

FaithWorks :: The Book of James

growing in gospel community, for the community

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**Questions are taken from 'James: The Gospel in Action' by Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York.*

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Study One

Read :: James 1:1-4

As a servant of Jesus, we can look to Him in the midst of trials (tests) and find comfort that He endured with joy and passed the greatest test on the cross in our place. God used the greatest trial of all to bring about redemption and bring life for us. Knowing that, we can trust Him in the midst of our trials and allow him to bring about redemption and life in us through them.

'Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with confidence the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.' (Hebrews 12:1-2)

1. James identifies himself as first and foremost “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.”
What attitudes and behaviors characterize a servant?

2. What fears and concerns arise in your heart when you consider God’s call to be a servant?

3. How does knowing that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are your masters affect such fears and concerns? In what particular situations do you need to let God melt your fears of being a servant?

4. The hedonist avoids trouble at all costs and the masochist enjoys suffering, but the Christian expects troubles and has a deep joy even in the face of them. According to this passage, why is this so?

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5. Why is it important to distinguish between “rejoicing in suffering” and “rejoicing for suffering”?

6. Consider this definition : “A trial is anything presented to us in life that on the one hand may cause us to disobey or disbelieve God or, on the other, may confirm us in obedience and belief and strengthen our character.” What insight does that definition give you as to what is going on when you face trials?

7. What trial have you faced that confirmed the truth that we can “count it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds”?

8. What trial are you facing now where you need strength to persevere to the end? Take time to pray for one another in these areas.

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Two

Read :: James 1:5-8

Life will be a continual experience of circumstances that will take wisdom and discernment to navigate. Our hope is in Jesus--the one who is wisdom and perfectly embodied wisdom for us in living the life we all should live. God gave Jesus' life for us, so as we trust in the life He lived in our place, we can look to Him, go to Him and trust Him to give us the wisdom to live for Him. There is no need to doubt Him as He is a good God who generously gave His Son and will generously give us what we need to follow Him.

'And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.' (1 Corinthians 1:30-31)

1. How is James's exhortation in these verses connected to the immediately preceding verses?
2. Why is prayer so important when facing troubles and trials? What role does prayer usually play in your life during difficult times?
3. What is "wisdom"? How does it differ from knowledge?
4. How does one get wisdom—and how do you know when you've got it? Can you recount an experience when God gave you wisdom in the midst of troubles? How did it come to you?

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5. What does verse 5 tell us about the character of God? How does it correct our tendency to see God as hard, austere, and difficult to please? How have you seen God display his generosity in his relationship to you?

6. What is the nature and character of the doubt James addresses in verses 6-8? How is this doubt different from legitimate doubt? What is the double-minded person doubting about God that makes the doubt particularly sinister?

7. What have you found to be effective ways to deal with double-mindedness in your life?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Three

Read :: James 1:9-11

Jesus knows and experienced both the riches of heaven as King and the poverty of having nothing in His death for us. In the midst of having everything and nothing (and everything in between) His identity and trust were in God alone. Jesus's love and sacrifice for us allows us to keep our identity (who we are) in Him---not in what we have or don't have, in our position or title, in who we know or don't know, in making a name for ourselves or our name being discredited. We can confess (boast) in the name of Jesus and serve others (no matter their background) because of who we are in Him.

'So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' (Philippians 2:1-11)

1. Do you sense any connection between this passage and the preceding verses? If so, what is that connection?
2. Why would a person in "humble circumstances" be in a "high position"? Why might a person "take pride" in humble circumstances?
3. What particular temptations and spiritual dangers would a person in "humble circumstances" face? How might you overcome these temptations and dangers?

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4. Why do you think James calls being rich a “low position”? What seems to be his attitude toward the “rich”? Why?

5. What particular temptations and spiritual dangers does a “rich” person face? How might you overcome them?

6. As you have sought to be generous with the resources God has entrusted to you, what difficulties have you encountered?

7. What truths or practices have helped you to be more generous with your resources? What steps have you taken to become a more generous person?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Four

Read :: James 1:12-15

There is temptation in every area of life and all have been enticed by it and fallen in to sin. The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus, God, came and dwelt among us, was tempted and tested, but past the test for us--in our place. He lived life without sin and died the death our sin deserved for us and gives us his crown of life. So when we are tempted (and we will be tempted by everything), we look to Jesus who relates to our temptation yet overcame it for us, thank Him, love Him and follow Him away from the temptation and sin in to true life.

'Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself (Jesus) likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.' (Hebrews 2:14-18)

1. This passage distinguishes between “tests” and “temptations.” What do you think the difference is between the two?
2. What motivations does this passage give for standing firm under tests and temptations? Do they motivate you to walk in obedience? Why or why not?
3. What is God’s role in temptation according to this passage? How does that square with Jesus’ teaching us to pray, “Lead us not into temptation”?
4. Why do you think James says nothing about Satan’s role in temptation when other biblical writers acknowledge the significant role he plays?

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5. James says that we get “enticed” by sin. Another writer has said that, in temptation, “Satan shows the bait and hides the hook.” Still another says, “Every temptation is accompanied by the lie, ‘You need this to be happy.’” What insights do these statements provide about the nature of temptation? Have you found this to be true in your own experience? Explain.

6. What truths do you cling to most in the midst of temptation? What helps you fight it off best?

7. What is the end product off falling into temptation? How does this serve as a warning to you?

8. What truths do you cling to most after you have fallen into temptation and sin?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Five

Read :: James 1:16-18

We can be deceived in to believing that life and hope can be found in something other than Jesus. However the Scriptures teach that life and hope are found only in Jesus who is the ultimate good and perfect gift. Jesus gave his life freely as a gift so that we can experience Him and true life with our creator. Believing the Gospel and following Jesus allows us to rightly enjoy the gifts God has given us and not be deceived by seeking to find life in the ever changing, never fulfilling things of this world.

'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.' (John 3:16-17)

1. James begins this passage with the exhortation: “Don’t be deceived!” Why is it so devastating to our lives to live under deception?
2. Can you think of a time when you believed a lie about God, the world, or what it means to live a God-pleasing life? How did believing that lie affect the way you lived?
3. What practices have you found helpful to keep deception (either self-deception or deception from outside sources) from taking hold in your life?
4. What areas of potential deception is James addressing in verse 17? Do you see any connection between this verse and James’s discussion of sin and temptation in verses 13-15?

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5. James refers to the good things we experience as “gifts from the Father of the heavenly lights.” How does this description protect us from being deceived?

6. What do you understand to be the heart of the experience of the new birth (that is, what takes place in a person’s life when God gives him or her new life)? What does the language “first fruits of all he created” suggest about the nature of this experience?

7. What does verse 18 suggest about the role God plays and the role we play in the new birth? Why is it important to be clear on this? What difference does it make if we are confused?

8. What changes have you seen in your beliefs and behavior that indicate that you have experienced the new birth this passage describes?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Six

Read :: James 1:19-21

Jesus spoke truth and embodied the truth that brings life through His grace. On the cross, all our filthiness and wickedness was put on Him and His righteousness was given to save the souls of those who believe in Him. In response to His love, patience and sacrifice for us, we can have a meekness and self-forgetfulness about ourselves that allows us to love others through being patient, attentive and truth telling.

'The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.' (John 1:9-14)

1. Verse 19 gives us three commands :“Be quick to listen. Be slow to speak. Be slow to become angry.” How are these commands related?
2. Why is listening well to others so important? When you speak, what makes you feel that others are genuinely listening to you?
3. James says, “Be slow to become angry.” How does one do that?
4. How would you distinguish legitimate anger from illegitimate anger? What causes each? Can you give examples of each kind from your own life?

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5. What is the connection between verse 21 and our anger?

6. How does this verse suggest we should deal with illegitimate anger?

7. What do you think it means to “humbly accept the word planted in you”? Why is it so important to be humble as you listen to God’s Word? What are the potential consequences if you are not?

8. What does this passage tell us about what it means to be saved? Why is the language of “being saved” (“the word...which can save you”) so appropriate as a description of what happens in the Christian life?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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5. Can you think of an area where you began to practice God's Word after avoiding obedience for some time? What was that area? What finally moved you to obedience? What benefits did you experience by obeying God?

6. What pictures come to mind for most people when they think of a "religious" person? How do James's words counter these views?

7. James states that true religion consists of three things. What are they and why are they all so important?

8. When it comes to your own life and thinking, which of these three things do you tend to leave off the list of characteristics of a truly religious life? Why?

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Study Eight

Read :: James 2:1-7

The Scriptures make clear only one distinction among humanity :: Jesus is sinless and the rest of humanity is sinful. At the foot of the Cross of Jesus all are equal. Since the sinless one took the place of the sinful one's on the Cross, there is no distinction and there should be no favoritism among Christians or in the church. The gospel allows us to be humble and gracious towards others no matter their background and status because we know the depth of our sin, while confident in pointing people to Jesus because of his love and sacrifice for us and all who come to him--no matter their background or status.

'for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.' (Galatians 3:26-29)

1. How would you define "favoritism"? What causes it? What warped values lie behind it?
2. Why is favoritism particularly inappropriate for "believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ"? (See Isaiah 53:2-3 for insight into this.)
3. Do you see the scenario James describes occurring in your church? If so, how does it manifest itself?
4. What arguments does James offer to demonstrate the intolerability of favoritism in the church?

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5. What does this passage tell us about God's concern for the poor? What are the implications for us? Is God "guilty" of engaging in favoritism?

6. How and when do you find yourself engaging in favoritism? How do you battle this tendency?

7. What does this passage say about race and class in the church? What motivation does it provide for ending racism and classism in the church?

8. What practical, concrete steps can you take to make your church more fully what God intends it to be in these areas?

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Study Nine

Read :: James 2:8-17

As we look at the call of James here to 'fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture' (vs 10)--it should result in two things :: 1. worship of Jesus who fulfilled the law perfectly and 2. realization of the depth of the sin in our lives because we do not. As we get a greater picture of the greatness and holiness of Jesus and the depth of our sin, the good news of the Gospel--that Jesus paid the price for our sin on the Cross--with loom large in our lives. It will result in a life of love, mercy and compassion for others since we have received love, mercy and compassion from Jesus. If our lives are not growing in love, mercy and compassion (even minutely) it is quite possible that we have not received/accepted it from Jesus and our faith is no faith at all, it is really dead.

'For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.' Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for 'The righteous shall live by faith.' But the law is not of faith, rather 'The one who does them shall live by them.' Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us-- for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'--so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.' (Galatians 3:10-14)

1. We are told that the royal law is to "Love your neighbor as yourself." How would you define love? Can you think of a time when someone expressed this kind of love to you?
2. James writes, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." What does he mean by this? What impact does he intend this to have on his readers? How does he want them (and us) to change their lives in response?
3. How do verses 12 and 13 explain what James means when he writes, "Mercy triumphs over judgment"?

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4. Do you see a connection between verses 12-13 and verses 14-17? If so, how are they connected?

5. What has been your experience in living a lifestyle of mercy (caring for the material and emotional needs of those around you)?

6. What are the greatest obstacles you face when it comes to being a merciful person? What do you think you need to do to surmount those obstacles?

7. What are some specific situations in which you can show mercy to others? Do you have a plan that will enable you to do this?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Ten

Read :: James 2:17-26

Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. We were dead in our trespasses and sins and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus--God rescued us from sin, judgement and death to new life. Our hope is in Him alone. But if there is faith in this gospel--it will result in action. Receiving the mercy of God will result in a changed life. The gospel is not just cognitive information to know, it results in a changed heart with new desires, affections and purpose. A dead tree does not produce fruit, an alive tree will produce fruit. One is not saved by their fruit, but fruit is a result/evidence/proof that one has experienced salvation.

'But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved--and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.' (Ephesians 2:4-10)

1. From an initial reading of this passage, what does James seem to be saying about the relationship between faith and works?
2. James states that "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." How is he defining the word "faith"? What leads you to that conclusion?
3. In verse 24 James says, "You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone." In Romans 3:28 Paul writes, "We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law." Is it possible to resolve the apparent conflict between the verses? If so, how? (Hint: think about how their definitions of key words might differ.)

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4. In James's examples of faith producing works in verses 14-26, what kinds of works are described? What does this tell us about the works that faith produces?

5. How does genuine faith stir us up to produce works?

6. Can you give examples of how faith has produced works in your life?

7. Are there certain works of faith you feel should be evident in your life that are not currently present?

8. James is trying to protect us from having false assurance about our salvation. How can we regularly apply his warning to our lives so that it spurs us on to live for God without crushing us with guilt for not having done "enough"?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Eleven

Read :: James 3:1-6

As you study this passage, write down how it reveals the good news of Jesus and our need for Him. Find Scripture that summarizes the gospel in light of this passage ::

1. What is the basic theme of verses 1-6?
2. Why do you suppose James issued the warning in verse 1? What was he seeking to accomplish?
3. How does the first part of verse 2 temper the warning of verse 1? Why do you think this was important to say? What does it tell us about progressing in holiness in the Christian life?
4. How does James connect the control of the tongue with the control of the whole body? Have you found this to be true in your own experience?
5. How might you define self-control? What is its purpose, according to this passage?

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6. What points does James make about our tongues in verses 3-6?

7. Can you recall a time when you carelessly said something that hurt another person deeply?
Can you recall a time when someone carelessly said something that deeply hurt you? How has either of these experiences continued to affect you? What do these experiences tell you about the power of words?

8. What steps have you taken that have helped you control your tongue? Do you engage in certain practices or follow certain rules that have been effective?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Twelve

Read :: James 3:7-12

As you study this passage, write down how it reveals the good news of Jesus and our need for Him. Find Scripture that summarizes the gospel in light of the passage ::

1. Review last week's study. What were the primary points made about our tongues and the relationship between tongue control and self-control in general?
2. After considering the importance of watching our words, what changes, if any, did you see in your practice during the week? What victories did you experience? What failures did you experience? What did you learn about yourself by trying to control your tongue?
3. According to verses 9-12, what do our words reveal about the state of our hearts? What is James's purpose in stating that it is impossible for an olive tree to bear figs, etc.?
4. "Self-control is the ability to choose the important thing over the urgent thing. The important thing is to please God, to bring him joy; the urgent thing is to please yourself (i.e. to seek joy apart from pleasing God). Its opposite is a lack of discipline. Its counterfeit is will-power through pride." What is your reaction to this definition of self-control? How does it clarify your reflections on self-mastery in general? On mastering the tongue in particular?

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Study Thirteen

Read :: James 3:13-18

As you study this passage, write down how it reveals the good news of Jesus and our need for Him. Find Scripture that summarizes the gospel in light of the passage ::

1. According to this passage, how do you identify a wise person?
2. How does James's view of the wise person contrast with our culture's view? What does this reveal about our culture and the dangers we must avoid?
3. Why are people filled with bitter envy and selfish ambition sometimes considered "wise" (v. 15)? What do people characterized by "envy and selfish ambition" value? In contrast, what do the truly wise value?
4. What does it mean to do deeds "with humility"? Why is it so important that humility accompany our good deeds? What happens when humility is absent?

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5. In verse 17 James mentions several traits found in the wise. They are “pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere.” How would you define each of these traits? What do they look like in concrete, practical ways when people are practicing them?

6. Why is each of these traits so important to healthy relationships?

7. Is there one trait in which you know you need to grow?

8. What do you think James is referring to in verse 18 when he talks about the “harvest of righteousness”?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Fourteen

Read :: James 4:1-3

As you study this passage, write down how it reveals the good news of Jesus and our need for Him. Find Scripture that summarizes the gospel in light of the passage ::

1. What different forms of fights and quarrels you have noticed in relationships within the church? From your observations, what types of issues give rise to quarrels?

2. Why do fights and quarrels so deeply grieve God?

3. What kinds of “desires” do you think James has in mind?

4. What does James mean when he says our “desires battle within us”? Can you give examples of this battle?

5. What makes desires legitimate and what makes them illegitimate? How is our tendency to “kill and covet” related to the illegitimacy of our desires?

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6. What does this passage suggest we are to do with our desires?

7. What does this passage teach us about prayer? What should be taking place when we pray?

8. Can you give an example from your own life when a desire had too much control over you but was brought in check? If so, how did the change take place? How is your new attitude toward the desire demonstrated in your life?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Fifteen

Read :: James 4:4-10

As you study this passage, write down how it reveals the good news of Jesus and our need for Him. Find Scripture that summarizes the gospel in light of the passage ::

1. James accuses the church of developing a friendship (a sharing of values, attitudes, and purposes) with the “world.” What values, attitudes, and purposes that are part of the “world” do Christians often assimilate into their lives? What should be a Christian’s values, attitudes, and purposes in contrast with the “world’s”?
2. What do you make of James calling the church an “enemy of God” in verse 4? When is such strong language justified? In such a case, what kind of interaction characterizes the relationship between God and his people (vv. 4-5)?
3. In the midst of severe rebuke, James rather unexpectedly writes, “but he [God] gives us more grace.” What does this tell us about God and the nature and meaning of grace?
4. What does it mean to “submit yourselves to God”? Why is this James’s first exhortation to this group of stumbling believers?

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5. What does it mean to “resist the devil”? What would “resisting the devil” look like in terms of practical, specific actions? How have you found the promise “he will flee from you” to be true in your experience?

6. We often feel as if God wants nothing to do with us when we have fallen into behaviors we know are displeasing to him. How does the promise in verse 8 counter that reaction? What does it tell us about God’s attitude toward us even when we fall into sin?

7. What do verses 8 and 9 tell us about the nature of true repentance, both its actions and attitudes? How does your repentance usually compare to this description?

8. What do you think James means when he writes that God “will lift you up”? In what ways has God lifted you up when you have come to him in repentance?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

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Study Sixteen

Read :: James 4:11-12, 5:12

As you study this passage, write down how it reveals the good news of Jesus and our need for Him. Find Scripture that summarizes the gospel in light of the passage ::

1. Look at James 5:12. What is the basic issue being addressed here? How widely does it apply?
2. Why is it so important to speak honestly and truthfully to one another, avoiding the exaggeration or soft-peddling of the truth? What happens to the Christian community if we do not speak the truth to one another?
3. Look at James 4:11-12. What does it mean to “slander” someone?
4. What does James mean when he writes that “anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it”?

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5. James's concern seems to be that our speech should be an expression of love for others rather than a product of a desire to harm them. What must be considered if we are going to speak in a way that benefits others?

6. Putting these two passages together, we might say we are to "speak the truth in love" (Gal. 5:6). What happens when we speak truth without love or we speak love without truth?

7. Can you tell about a time when you either did or did not "speak the truth in love" to someone? What effect did this have on the hearer? or Can you tell about a time when someone did or did not "speak the truth in love" to you? What effect did this have on you?

8. How do you think our group is doing in terms of "speaking the truth in love" to one another? Can you think of things that would enable us to do this more effectively?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

PRAYER

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Study Seventeen

Read :: James 4:13-17

As you study this passage, write down how it reveals the good news of Jesus and our need for Him. Find Scripture that summarizes the gospel in light of the passage ::

1. What is the basic point James is trying to get across? What new attitudes and ways of thinking is James seeking to develop in his readers?
2. What does this passage teach about the way we are to make decisions?
3. Do you think James's words discourage planning for the future or seeking to control things?
4. How, if applied, would this passage make a difference in the way you make decisions?

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5. How do you see the teaching of this passage affecting our tendency to worry about the future? How, according to this passage, are we to deal with worry if it arises in our lives? How have you sought to drive worry from your life?

6. What is the connection between verse 17 and the verses that precede it?

7. What causes an action to be characterized as “good”? What makes our actions “good”?

8. Is there any particular “good” thing you believe God is calling you to do, but you have resisted him?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

PRAYER

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Study Eighteen

Read :: James 5:1-6

As you study this passage, write down how it reveals the good news of Jesus and our need for Him. Find Scripture that summarizes the gospel in light of the passage ::

1. How would you summarize the teaching of this passage in a single sentence?
2. What faults lead James to use such harsh and condemning language?
3. What does the intensity of James's language lead you to conclude about God's character and concerns?
4. What does this passage teach us about the folly of riches? What does it teach us about the dangers of riches?
5. Have you ever seen money exerting a dangerous influence on your life? If so, how?

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6. What do you think constitutes a life of “luxury and self-indulgence” and “hoarding wealth”? What makes these behaviors so offensive to God? How can you discern if you have crossed the line into these behaviors?

7. It is sometimes said, “It is your attitude toward riches and material things that matters, not merely having riches and material things.” What perspective does this passage shed on that belief?

8. How does this passage affect you as you read it? Does it make you angry, uncomfortable, bewildered, or something else? Why does it make you feel that way?

9. In light of this passage, how do you think God is calling you to live differently? What, if any, specific and concrete steps might God be calling you to take in response to this passage?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

PRAYER

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Study Nineteen

Read :: James 5:7-11

As you study this passage, write down how it reveals the good news of Jesus and our need for Him. Find Scripture that summarizes the gospel in light of the passage ::

1. How would you define patience? What do our lives look like when we exercise patience? How is patience related to “standing firm” (v. 8)?
2. James offers the second coming of Christ as a primary motivation to exercise patience (vv. 7-8). How does anticipating this event help us to stand firm and be patient?
3. How should we understand James when he writes that the Lord’s coming is “near”? What pitfalls must we avoid as we reflect on the nearness of his coming?
4. Do you think about Christ’s second coming very often? If not, why not?
5. In addition to making you more patient, how else would your life be different if you reflected more often on this event?

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6. Why do we “grumble against each other”? How is this grumbling related to a lack of patience?

7. What hints does James give about how to overcome our tendency to grumble?

8. What encouragement does James intend us to draw from the examples of the prophets and Job?

9. Is there a situation in which you are being called to exercise patience and avoid grumbling? If so, what is it? How do James’s words give you insight on handling the situation?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

PRAYER

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Study Twenty

Read :: James 5:13-20

As you study this passage, write down how it reveals the good news of Jesus and our need for Him. Find Scripture that summarizes the gospel in light of the passage ::

1. According to verses 13-16, when should we pray?
2. How are sickness and sin related in verses 15-16?
3. What is “the prayer offered in faith” described in verse 15?
4. What is the purpose of praying for one self or others?
5. Why is Elijah given as an example of a praying person in verses 17-18?

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6. Do you have friends who have “wandered from the truth”? (Or were you someone who once “wandered from the truth”?) How have you tried to bring them back? (Or what did someone do to bring you back?)

7. Is there any connection between verses 13-18 on prayer and verses 19-20 on turning a sinner from his ways?

Gospel Connection :: How does this passage reveal Jesus and our need for the Gospel?

PRAYER