just do it. Do it.

And Deanne, I agree so much. And it can be something as simple as rake their leaves. Yes.

Wash their windows. Absolutely. Sometimes for elderly people, you climb up into their attic and bring down their Christmas decorations.

Or whatever. It can be simple tasks. Yeah.

Or just a word of encouragement or stopping by is lugging things into the house or into the garage or cleaning up things. Listening friend, there's so many different ways you can exhibit the love of Christ. And this word religion, I wanted to talk a little more about it, but we've got to close out.

But the benefit, the blessing that we have as followers of Jesus, it's not so much about religion. It's about a relationship. Yes.

That God loves us. That he cares for us. Absolutely.

And that he delights that we talk to him. That's what prayer is all about, communicating with God. We have a God that hears our prayers.

And we have a God that will speak to us. We can listen through his word, through circumstances, through seeing his creative handiwork. All of creation demonstrates his greatness and his goodness.

And so it's not a religion. It's a relationship. And God wants to talk to you.

And he wants to hear from you. So if that's a new concept, maybe you've never started that faith journey of following the Lord Jesus Christ, you can call an 800 number. There's great counselors.

It's a free call. They'll talk to you about the Christian faith, how you can trust the Bible, what it means to have a relationship with Jesus, how to know God in a personal way. You can call 1-888-NEED-HIM.

That's 1-888-NEED-HIM. Now, if you missed a portion of today's broadcast, want to hear it again, or maybe you're thinking of a friend that needs to hear these truths from the book of James, stop by [greatnewsradio.org](http://greatnewsradio.org). And [WLUJ.org](http://WLUJ.org). And you can listen anytime under the Mark and Friends tab. We'll continue next Friday on Chapter 2 of the book of James.

So we'll be in this maybe through the end of the year. I don't know. A long time.

Probably three or six years. We have four more chapters to go through. But it's a real blessing.

And I trust as God uses it in your life, you'll have testimonies to share with others. Well, thanks for listening. Thanks for being a part of our Radio Listening family.

This is Mark Burns, Pastor Rick Mulkins, in a room of friends with the Ministry of Great News Media. God bless you, and have a great day, night, and weekend. All God's people said, Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

## About Mark & Friends

Mark & Friends is a weekday broadcast featuring biblical teaching, interviews, testimonies, and encouraging conversations designed to help listeners grow in their walk with Jesus.

## About Great News Radio & WLUJ Family of Stations

Great News Radio & WLUJ Family of Stations is a ministry of Great News Media dedicated to educating, edifying, and evangelizing through Christ-centered broadcasting, biblical teaching, and encouraging conversations.

---

Did this program encourage you? Feel free to share it with a friend who might also benefit from today's message.

### **Great News Radio & WLUJ Family of Stations**

*A Ministry of Great News Media*

Educating - Edifying - Evangelizing