



COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Mirrors: The Book of James - Part 4

Helium, Faith, and Trust Falls: Why James Thinks Talk is Cheap

LEADER REMINDERS: Remind your groups to sign up for the different [short term mission trips](#) and to sign up for a [Volunteer Team](#). We want to be involved in God's work both locally at Mercy Church and around the world!

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 weekend we looked at a passage in James talking about the difference between true faith and false faith. James says that simply "believing" in Jesus does not mean that you have true faith. Even the demons believe in Jesus. Rather, true faith is revealed by good works. Christians are not saved by their works, but if someone is truly a follower of Jesus Christ, their faith will be revealed by their good works.

OPENING QUESTIONS

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. Was there anything that you heard that you had never heard before?



2. When you hear the word “faith” what comes to mind?

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 2:14-26 and Matthew 25:31-46

Observation

1. How does James relate your faith to your works in this passage?
 - a. James is saying that faith and works are inseparable. You cannot have faith without works and you cannot have works without faith. Works do not save you, but saving faith is shown by your good works.
2. What examples does James use to show that faith without works is dead?
 - a. Seeing a poor brother or sister in need and telling them to go in peace without actually clothing or feeding them.
 - b. Demons having correct belief in God.
3. What examples does James point to to show what true faith looks like?
 - a. Abraham believing God and offering Isaac to Him.
 - b. Rahab hiding the spies of Israel because she believed God.

Interpretation

1. How can intellectual belief in Jesus still not be enough for salvation?
 - a. True and genuine faith is not intellectual agreement. It is a life change where you commit your whole life to following Jesus. True faith not only believes in God but serves Him out of love. “If you love me, you will keep my commands” - John 14:15
2. In Matthew 25, what does Jesus use as the ultimate test of your faith when everyone is gathered before Him?
 - a. How you treat the “least of these” reveals if you have true faith or false faith.

3. Why does Jesus say that it is necessary to care for the poor and the needy?
 - a. Jesus says that whatever you do to the least of these, you are really doing to Him. So if you ignore the poor, you are ignoring Him, but if you help the poor you are helping Him.
4. How does James 2:14-26 and Jesus' words in Matthew 25 apply to our southern "Christian" culture?
 - a. In the Bible Belt culture, we are quick to "accept Jesus into our hearts" because we want to go to heaven but we do not make Him Lord over our lives. This is not true faith. True faith is confessing that Jesus is Lord over your life (Romans 10:9).

Application

1. In what ways have you "accepted Jesus into your heart" without accepting Him into your lifestyle?
2. What are some active steps you could take to care for the "least of these?"

Homework:

James' message is about checking our hearts and then realign them towards God and His purposes. Then getting to the work God has created us for. For our homework this week, we are challenging you to **do one act of selfless love**. Here are a few ideas:

1. Serve at Mercy Church. You can sign-up online. Tear down team. Set-up team.
2. Volunteer with one of our partner organizations.

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 18:31-35 - "For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God?— the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless. He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights. He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You have given me the

shield of your salvation, and your right hand supported me, and your gentleness made me great.”

This is a Psalm where King David is reflecting on all the difficult times he has faced and how the Lord has been his strength. Notice that David isn't saying that God made his way easy, but he is saying that God was with him every step of the way. Stepping out in faith can be challenging and sometimes difficult. However, the good news is God is our strength. With this hope in mind pray for:

1. Pray for true faith in the people of Mercy Church.
2. Pray for the people of Mercy Church to be more bold in preaching the Gospel to the people God has put in their lives.
3. Pray for the upcoming short term mission trips.