



Adulting

Accept

Snooze

Expositional study on the book of James.

*The #1 catalyst for spiritual growth is reading and reflecting on the Bible.
Use these questions for personal study or as part of a community group experience.*

WEEK 2 OF 7

09/24/2017

Note to Leaders: This week's main point is acknowledging and humbly applying all of scripture as the authority for the Christian's faith and life.

Sermon Questions

1. In three or four sentences, how would you summarize the main point of John's message?
2. Was there something in the message that was particularly challenging? Or surprising?
3. Re-read James 1:18-27. What speaks to you most out of this passage? What questions does it leave you with?

Discussion Questions

1. Verse 18 begins with a reference to "birth", which has become known as a second birth or being born again. What does James mean by a new birth? What does it look like? (consider 2 Corinthians 5:17; cf. John 3:1-10)
2. James states that this new life or new birth comes by the "word of truth". What practical outcomes of this teaching come out in the following verses?
3. Why is humility necessary in hearing and obeying God's word (James 1:21)?
4. In verse 22, two reactions to scripture are depicted—hearers and doers. What are the differences between these two actions? What practical implications does this have on the Christian life?
5. Verse 27 attempts a brief synopsis of what "doing" scripture looks like. The first two charges seem self-explanatory—to care for orphans and widows. But what does James mean by "keep oneself from being polluted by the world"? (Romans 12:2)

6. John mentioned the “cafeteria god”. What imagery does this create in your mind? How have you seen this at play in your understanding of God?

How have you seen this same principle at play when reading or applying the Bible?

7. If life and faithfulness come through the “word of truth”, how then should we engage the Bible?
8. What things have you read in the Bible or heard through messages at Church that you have been reluctant to “do”? Why?
9. How does your reluctance or refusal to “do” certain things in scripture impact your relationship with God, your endurance in the faith, or your maturity? (Consider John 14:23-26)
10. Reflect on your life and habits. Do your actions show that you are committed to following Jesus, both in faith and in obedience? Is there an area where you would like to see progress?

Background Comments

James begins his conversation, directed to followers of Jesus, by reminding them of the message of God through Jesus that brings new life. The foundational presupposition of this letter is its address to Christians whose lives should be guided by the grace of the gospel and God’s revealed message in Scripture—what James calls the “word of truth”. This “word” is able to “save your souls” and thus refers to the grace and forgiveness found in Jesus through his life, death, resurrection, and exultation to the right hand of God where he now rules as Lord (Hebrews 1:1-9; Ephesians 1:15-23).

The new birth reflects a new status, one free from the power of evil and freed to live under the power of the living God who is life (Romans 6:5-11). This new life results in a new way of living because our allegiance to self has been put aside in favor of allegiance to the one true God (Romans 8:5-8). The Bible serves as the Christian’s aid in understanding what true allegiance and a faithful life look like (2 Timothy 3:14-17). Both Old and New Testament authors remind the people of God that the spiritual birth, graciously given by God through his word, was to be followed by turning from the kind of behavior associated with the old life and to begin living by the standard of the word that had saved them.

Transformation from the old way of life to the new is not simply a matter of conformity, although it may be unnatural and require determination, it is an aspect of our response to God and the internal work of the Holy Spirit who brings about in us the fruit of new life (Galatians 5:16-25). Thus, the word is implanted in those who offer their life to Jesus, and this implanted word is to influence every aspect of life by its humble acceptance of Jesus’ authority.

Prayer Requests

Take a few minutes to go around the room and ask if anyone has something they would like prayer for. Write these down as they are being shared.

Additionally, challenge people to begin praying about the step of maturity God may be calling them to during this series.

Finally, pray together. You can pray the prayer below or your own prayer that incorporates the requests represented in the group.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, in this week's passage I am reminded of your grace that gives new life. That this new life brings me into contact with your truth, which you gave as a guide for healing, rich relationships, and spiritual maturity. You challenge me to humbly accept this word and allow its meaning to influence my words, thoughts, and actions. May you grant me the humility and honesty to accept this word. To see it produce good fruit and actions in my life. Help me to put into action all of scripture that my life might be under your authority. In Jesus name, amen.