

Ice Breaker:

What has been your favorite memory from Groups this year?
What would be something fun to do together this summer?

Groups Discussion Questions:

Read James 1:2-4

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

How would you describe pure joy?

James faced many trials for being a Christian, including being put to death, but his letter focuses a lot more on day to day living. Eric said that for many of us the trials happen every day as we struggle to choose to live for Christ. Do you agree or disagree and why?

Read **James 1:19-27**

19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. 21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. 27 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.

What stands out to you about this passage?

How do we deceive ourselves, as stated in verse 22? How have you experienced that?

According to verse 26, what behavior makes our religion worthless?

How do you feel about that statement?

Question 1, based on James 2:14-19

14 *What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15* Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. *16* If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? *17* In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

18 But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.”

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Have you ever had someone say the right things to you, but not help you?

How did that make you feel?

Have you ever said the right things, but not followed up with any actions to show you care?

What kind of lies do we tell ourselves in order to justify not accompanying our faith with actions?

Questions 2, based on James 3:13-18

13 *Who is wise and understanding among you?*

Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. *15* Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. *16* For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. *18* Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

According to this passage, What are the qualities of a wise person?

What is the beginning of wisdom? (Proverbs 9:10)

What does the fear of man lead to? (Proverbs 29:25)

Who do you go to for advice?

In this passage, James claims that wisdom (verse 17) has fruit, and so does envy and selfishness (verse 16). What are they?

Question #3, based on James 4:1-12

4 *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

4 *You adulterous people,[a] don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us[b]? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:*

*"God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble."*[c]

7 *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

11 *Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister[d] or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?*

According to this passage, and the message yesterday, what is the main cause of fights?

Can you describe a time where you got into a quarrel, and the reason was because you didn't get something you wanted? (attention, control, authority, material possession, privilege, reward etc.)

Prayer Requests

Digging Deeper:

Read James 5:13-20

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Why is it important to confess our sins to each other?

Why don't we want to do that?

What lies does Satan try to tell us to keep us from confessing?

Have you ever had an experience where you did confess your sins to another Christian, and you found the benefit that this verse describes?

17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

This story comes from 1 Kings 17:1, and 1 Kings 18:16-46

Why did Elijah pray for no rain and then rain?

Why did God answer his prayer?

Do you believe prayer has that kind of result today?

Can anyone share a personal testimony about prayer?

19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

What does James mean by wander away?

Have you ever been brought back by a fellow Christian or brought back a fellow Christian? Tell us about that.