

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, July 17, 2011

Passage: James 1:9-12

Memory Passage: James 1:12

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 1:9-12.** What does “lowly” mean in v. 9 (don’t forget about the context!)? Is “boasting” a good thing or a bad thing (cf. 1 Cor. 1:31; 3:21; 2 Cor. 10:17; 11:30; 12:9; Gal. 6:14; James 4:16)? What makes one’s boast good or bad, and how is James using this term in 1:9?

(b) What is the poor’s exaltation and why should they boast in it (see Rom. 5:1-3, 11, where the word “rejoice” in the ESV is the same Greek word as our “boast” in James 1, & Eph. 2:4-7, and especially James 2:5 for help)?

(c) Is the “rich” man in v. 10 a believer or non-believer? Upon what do you base your answer? What is the “humiliation” in which James tells the rich to boast? How is this done?

(d) *Family: Read James 1:9.* Ask your family: “What does the word ‘boast’ mean?” If they don’t know, or if they give definitions similar to “brag,” explain that James is using this word in a good sense that means “to rejoice, glory in, or exalt” and that the term “lowly brother” refers to someone who is poor (because it is contrasted with “the rich” in v. 10). Then explain what “exaltation” means (and what it means to be exalted) and then have your family read Eph. 2:1-7. Explain that vs. 1-3 describe someone before they have been saved, and vs. 4-7 explain what God has done for someone in order to be saved (made the spiritually dead person to be alive) and what happens to them after they are saved (He exalts them). Then explain how the one who is poor in possessions is rich in spiritual possessions (Eph. 1:3) because God has exalted them, so they should boast in what God has accomplished.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 1:9-12, Jer. 9:23-24 & Phil. 3:7-11.** James 1:10a speaks of a believer who is rich. How does Jer. 9:23-24 help us understand James 1:10a? Describe the “humiliation” to which James refers, and how does a rich person boast in this?

(b) Why does a rich person need to hear this command? Do you need to hear this command? Do you consider yourself among the rich or among the poor?

(c) How does Paul in Phil. 3:7-11 obey James’ command to “boast in his humiliation?” How can you, as a person who is wealthier than a majority of the people in the world, obey James’ command in 1:10a? What lessons can you learn from Paul?

(d) *Family: Read Jer. 9:23-24.* On your whiteboard make 2 columns: head the first column with the word “boasting” with a circle around it and a diagonal line through it to signify “no boasting,” and head the other column with the word “boasting.” Have your family list the things in which we are not to boast from v. 23, place them under column 1, and have a discussion about how one might boast in these three things (your family must first understand what something “is” before they know how to avoid it). Then list in the second column the things in which we should boast found in v. 24. Use this time to preach the gospel to your children as you help them understand the 3 actions Jeremiah mentions in which God is involved. Remember to explain that these are attributes of God’s character as well.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 1:9-11 & Matt. 19:16-24.** In James 10b-11 James speaks of a person who is not a believer. What is in the text that causes me to say this? Am I justified in saying that 10a speaks of a believer and 10b-11 speaks of a non-believer? Could this person be a “professing,” but not an authentic, believer? Why or why not?

(b) In the parable of the rich young ruler, what is the fatal flaw in the man’s question (v. 16)? How does Jesus point out this flaw as he dialogues with the man?

(c) Why does Jesus say what he says in vs. 22-23? Why can riches cause this difficulty (In case you missed it, go back and look at the partial list of the 10 Commandments Jesus gives in vs. 18-19. Which one’s omission is glaring?)? Back in James 1:10b-11, what is the end result of someone who spends his/her life in the “pursuit” of wealth and possessions?

(d) Is wealth bad in and of itself (James 1:17)? What is the problem with wealth? What temptations does it bring?

(e) *Family:* Prior to your lesson, write out lines for two people to act out **Matt. 19:16-24**, and also have a needle available. After 2 people have acted out this parable, have your family turn to Ex. 20:1-17 and have them list the 10 Commandments while you write them on your whiteboard (or do this from memory ☺). Then have them turn to Matt. 19:16-24 and have them list off the commandments that Jesus mentions as you cross each one off the list. Then discuss which ones are left that Jesus did not mention, and draw their attention specifically to the command not to covet. Explain what covetousness is, and then help them understand what Jesus means by his illustration in Matt. 19:23-24 using your needle to show how small the eye is.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read James 1:9-12, 1 Tim. 6:10-19.** Paul writes this passage against those who preached a false gospel claiming that “godliness is a means of (material) gain” (6:1-9). What admonitions does Paul give those who desire to be rich (vs. 9-10)?

(b) What does Paul charge those who are already rich *not* to do (v. 17)? What does he charge them *to* do (vs. 18-19)? In which category do you see yourself, one who desires to be wealthy or one who is already wealthy?

(c) What is your own attitude toward material blessings? Do you struggle with gaining/keeping them? Do you feel an entitlement to a certain level of “stuff-and-things?” Are you discontent because of your current financial status? Do not ignore these questions just because you might not consider yourself to be “rich.” Some of the most greedy, covetous, entitlement-minded people come from the ranks of what we in America would call “poor,” and Paul warns those who *desire* to be rich, not those who are *already* rich, about temptation, covetousness, and the love of money.

(d) *Family:* **Read Luke 12:13-21.** After you read and explain this parable, retell it by replacing the crops with items that your family is tempted to covet. You might use toys, books, video games or other electronics, having one’s own room, allowance or money in general, free time, good grades, success in sports or the arts, knowledge, or a plethora of other things that fit the temptations of those in your family. The goal is to bring this parable, with its sobering warning, to your family in a way that they cannot escape the weight of it. Then tie what you have learned back into **James 1:9-12.**

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read James 1:9-11.** What will be gained by the one who remains steadfast under trials? To what does this refer?

(b) To whom is this crown promised? Notice that the text does not say that it is promised to the one who remains steadfast; the steadfastness is expected. What does this tell us about life and how we should live it?

(c) Now that you have studied vs. 9-12, how would you say they are connected with what has preceded? What is the specific connection between v. 8 and vs. 9-11 (see Matt. 6:24 for help)? Between v. 12 & vs. 2-4?

(d) *Family:* Before the lesson prepare crowns made out of pliable branches or flower stems or weeds (entwine them together to form a wreath). Make one for each person. Open your session with some kind of a race or competition for your family. Play it up and have fun! Then present everyone with a victors’ crown for finishing, not winning. Then **Read James 1:12 & Rev. 2:8-11.** Explain that the crown of life is salvation, and show that God gives this to everyone who remains steadfast in trials. Also explain that those who “stand the test” are those who Christ has already saved and who love Him because He first loved us! Also draw their attention to the fact that Jesus knew the “tribulation” and “poverty” of the saints in Smyrna, and tie this in to the discussions from this week on the poor from James. Remind your family that it is because of Christ that we persevere, and are able to consider the trials we face as complete joy as we finish the race of life well, and we have our salvation complete in heaven.

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The Great Reversal

In James 1:9-11 James presents 4 admonitions concerning one’s socio-economic status.