



Study Guide



Week 1 - Faith that Works

Introduction to the Book of James

- Read James 1:2-4 with your group.
 - Why is it important to “consider it joy” when we face trials?
 - How exactly do we find joy in the midst of trials?
- Read James 1:22
 - Why is James so concerned that we not only listen to the Word, but do what it says?
 - Are there areas in your life where it seems easy or natural to follow God? What might those be?
 - Are there areas in your life where it is difficult or feels unnatural to follow God?
 - What authorities in our lives compete for our allegiance?
 - Why is it so important that we bring ourselves under the authority of God’s Word?
- Orthodoxy means “right belief.” Why is it important that we have right belief?
- Orthopraxy means “right practice.” Why is it important that we allow the scriptures to inform our views of what is right and what is wrong?
- Orthokrisis means “right judgment” or “right discernment.” James is concerned that the people he is writing to learn to properly apply Godly, biblical wisdom to their circumstances. What are some specific areas in your life that would benefit from taking the time to apply Godly, biblical wisdom?
- What are most excited about for this series in James?
- Will you commit to reading the book of James all the way through this week, and continuing to read the text under specific study each week with us?

Week 2 - Enduring Faith

James 1:1-18

- Read James 1:1-18 with your group.
- Why is it important not to retreat in the midst of conflict? How can we prepare ourselves before the conflicts or trials come?
- How does what you value affect your attitudes and reactions to trials in life?
- Why can a dedicated Christian have joy in the midst of trials?
- How would you define patience? Why is patience important when we face trials in life?
- What is God's goal for us as Christians according to James?
- When faced with a trial, what should you pray for? How should you pray?

Week 3 - Tangible Faith

James 1:19-27

- Read James 1:19-27 with your group.
- What is the role of God for seeing spiritual reality?
- What are our responsibilities toward God's Word?
- Since external religious works can be manufactured , how can we know the difference between these and true good works?
- How can we prepare our hearts to receive God's Word?
- In what ways is God's Word a mirror?
- Why is God's Word so important to us in the midst of trials?
- Why is God's Word so important to us in the midst of temptation?
- What is "pure religion" in God's sight? Why is it important that we understand the nature of "pure religion"? What happens when we get it wrong?
- Christians often think being "unstained by the world" means to avoid the world or disengage from it. What does it actually mean to be "unstained by the world?"

Week 4 - Authentic Faith

James 2:1-13

- Read James 2:1-13 with your group.
- What is it about certain people that makes it difficult for you to associate with them?
- What are some issues that divide some people but are not a problem for you?
- How does James 2 compare to 1 John 4:20?
- What does it mean to look at people through the eyes of Christ?
- On what basis do we tend to judge people? How does Jesus see people?
- How is God's grace manifest to us in the way he relates to people? How can we imitate this?
- What aspects of our behavior toward other people will God judge? By what criteria will God judge?
- How does showing mercy to others affect God's judgment of us? Who are we called to show mercy to?

WEEK 5 - LIVING FAITH

A workless faith is a worthless faith! James encourages us to examine our faith in Christ not by what we say we believe but rather by what we do! Our faith should be more than mere declarations of belief. Our faith should be something that is living vibrant and active that displays our love for Jesus and our love for others.

Study James 2:14-20

What stands out to you in these verses? Is there anything here that James speaks to that you personally find challenging?

How do we balance salvation being granted because of God's grace offered to us through faith in Christ with what James is communicating regarding our faith being shown in and through what we do?

Reference the following verses to help shape your discussion;

- Matthew 6:15-20
- John 15:1-8
- Ephesians 2:10

Read James 2:21-26

Here we see two different example of faith in action through the stories of Abraham and Rahab. How do we see faith in action in these accounts? What motivates their decisions?

Reference

- Joshua 2:9-14 (Rehabs response to the spy's in her home)

We discussed three reactions of hearing these words of James and examining our faith in light of them. Which of these reactions do you resonate with the most? What actions or steps do you feel you could take to more fully live out your faith?

1. Soft Conscience

The person of soft conscience is likely to respond by cataloging and dwelling on past mistakes or sins in their lives while overlooking the good that is accomplished in their life through their faith in Christ. A healthy response is to recognize the good your faith is achieving, and not be defined by your mistakes but by your life giving relationship with Jesus.

2. Strong Confidence

The person of strong confidence is likely to respond by quickly recognizing the genuine good works they have done recently and moving on without considering what areas of their life might be in need of serious examination and development. A healthy response would be to seriously evaluate the areas of your life that might need some work and invite God to lead you in the identification and development of these areas, while also being aware of the fruit your faith is producing.

3. Seriously Questioning Genuine Faith

Hearing James' words here can definitely bring a person to the realization that their faith may not indeed be genuine real saving faith in Christ. A healthy response here is to honestly, sincerely, and frequently pray. In Psalm 139 we see David offer such a pray to God!

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!

And see if there be any grievous way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting!

Take some time this week to meditate and pray through the whole of Psalm 139. It would be beneficial for all of us regardless of our response.

Pray as a group. Please feel free to use the prayer below

Father we give you permission to have your Holy Spirit search our hearts and shine the light of your Son into the darkness you find there. Our desire is to have; real, genuine, vital, life giving, love giving faith in you. We ask that our hearts and minds be shaped by the love you have for us and that our actions and deed would proclaim that love to the people around us. Amen!

Week 6 - Discerning Faith

James 3:13-18

1. In what three aspects does James contrast true wisdom and false wisdom?
2. What are some biblical examples of the folly of man's wisdom?
3. What is the difference between the world's knowledge and the world's wisdom?
4. How can you tell when God's wisdom is at work?
5. In James 3:13-18, what are the evidences of false wisdom? What are the evidences of true wisdom?
6. What of the evidences of worldly wisdom would you like to see less of in your life?

7. Which of the evidences of wisdom from above would you like to see more of in your life?
8. What results does worldly wisdom produce? What does godly wisdom produce?
9. What is the most important way to measure which wisdom is prevailing in ourselves, our ministries, and our churches?
10. In what way is the Christian life a life of sowing and reaping?

Week 9: Generous Faith

Read James 5:1-6

- 1) Do you see yourself in any of the worldly miss applications of wealth James mentions in these passages
 - a. James 5:2-3: The hoarding wealth
 - b. James 5:4: The unjust / illegal / immoral gaining of wealth
 - c. James 5:5: Living and opulent or lavish life
- 2) How should a follower of Christ approach wealth and finances? What is benefit to having this mind set?
- 3) Are there ways in which you seek the accumulation of possessions for yourself rather than use things for others? If yes what opportunities do you see for you to change your attitudes or actions regarding your riches.
- 4) Take a moment to survey the relationships in your life. Is there any division present between yourself and a follow believer or between yourself and friend or colleague who has yet to place their faith in

Christ? How can patients be a tool for you personally as you seek to unite that relationship?