



COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Mirrors: The Book of James - 100% Pure Religion

LEADER REMINDERS:

- Missions Night is Monday, April 11 @ 7pm at the Levine Center. Childcare will be available.
- Starting Point is Saturday, April 30 @ 5pm at the Levine Center. Childcare will be available. RSVP at mercycharlotte.com/startingpoint

INTRODUCTION

***LEADER NOTES:** This is simply a guide to help discussion about the Scripture that was preached over the weekend. You are not bound to it. Ultimately our hope is that God in His infinite grace would transform our heart to look more like Jesus and fall more in love with Jesus. We should always be in prayer that God would do this every time we meet as a community. So if God redirects your group's time away from the Community Group Guide that is great. Please do not abandon a fruitful conversation for the sake of getting all the questions answered.*

This week we looked at how the implanted Word of God in our hearts can bring good fruit.

- It gives us humility to battle against our pride.
- It shows us how we can grow into the image of Christ that God is calling us towards.

For Christians, the implanted Word of God is as necessary as our food. In this study guide we will examine further how God's word changes our lives.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION

LEADER NOTES: *These questions are here to help your group get their minds re-engaged with the passage and teaching points from the weekend message. Think of this as “priming the pump” for a more interactive discussion in your time together. Don’t feel the need to answer all of these.*

1. If you had to boil this weekend’s sermon down to one point, what would it be?
2. Was there anything from the sermon that you had not heard before?

INVESTIGATING SCRIPTURE

LEADER NOTES: *The following questions will help you work through the passage(s). Have someone read the passage(s) aloud, dividing among two or three people if needed. If there is a good, fruitful conversation going, you do not have to cut it off to get back to the questions.*

A good way to study the Bible is by using three steps: Observation, Interpretation, and Application. We want to observe the passage first to get an idea of what is happening. Then we interpret the meaning of the passage so that we can apply it to our lives. The following questions will follow this pattern as we look through this Biblical passage.

Scripture: Read James 1:19 - 27

Observation

1. List at least 3 (there are likely more) key themes James addresses in this passage.
 - a. Anger
 - b. Putting away filthiness
 - c. God’s implanted Word
 - d. Being a doer of the Word
 - e. True Religion
2. What common thought unites these themes?
 - a. Bad fruit of man’s heart or good fruit of God’s Word
 - b. Leader, this question helps you see James as one letter, instead of a choppy set of New Testament proverbs. It’s important for anyone you are leading to be able to see James, like all biblical authors, is developing a consistent thought throughout his letter. Once you get that big idea, the rest becomes a lot easier to understand.

Interpretation

1. How does being quick to listen and slow to speak, relate to anger?
 - a. Quick tempered anger comes from pride. If you are quick to listen and slow to speak you are more likely to hold your tongue and address the situation in humility.

2. How does looking into the “mirror” of God’s word produce good works in our lives?
 - a. We see who God has made us to be and then we have the grace to “do.”
 - b. God’s word also gives us instruction for how we are to live. Following these instructions are ‘good works’ that puts the love of God on display for others to see.

3. If we are hearers of the Word only, how do we deceive ourselves?
 - a. Good fruit in a person’s life is evidence that they truly follow God. If we are not doers of the Word and have no fruit, we are deceiving ourselves into thinking that we follow God.

4. Why does James call the law the “law of liberty?”
 - a. Because God’s perfect law bring freedom, not bondage. The Old Testament law could not be followed, therefore it brought bondage. However, Christians have been given new life in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit now dwells in every believer and gives them the power to follow the law of God. True freedom is obedience to the will of God.

5. How does someone’s tongue reveal if their religion is true or false?
 - a. The Bible tells us that “Out of the heart, the mouth speaks.” Luke 6:45. James is saying that if someone is claiming to be a Christian, but he speaks evil with his mouth, his tongue is showing that in his heart, he does not worship God. Therefore “his religion is worthless.”

Application

1. What is one area of your life where you find it hardest to be a doer of the Word and not just a hearer?
2. What can you try this week in order to be a “doer” in that area?

James Homework: Read all of James over the course of next week.

Option #1 - Read through the entire book of James in one sitting.

Option #2 - Read one chapter of James each day:

- Monday - James 1
- Tuesday - James 2
- Wednesday - James 3
- Thursday - James 4
- Friday - James 5

Since we want to be people who are continually reading and meditation in the Word of God, we have included some Bible reading plan resources for you. This will help you grow in the discipline of reading God’s written Word.

- Beginner - Read through the New Testament in a Year - <http://apostles-raleigh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Read-New-Testament-in-One-Year.pdf>
- Next Level - Read through the Bible in a Year - <https://cchmb.org/content/plugins/mcheyne-reading-plan/calendar.pdf>

PRAYER

LEADER NOTES: *The following is designed simply as an outline for you to use in your group prayer time. Feel free to make this your own and adjust it to fit your group.*

Prayer is an essential component of your life as a follower of Christ, and an integral part of any healthy church body. Divide up into groups of 2-3 people and use the following points to guide you through a time of prayer together.

Psalm 1:1-3 - "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

This Psalm shows us that when our delight is in the Lord and when we are meditating on His Word, we will bear much fruit. It is from God and His Word that we draw our strength for our lives. It is only in Him that we can find life. With this hope in mind pray for:

1. God to give our people a greater desire for His Word.
2. Our hearts to be continually transformed by God into the character of Christ.
3. Above all, that we would desire to glorify God and make His name known in the world.