

Community Small Group Discussion Questions

Week #1- Fit Faith

James 1:1-8

Accountability

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you understand and apply the truth revealed through this study in the book of James.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. What is faith? Why do we go through trials and face temptations? How do we go through trials and face temptations?
2. Where does joy come from? Is joy always tied to the outcome? (Psalm 73:25.) Which common struggle in the Christian life most often threatens to steal and destroy your joy?
3. What does trusting God have to do with his character? And what is the correlation between his character and ours? Who does James say should not expect to receive anything from God? Why?
4. What does it mean to be mature or complete? (see Mat 5:48; Rom 12:2; Eph 4:13; Phil 3:15; 1 Thes 5:23.) Why would we want strive for maturity?
5. How is asking for wisdom tied to persevering under trials? Why does James say those in humble circumstances can be proud of their situation?
6. What does it mean to be double-minded? How does James pick up this subject in the rest of this letter? (Don't view this as an issue of evaluating the sincerity of your prayers. Based on the rest of this letter, double-mindedness has at least three applications: 1) Believe and don't doubt that God will answer when you pray – see Heb 11:6; 2) Believe that God is good and will give you good things – Heb 11:6; 3) Do not waiver about obeying God when he tells you what to do – see James 1:22-25.)
7. How do you usually respond to life's difficulties? How has your relationship with God changed as you have gone through trials? When was a time when God's wisdom helped you get through a problem?
8. How does believing that God created you and knows everything about you affect your willingness to obey Him (Read Psalm 139:16)?

What's the "Big Idea" from God's word that we need to make sure we wrestle with today? What will you do this week in response to it?

Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #2- Tested Faith

James 1:9-18

Accountability

- How has your faith been tested this past week? How did you respond? Share with your CSG?

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. What does James 1: 9-11 have to do with the theme of enduring trials? Do you believe God tests the faith of His people (Rom. 8:28; Heb. 12:5-6)?
2. How does James 1:10-11 affect your attitude toward your career and possessions?
3. How does James explain the true source of temptations? What is the difference between temptations, trials, and sin (1Cor. 10:13)? When temptation comes, why do people tend to blame others and excuse themselves instead of taking responsibility for their sin and their action?
4. What can you do to prevent yourself from falling into temptation?
5. Think of one particular area of your life where you are being tempted and led into sin. How can you stop excusing yourself? What can you do to prevent this from happening?
6. What do you believe God is trying to teach you this week through the trials and situations you are experiencing?
7. What are two things God never does, and two things that come only from God (James 1:12-18)? How can this knowledge help you resist temptation?
8. Read what Peter wrote to his fellow Christians in 1 Peter 4:12-19. Compare this passage with what James is sharing.
9. How do the following scripture verses give you hope and strength during the challenges of life? Romans 8:28; I Cor. 10:13; Gal 6:1; Hebrews 2:18, 4:15; Ephesians 6:11-13.
10. How would you respond to someone who no longer has an interest in following Christ due to a trial?
11. What reward awaits the person who perseveres under trial?

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #3- Git 'R Done Faith

James 1:19-27

Accountability

- How has God given you the strength to endure the challenges that have come your way this past week? How has Jesus set you free from sin and temptation?

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passage listed above)*

1. What are different ways, found in this scripture, we respond to the Truth found in God's word? What role should God's Word play in our pursuit of Christlikeness?
2. What instruction did James give about the relationship between speaking, listening, and anger?
3. How do displays of anger and temper affect the witness of a Christian? How does our speech reflect our relationship with God?
4. In what sense is God's Word planted in you? How does this implanting take place?
5. How do believers deceive themselves by just listening and not acting on God's message?
6. What might be the effects in the life of a person who reads the Bible week after week but never puts any of the truths into practice?
7. Why do you think so many professing Christians struggle to find time for God's word? Is it a problem of discipline or desire...or both?
8. What promise did James give to the person who studies God's Word and practices it?
9. What are some practical ways to protect yourself from the world's influence? What pressures does culture put on you to disobey or disregard God's word?
10. What does the bible say about obedience (Deut. 28:1-14; Isaiah 1:18-20; Acts 5:27-32; Romans 6:1-14; Titus 3:1-2)?
11. List some areas of your life where you've said you're willing to obey, but you're not actively obeying. How will you move forward in these areas?
12. What does it mean to be blessed in what you do?

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #4- Fair Faith

James 2:1-13

Accountability

- During this past week, how have you been putting God's Word into practice? Share with your CSG.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. What practical example did James use to illustrate how favoritism was practiced in the church? Do you see any of these examples in the church today?
2. Why is favoritism to the rich inconsistent with believing in Christ?
3. In what ways do adults continue to play favorites at home, at work or in Government
4. What has God promised to the poor of this world?
5. Why do you think God gives such a priority to the poor? Why doesn't God just simply bless them with more material things?
6. How does God's view of wealth compare with your view? In what specific areas do you need to align your thinking about wealth and poverty with God's?
7. Think of someone who God has brought into your life who is unattractive or seems to have little to offer you. Perhaps you have been guilty of ignoring this person in the past. Ask God to help you see this person more clearly from his or her perspective. List at least three specific actions that you can take to reach out to this person with God's love.
8. What will happen to those of us who have not shown mercy to the needy? (See James 2:13, Matthew 5:7, and Luke 6:38)
9. How does care for the poor in our community and around the world affect our gospel witness?
10. Read and discuss some other passages in the bible on favoritism (Mark 12:30-31; Deut. 10:14-19; Acts 10:34-43; Romans 2:6-11).

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #5- Walking Faith

James 2:14-26

Accountability

- How has your view of others who are different from you changed with our study last week? Have you asked God to help you identify your prejudices and recognize situations in which you might show favoritism?

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. What does James teach about the relationship between faith and deeds? How would you define biblical faith to an unbeliever?
2. What illustration did James use to explain how real faith affects a person's deeds?
3. How did James describe faith that has no accompanying deeds? How do some people rationalize inactive faith?
4. What would you say to a person who claimed to have faith in Christ but was living an unrepentant lifestyle of sin?
5. What might be some consequences for believers who are not clear on the relationship between faith and works?
6. In what ways are Abraham and Rahab different? In what ways are they similar?
7. Why do you think Abraham was called God's friend? What did Jesus mean when He called those who follow Him "My friends" (See John 15:14)
8. James offers Abraham and Rahab as two examples of genuine faith. What about their lives, which were polar opposites, encourages you in your faith? (See Genesis 22:12, James 2:21-23)
9. What do you consider the greatest example of faith you have ever seen? Why?
10. What were some of the victories enjoyed by faithful Old Testament believers? (See Heb. 11:32-34)
11. With what do you need to trust God even though you can't see what the future holds? How can you show this trust?

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #6- Talking Faith

James 3: 1-12

Accountability

- How has your faith showed up in actions this past week? Share with your CSG.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. Recall a time when you've hurt someone with your words. What was motivating you? Why is it so difficult for us at times to say the right thing instead of the wrong thing?
2. Why isn't the tongue problem solved when people become Christians? In what ways do you struggle with the tension between "the old man" and "the new man?"
3. James uses some practical examples to explain why controlling our tongues is a key to maturity. He also compares the tongue to a horse's bit and a ship's rudder. What do these images have in common?
4. How can a person be hurt by the words of others? What are some situations in your life when a person's words have caused you hurt? How did you respond?
5. What practical advice would you give someone who wanted to control his or her tongue better?
6. What are the ways we sin with our speech? How do James's instructions apply to social media?
7. What would you say to someone who professed faith in Christ but was either unwilling or seemingly unable to control his or her tongue?
8. What kind of damage does an uncontrolled tongue do to a family? To a marriage? , To children? , To a church?
9. What illustrations from nature did James use to condemn cursing?
10. What can a spring or a fruit tree teach us about speech?
11. What weaknesses in our lives does our speech often expose?
12. How can we submit our tongues to the control of God's Holy Spirit? What would be the result (Romans 10:14-17)?

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #7- Wise Faith

James 3:13-18

Accountability

- How have you submitted your tongue to God's Spirit this past week? Have you been actively seeking to encourage others through your words?

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. How does James say a person can demonstrate wisdom and understanding?
2. How can we tell when a person is wise?
3. Jesus encouraged people to come learn from Him because He was "gentle and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29). Paul declared his authority as an apostle and teacher after pleading "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:1). Why do you think humility or meekness is such an essential sign of wisdom?
4. How would you describe "worldly wisdom"? What are the qualities of the wisdom that comes from heaven (see Matt.5:9)? How does worldly wisdom differ from wisdom that comes from heaven?
5. What damage can bitter envy or selfish ambition do to a person? How do bitter envy and self-ambition affect a person's ministry?
6. All the good traits of James 3:17 spring from acquiring heavenly wisdom and ridding ourselves of devilish wisdom. How can you cultivate heavenly wisdom and its fruits this week?
7. In light of James 3:13-18, what do you think it means to be a peacemaker?
8. What are practical ways we can sow seeds of peace during our life?
9. According to verse 18, sowing in peace produces a harvest of righteousness. Why do you think peacemaking and righteousness are connected like this?
10. List some practical ways you can bring peace to a conflict?
11. Read the following scripture verses to discover more about what the bible says about wisdom and peace: Proverbs 2:6; 3:13; Philippians 4:4-7; Colossians 2:2-3; Rom 8:5-8; Psalm 29:11.

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #8- Humble Faith

James 4:1-12

Accountability

- How have you been taking the truth found in God's word and applying it to your life this past week? Has heavenly wisdom and its fruits shown up in your life this week? Share with your CSG.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. What does the Bible mean when it says a war is waging inside of us? What causes the fights and quarrels within you and in your relationships?
2. When we ask God for things, why does it seem we often don't get what we want? What are the wrong motives for prayer? What does James say is one reason why God may not grant a request?
3. What is the connection between our relationship with God and our relationship with people?
4. Why is it impossible to be a friend of the world and a friend of God at the same time?
5. From your own personal experience and your knowledge of the Word, what are some of the symptoms of friendship with the world?
6. How does pride show up in our work? Home? Church? Community?
7. Why does God oppose people who are proud?
8. What is the difference between pride and a sense of accomplishment?
9. What is involved in humbling yourself before God?
10. Have you ever wondered why at times you might not feel God near you? According to James 4:8, is this a failure on God's part or on our part? What should we do when God seems so far away?
11. How did James describe the way we should come to God?
12. What can you do this week to help you bring more humility into your life?
13. When we speak against a fellow believer, what attitude are we having toward God and His law? What do you think you should do if someone insults another in your presence?

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #9- Messed Up Faith

James 4:13-5:6

Accountability

- How have you brought more humility into your life this past week? How have your actions demonstrated that you are living in complete submission to God? Share with your CSG.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. How does James describe the lifestyle of the rich in this passage? What is the effect of their lifestyle on others? What is the effect of their lifestyle on themselves?
2. How can planning for the future be wise? How can it become sinful? What's the difference?
3. What attitude does God have toward hoarding wealth? How does greed blind us to spiritual realities? Where have you seen this show up in your own life?
4. How does the love of money and riches affect our relationship with God?
5. Why does James speak so strongly against self-indulgence? What kinds of self-indulgent activities are "in now"? Why is this inappropriate for believers?
6. Are you investing time and money in anything that is not really worth much from an eternal perspective? If so, what?
7. It has been said that one of Satan's strategies is to change the price tags while no one is looking so that people value the wrong things. In the light of this, what do people tend to pursue that has little eternal value?
8. Compare the descriptions of the rich in this passage with the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. How is this an encouragement to you?
9. How can you invest yourself even more in what will matter forever?
10. How content are you with your financial situation? How has this impacted your attitude?
11. What do you possess that money cannot buy? Take some time to read and apply other scripture on this topic (Proverbs 11:28, 23:4; Matt. 19:23-24; Luke 6:23-26; Acts 4:32-35; Heb. 13:5-6).

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #10- Confessing Faith

James 5:7-20

Accountability

- With what you learned last week with regards to having a generous faith, how have you applied this knowledge to your life this past week? Share with your CSG.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. Why should believers be motivated to patiently endure? How does God use others to build patience in our lives?
2. How does the illustration of a farmer show the importance of patience? Patience is not a quality we naturally possess. How can we acquire it? (See Galatians 5:22-23)
3. What do and don't we know about the time of Christ's return? (See Matthew 24:26-27, 36-30) Why should expecting the Lord's coming make you patient?
4. Describe Job's experience of perseverance (See Job 1:1-2:11, 29:1-30, 42:1-17). How is his example an encouragement for us?
5. What is the difference between patience and perseverance? Which is more difficult for you? Think of a time when you persevered in spite of difficult circumstances. What were the rewards/results of your perseverance?
6. Why does a God "full of tenderness and mercy" allow His people to experience suffering?
7. Why is prayer important? How does prayer make a difference in the lives of believers?
8. If Jesus is our only mediator and forgives our sins, why does James tell us to confess our sins to each other? What obstructs Christians from confessing sins and praying for each other?
9. What did James mean by saying that, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective"? How have you seen prayer bring changes in people or circumstances?
10. What is the point of James' illustration about Elijah? How is Elijah a good example of how God answers prayer?
11. What causes Christians to stumble and fall away from their faith? What is a Christian's responsibility toward a fellow believer who has wandered away from the truth?

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Prayer Request and Reports: