

Practice, practice, practice

By [Dennis Sanders](#)

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My first piano teacher, Mr. Jackson, was the best. I didn't like him.

He was a stern teacher, and in my 11-year-old mind, I thought he was just plain mean. At your lesson, Mr. Jackson expected that you had practiced the assigned piece beforehand. He could tell if you hadn't practiced enough, and he responded with cutting remarks that left you devastated.

He believed that if you were going to play piano, you were going to work for it. That meant practicing--daily. And it paid off. The two years I was with him, I think I played some of my best piano ever.

James tells his readers to not only hear the word, but also put it into action. He likens those who hear the word but don't take it to heart to someone who looks in the mirror and then forgets what they look like as they walk away. As for those who hear the word and take it to heart, they actually put it into practice in their daily lives.

This is what discipleship is all about: it's taking what we learn in the hearing of the word of God and putting it into practice. We don't do this to earn points to get on God's good side. We practice because of what God has done in Jesus, and because we want to be followers of Christ.

I got a new piano teacher a few years later. I loved that he wasn't as strict as Mr. Jackson. But he let me get away with not practicing much at all. I was never as good on the ivories as when I was with Mr. Jackson. Practice really does make perfect.