

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, July 3, 2011

Passage: James 1:1-5:20

Memory Passage: James 2:17

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Job 1:1-1:27.** This week we will read all of James, one chapter each day, and observe some of the book's main themes. Consider this to be a sort of "fly-over" as a preparation for our digging in to the text verse-by-verse. To whom is the book written, believers or non-believers? Why do you answer the way you do? What do you notice different about this greeting than other greetings found in the NT letters?
- (b) Consider the theme of each of the following sections and assign a title to each section which reflects its content: 1:2-4; 5-8; 9-11; 12-15; 16-18; 19-21; 22-27.
- (c) Which of these sections do you look forward to studying the most & why? The least & why?
- (d) One of the main themes of James is found in vs. 22-24. What does it mean to be doers of the word and not hearers only? What dangers are there for the professing believer who hears but does not "do" the word?
- (e) *Family:* Explain that we are embarking on a study of the book of James, and we will spend this week looking at the major themes of the book, one chapter a day. On the left side of your whiteboard write down the 7 divisions of Scripture mentioned in question (b). As you have family members take turns reading each section, help your family decide a title for each section that represents the main theme. If they need help, draw their attention to the key word or phrase in each section (e.g. "trials" or "maturity" in vs. 2-4, "wisdom" or "double-minded man" in vs. 5-8). Then ask your family, "Which one of these sections do you have questions about, or most look forward to studying and why?"

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read James 2:1-26.** In this chapter there seems to be either 3 sections (vs. 1-13; 14-17 & 18-26) or two sections: (1-13 & 14-26). How do you think the chapter should be divided, and what title will you give each section (remember that the title is to reflect a summarization of the teaching of the section)?
- (b) Since James is writing to the believers who are scattered throughout the empire (1:1), do you think he has specific church situations in mind when he writes, or is he just giving general commands with no specific situation in mind? Why?
- (c) How does 1:19-26 relate to 2:1-13? Why is showing partiality in the church such a grievous offense? How might a 21<sup>st</sup> century church be guilty of this sin of showing partiality?
- (d) Another main theme in James is found in vs. 14-26. Is James teaching salvation by works? Why/why not?
- (e) *Family:* **Read Gen. 22:1-18.** As you read, make sure your family is engaging in the details of the story. **Then Read James 2:21-23** and ask, "Why was it necessary for Abraham to show his faith by the work of obedience to God's command to sacrifice his son?" (the answer is in v. 23) Remind your family that Isaac was the son God promised to Abraham and through whom God's promise to make Abraham a great nation would be filled. If God did allow Abraham to sacrifice his son, then there would seem to be no hope of the promise being fulfilled! Then ask, "How did Abraham's offering of Isaac demonstrate faith?" and "What did Abraham have faith that God could accomplish?" **Read Hebrews 11:17-19** to reveal the answer.

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read James 3:1-18.** Assign titles to the following sections based on their main idea: 3:1-5a; 3:5b-12; 13-18.
- (b) How do these verses connect to what has preceded? To what follows? Does the theme of "teachers" in verse 1 carry over to the entire chapter? Why/why not?
- (c) The tongue is another strong theme in James. What mention of the tongue/speaking have you seen in chapters 1 & 2? Consider your own tongue: Does it more resemble the tongue described in 3:1-5a or the tongue described in 3:5b-12? What ways might you need to better control your tongue so that it "boasts of great things" (3:5a)? From what you have read so far in James, how might your study of this book give you encouragement to make these changes?
- (d) *Family:* Have a tube of toothpaste ready for this lesson (this lesson will work best if you have a tube for each child!). Cover your table with newspapers or paper sacks and place the tubes of tooth paste in the middle of the table. Tell the children to squeeze the toothpaste out of the tube onto the paper. Let them have fun with this, and encourage them to get every drop out. **Then Read James 3:3-12** and explain the dangers of a tongue unrighteously used. Then say, "Now I want everyone to put their toothpaste back into their tube, every last drop of it!" Some of your kids might succeed in getting some back in the

tube, but after a few minutes let them know that words spoken unrighteously cannot be taken back just like the toothpaste cannot be put back in the tube after it has been squeezed out. The damage is already done once the words are spoken.

**DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read James 4:1-17.** Title each section based on its content: 4:1-5; 6-10; 11-12; 13-17.
- (b) Another main theme in this book is dissention within the body of Christ. A theme to which James has already tipped his hat in chapter 2. Summarize what is going on in the body that James addresses. Are there actual murders going on or is he using hyperbole? How do you substantiate your answer?
- (c) Are verses 13-18 still focused on dissentions in the body? What is James addressing here? Do you feel the sting of his rebuke as you consider your life and how you make plans for the future? Is Christ always at the center of those plans?
- (d) *Family:* **Read James 4:6-10.** These verses contain rich descriptions of fleeing temptation and repentance. Teach your family these verses, and help them to understand what it means to “resist the devil” by submitting to God and drawing near to Him. Show them the promises that are made: Resist the devil and he *will* flee; draw near to God and He *will* draw near to you.

**DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read James 5:1-20.** Rather than me giving you the divisions, you make the divisions in chapter 5 and title each one according to its content.
- (b) What questions do you have about the teaching found in this chapter? What themes do you see returning in chapter 5?
- (c) When was the last time you brought back someone who was wandering from the truth (vs. 19-20)? Given the benefit of this found in v. 20, do you desire to be more involved in this kind of activity? Are you equipped to be more involved, and if not, how would you get better equipped? Do you desire others to pursue you if you are the one who is wandering?
- (d) Now that you have read the entire book of James and looked at some of its themes, give a title to the entire book that reflects what you think is the primary, overall message of the book.
- (e) *Family:* **Read James 5:7-11.** Ask your family: “What does it mean to have patience?” If their answers are not complete, help them fully understand what the word means. Then ask: “What does patience have to do with not grumbling with each other (v. 9)? Why does that take patience?” Finally, ask your family to consider these questions: “Why Job would be an example of steadfastness in v. 11?” & “After our study of Job, explain what you have learned about ‘the purpose of the Lord’ and His compassion and mercy.”

**DATE: July 3, 2011**

*James: Authentic Faith*

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