



JAMES: MERCY TRIUMPHS BY BETH MOORE

SUPPLEMENTAL DISCUSSION GUIDE

Guide by Jean E. Jones

INTRODUCTION

Welcome!

Beth Moore’s fabulous workbook, *James: Mercy Triumphs*, is broken into sections meant to be covered in a single week. However, not all women’s groups are able to cover that much material in a week and so they break the chapters into two or three parts, showing the video on the day with the fewest questions.

But there aren’t always enough discussion questions if the weeks are broken up like this. That’s where this supplemental discussion guide comes in. It chooses key questions from the workbook and adds extra questions as well as optional questions to enhance your discussion time.

Here’s what you’ll find:

“Before the Meeting” Pages

Some weeks begin with an introductory page called, “Before the Meeting.” These list Scriptures and concepts you might be asked about during the meeting. Review this page so you’ll feel better prepared for possible questions that might arise.

“Timing” Tips

Timing tips are shaded blue at the top of discussion pages. These assume you’ll discuss Days 1, 2, and 3 one week, and Days 4 and 5 the next week. They also assume you’ll have about 75 minutes for discussion.

Before each meeting, adjust the timing to match your needs and write down actual times. That way as your meeting progresses, you’ll know whether you have time for the optional questions.

“Discussion Reading”

Begin each day’s discussion by asking a volunteer to read the passage in the gray bar labeled, “Discussion Reading.” This reminds everyone of the passages they studied. It also brings up to speed anyone who didn’t finish their homework.

If you have a mix of quiet and talkative women, ask the quiet gals privately if they’re comfortable being called on to read out loud; if so, after the first discussion, call on whomever is most quiet to read the passages in the discussion reading so they feel like they’re participating (once they hear their own voice, they’ll often open up).

The Questions

This supplemental discussion guide selects questions from the *James: Mercy Triumphs* workbook and adds extra, thought-provoking questions for groups which divide the homework into two or three weekly discussions. Blue-shaded tips about individual questions help you as you go—read these before the meeting.

Also before each meeting, copy the question numbers from this discussion guide into the workbook’s margins next to the questions. That way you’ll find them quickly during your meeting.

Here are the symbols used in the questions and what they mean:

- * Principle question from book
- ♥ Personal question from book
- 📖 Additional question from book
- 🕒 Ask if time permits
- (no symbol) Extra question

Principle, personal, and book questions are followed by the page number in the workbook from which the question is taken, like this: ♥41. Tell the gals what page the question comes from so they can review their answers. Sometimes the questions in this guide appear longer than what’s in the book because they contain a sentence or two of introductory material.

For extra questions, explain you’re asking an extra question for them to think about that isn’t in the book. Otherwise, they’ll thumb through the pages trying to find it. If the extra questions refer to something in the workbook, the page number will be in parentheses.

Here are some tips for asking questions:

- If there’s an opening talk or video, share what stood out to you most about it and why first, setting an example of openness and brevity (about a minute)

- Answer personal questions first; set an example of openness and brevity (usually less than a minute)
- Try to draw out the answers to non-personal questions from others
- If a question has many possible answers, ask everyone to share one answer, allowing the women newest to Bible study to answer first if they want and encouraging the most experienced women to answer last and only if there are answers that haven't been given
- Use eye contact and a smile to encourage a quiet or less experienced woman to answer an easy question

Enjoy!

Jean E. Jones



WEEK ONE

A MAN CALLED JAMES

Before the Meeting

YOU MIGHT BE ASKED ...

Days 3 & 4: Circumcision group

Not all Jewish believers in Christ accepted the decrees from the Jerusalem Council. In Galatians Paul refers to the circumcision group, who believed Jesus was the Messiah but continued to insist Gentiles had to be circumcised and obey the Mosaic Law. They're also known as Judaizers (but not as Pharisees—see below).

Day 5: First Gentile believers

Acts 10:1–11:18 has the story of Peter and the first Gentile converts.

Day 5: Pharisees

Some gals may have heard the term *Pharisee* used only as a put-down to describe someone legalistic. The Pharisees were a Jewish sect whose members were so concerned with following the Mosaic Law that they put together a set of oral traditions to be a hedge around the Law. They did this originally because God had sent the Israelites into exile for disobeying the Mosaic Law, and they believed God would restore them to their land and deliver them from Roman rule if they carefully kept His commands.

Jesus rejected the Pharisees' oral traditions as people's laws, not God's. While some Pharisees argued with Jesus and rejected his teachings, others followed Him and became believers. Paul was a Pharisee before his conversion.

Day 5: Unity

Though Paul once persecuted Jews with beliefs different than his, when he came to Christ he embraced unity. You may want to review Romans 14.

Day One

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Timing: Day 1 ~20 min.; Day 2 ~30 min.; Day 3 ~25 min.

Discussion Reading: Matthew 2:19–23; Luke 2:34–35; Matthew 13:55–56

The * symbol indicates a principle question from the workbook, and the number is the page number on which the gals can find their answer.

1. *16 The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that those who wanted to kill the child Jesus were dead, and so he should leave Egypt where he had fled and return to Israel. Where did the young family settle and why (Matthew 2:21–23)?

The ♥ symbol indicates a personal question from the workbook.

2. ♥16 Put yourself in Mary's sandals. What impact would Simeon's words have on you (Luke 2:34–35)?

The 📖 symbol indicates a question from the workbook.

3. 📖16 Record the minimum number of children under Mary and Joseph's roof (Matthew 13:55–56).

On thought-provoking questions, give everyone else the opportunity to share before you. If needed, allow moments of silence for quiet gals who wait for pauses before speaking.

4. (a) What do you think it might have been like for James to be second-oldest in a family this size (Matthew 13:55–56)? (b) What might it have been like having a perfect oldest brother? (c) Did any of you have a sibling who seemed never to get into trouble? If so, what was that like?

The ⌚ symbol indicates an optional question to cover if you have time.

5. ⌚ We'll see soon that James was a wise, godly man who knew Scripture well. (a) What kinds of conversations do you imagine happening between them? (b) Did any of you have a mentoring relationship with a sibling? If so, what was that like?

On personal questions, sharing first lets others know how long to talk and how open to be.

6. 📖18 Briefly describe your young life ... by including the size of your family, your town, and the foods you regularly ate.

Day Two

RESURRECTION POWER

Timing: Day 2 ~30 min.; Day 3 ~25 min.

Discussion Reading: Mark 3:20–35

1. 🕒 (a) Why do you think Jesus' brothers thought he'd gone mad when people first started gathering to hear Jesus (Mark 3:20–21)? (b) What kinds of feelings might the brothers have had about respected teachers of the law calling their eldest brother demon-possessed?
2. 📖20 Why might Jesus' brothers have been so defensive over Jesus' independence that their hearts were hardened (Mark 3:31–35)?
3. Let's look at Jesus' reaction a moment. (a) Did Jesus allow his brothers' opinion of Him to stop Him from doing the work He was called to do (Mark 3:31-35)? (b) Did He allow their opinion of Him to alter what He knew from His heavenly Father? (c) If Jesus' birth family came to hinder His work, then to what family would Jesus minister? (d) What can we learn from this about fulfilling God's call in our lives?
4. 🕒 When Jesus was avoiding the Jews who wanted to kill him, his brothers mockingly told Him to go to show Himself in Judea (John 7:1-10). How might this have affected the brothers' reaction to Jesus' crucifixion?
5. After Jesus' resurrection, Jesus appeared to James (1 Corinthians 15:4-7). What, if anything, does this suggest about Jesus' relationship to James in particular among His family members?

After Jesus ascended to heaven, the apostles, Mary, and Jesus' brothers gathered together in Jerusalem in prayer (Acts 1:13-14).

6. 📖21 How recently must James have seen the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:3)?
7. ✨21 What do you think would have made James feel awkward about joining the apostolic group after his previous disbelief?
8. ❤️22 Describe a time when you faced feeling awkward, battling with doing what God was calling you to do.
9. 📖22 Skip ahead 14 years to AD 44. Whom did Herod kill (Acts 12:1–2)?
An angel freed Peter, and he went to the house of the martyred James' mother where many were gathered in prayer for Peter.
10. 📖22 What instruction did Peter give concerning "James and the brothers" before he left Jerusalem (Acts 12:17)?

From this point on, we see James as the leader of the Jerusalem church, fully aware that he was risking his life for his testimony about Jesus.

Day Three

THE LORD'S BROTHER

Timing: Day 3 ~25 min. If you've less time than that, skip the optional questions or plan to finish next week.

Discussion Reading: Galatians 1:18-24

Day 3 in our workbook looks at James from the Apostle Paul's viewpoint. In the passage we read from Galatians, Paul explained how he was called by God and—incidentally—how he met James.

1. ✨²⁴ The chief goal of every testimony is summed up beautifully in Galatians 1:24. What does it say?
2. 📖²⁴ This glorious result is not only for our conversion stories. What does Matthew 5:14-16 say about the purpose of our works?
3. What are ways you let your light shine?
4. 🕒📖²⁵ What happened as a direct result of the persecution against the early church (Acts 11:19-21)?

Before his conversion, the highly religious Jewish man Paul persecuted Jews like Peter and James who believed Jesus was the Messiah. He imprisoned many; some were sentenced to death.

5. ❤️²⁶ Describe a time when you grappled with some of these questions and tell what happened:
 “Do we think we have a few strikes against our relationships with other servants of God? Do we think the work of God is only accomplished when we're riding tandem with our personal favorites? Do we believe we always have to see it the same to do ministry together? Has ‘the kindness and love of God our Savior’ not ‘appeared’ to us all (Titus 3:4, NIV)? Have we not all denied Him at one time or another?”
6. (a) Briefly describe a relationship in which you do not see eye-to-eye with the other person, but you still get along well. (b) What are some ways you maintain good relationships without compromising core Christian beliefs?
7. 📖²⁶ Choose a period of years in your own life that proved very strategic in your journey toward Christ or with Him. Comprise a time line of your own Be ready to share it as a means of giving your testimony.
8. 🕒 What stood out to you most about this week's lesson? Why?

Day Four

THREE PILLARS

Timing: Day 4 ~15 min.; Day 5 ~60 min.

See if a quiet gal will volunteer to read—she'll feel more comfortable speaking up later.

Discussion Reading: Galatians 2:1–10

1. 📖28 In Paul's view, what appeared to be at stake when he went to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:4–5)?

On personal questions, sharing first lets others know how long to talk and how open to be.

2. ❤️30 Into what comparison trap do you most often fall? Why?
3. When you catch yourself in a comparison trap, what are some ways you try to get out of it?

Answer first so the others have time to think, since this isn't in the book.

4. ⌚ (a) Describe two people with similar ministries but different styles that bless you in different ways. (b) How do their differences complement each other in your life?
5. ✨30 In what context does James, our protagonist, show up in Galatians 2:1–10?
6. 📖31 What did the pillars give Paul and Barnabas when they "acknowledged" or "recognized" the grace given to Paul (Galatians 2:9)?
7. 📖31 What was all they asked of Paul and Barnabas (Galatians 2:10)?

Day Five

LISTEN TO ME!

Timing: Day 5 ~60 min.

Discussion Reading: Acts 15:1–13

1.  33 A heated debate led to what is historically called the Jerusalem Council. What was this meeting (Acts 15:1–6)?
2.  33 Who insisted that the Gentiles be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law (Acts 15:5)?

The Pharisees were a Jewish sect whose members were so concerned with following the Mosaic Law that they put together a set of oral traditions to be a hedge around the Law. While some Pharisees argued with Jesus and rejected his teachings, others followed Him and became believers.

3.  34 List several of Peter’s claims. Complete Peter’s challenge in verse 10: “Why are you testing God by ...”
4.   34 Write your own paraphrase of Acts 15:11.

Discussion Reading: Acts 15:12–21

5.  34 Why do you think the whole assembly needed to hear Barnabas and Paul as they told about these “miraculous signs and wonders” (Acts 15:12)?
6.  35 What exactly did God do (Acts 15:14)?
7.  36 What particular areas of abstinence did James suggest?
8. These decrees allowed Jewish believers to eat with Gentile believers; why do you think this was important?
9. (a) James said “we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God” (Acts 15:19). If the Gentile believers had to cut off most of their contact with their Gentile friends and neighbors in order to follow the Mosaic Law, what difficulties would they have faced? (b) How would this have hindered their sharing the gospel with other Gentiles?

 Discussion Reading: Acts 15:22–35

10.  36 How did they get the word out concerning the decision of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:22–23)?
11.  (a) Who sent the decision out (Acts 15:22)? (b) What does this tell us about their unity?
12.   36 How did they distance themselves from those who tried to impose on the Gentiles circumcision and the Law of Moses (Acts 15:1, 24)?

13. 🕒📖37 Note the phrase “troubling your minds” (NIV). The Greek term translated “troubling” is a military metaphor for “plundering a city.” How might the plundering metaphor fit into this context (Acts 15:24)?
14. 🕒 (a) How did James describe Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:25–26?
(b) What does this tell you about James and Paul’s relationship?
15. 📖37 What was the means of the Gentile believers’ peace (Ephesians 2:14–18)?
16. ❤️37 How have you personally experienced this peace?

Read the next paragraph if you’re going to ask the question that follows.

🕒 As things worked out among imperfect people in the fledgling mixed fellowships, those who followed the dietary laws tended to judge those who didn’t as not really doing what God wanted, while those who didn’t follow the dietary laws tended to look down on those who did as having weak faith. Paul wrote Romans 14 to address how believers should get along with those who have different opinions on “disputable matters”—non-essential matters that Scripture isn’t perfectly clear on or which believers might legitimately interpret in different ways.

17. 🕒 (a) Why is it important to accept believers with different opinions on disputable matters without condemning them or looking down on them (Romans 14:1, 3, 10)? (b) Paul says, “So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God” (14:22); what are practical ways to do this?
18. 🕒 From everything we’ve learned about the man James these last two weeks, what stands out to you most? Why?



WEEK TWO

A BOOK CALLED JAMES

Before the Meeting

YOU MIGHT BE ASKED ...

Day 5: Father of Lights

People might get different answers to the question about James 1:17 because translations differ. *James Mercy Triumphs* mostly uses the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* so I included its translation for that verse.

In HCBS the sense is that the heavenly lights (sun, moon, and stars) vary in their position in the earth's sky through the seasons and through the day, and they cast shadows as the earth turns; but God who created these heavenly lights neither varies nor casts shadows. In NIV84 the sense is more God who created the heavenly lights does not change like the shadows these lights cast.

Day 5: The NEXT LEVEL

A *diaspora* (die-ASS-pour-uh) is a scattering of a people group away from their homeland. When capitalized, it usually refers to the Babylonian exile of the Jews. It's a Greek word (James 1:1 uses it).

Day One

JOY WHENEVER

Timing: Day 1 ~25 min.; Day 2 ~25 min.; Day 3 ~25 min.

Discussion Reading: James 1:1-4

1. (a) What does it mean to be a “slave” or “servant” of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (James 1:1)? (b) How does our taking on that position affect our daily lives?
2. 44 Let’s take apart James 1:2. Swap *consider* for *feel*. Describe how the meaning would change if the exhortation read “*Feel* pure joy” rather than “consider it.”
3. 45 What does the “testing of your faith” give you?
4. 45 What must perseverance or endurance do, and exactly why?
5. Have you grown spiritually more in hard times or easy times? Why?
6.  (a) When in the midst of hardship, how are we sometimes like a second-grader insisting she doesn’t need school? (b) What are faith-building steps you take when you start to feel like nothing good could come out of a particular hardship?
7. 46 Name three *different* things you could do with what you’re going through. Consider making one obeying James 1:2.
8. 46 What do you believe the five-year ramifications would be for each of those courses of action?

Day Two

JUST ASK

Timing: Day 2 ~25 min.; Day 3 ~25 min.

Discussion Reading: James 1:5-8

1. ♥49 What are four different areas in your life where you could use the kind of wisdom only God can give?
2. 📖49 What are we to do if we lack wisdom (James 1:5)?
3. ⌚📖49 Why doesn't God just give us wisdom? Why do we always have to ask?
4. ✨50 How can we expect God to respond to our plea for wisdom (1:5)?
5. 📖50 The unshakable promise of generous wisdom is not without condition, however. What is the condition (1:6-8)?

If asking with thanksgiving is a new concept to some, have someone read Philipians 4:6-7.

6. (a) Have you (like Beth) practiced "coupling my plea for wisdom with my advance gratitude for receiving it" (50)? If so, what did you discover?
(b) How does praying with thanksgiving help prevent double-mindedness?
7. 📖51 What do you think could be an example of "two-heartedness"?
8. Briefly describe a time you asked God for wisdom and He gave it to you.
9. ⌚ (a) How can doing something foolish teach us wisdom? (b) Why does learning from mistakes require humility? (c) Describe a time you grew in wisdom from making a mistake.

Day Three

A WILDFLOWER IN THE MEADOW

Timing: Day 3 ~25 min.

Discussion Reading: James 1:9-11

1. How do you keep yourself from trading true conviction for self-condemnation?
2. 📖52 Write three summations of James 1:9–11 that you could compile on a first-glance basis with little thought.
3. 📖52–53 What is the one thing the apostles and elders asked Paul to remember when he established Gentile churches (Galatians 2:10)? What is one way Paul did that (Romans 15:23–29, Acts 24:17)?

There won't be time to look up all these verses so just ask for what the gals have written.

4. 📖53 Why must we constantly tune our ears to the voices of those who are of humbler means? What reasons did you find from the verses on the bottom of page 53, beginning with Deuteronomy 15:11? Proverbs 17:5? Proverbs 19:17? Proverbs 31:8-9?
5. ✨54 What in Hebrews 10:32-34 suggests an outbreak of poverty among early converts to Christ?
6. 🕒📖55 How does James 1:10 carry over Jesus' teaching in Luke 12:15-21?
7. 📖55 Who is "blessed" according to James 1:12?
8. ❤️55 Why do you think God placed such emphasis on the poor throughout His Word?
9. 🕒 If possible, briefly describe a time someone helped you when you had limited funds. What did you learn from that experience?
10. 🕒 What are ways you've taught children about caring for the poor?
11. 🕒 What stood out to you most about this week's lesson? Why?

Day Four

BAITED BY OUR DESIRES

Timing: Day 4 ~25 min.; Day 5 ~50 min.

Discussion Reading: James 1:12-15

1. 57 Which friendship do you most need: (a) the one who is most prone to tell you what you want to hear; (b) the one who will talk you into feeling better even when you shouldn't; (c) the dependable liar; (d) the one who blurts out what you need to hear even when your fingers are in both ears?
2. (a) When a friend tells us a difficult truth, how can we respond in ways that affirm such honesty? (b) How have you cultivated loving but honest friendships?
3.  (a) Proverb 19:20 says, "Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise." Why is that so? (b) Proverb 26:12 says, "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him." Why is that so?
4. Does God entice us to sin (James 1:13)?
5. 58 What does Proverbs 19:3 say about temptation?
6. 59 Have you ever been forced to recognize your own "deformed desire"? If so, what forced you into awareness?
7. 59 Name a few deaths that can result from full-grown sin conceived out of deformed desires.
8. 60 What exact progression is described in James 1:3-4?
9. 60 (a) Sin matures and brings forth _____. (b) This is the James version Deuteronomy 30:19: "I have set before you _____ and _____. Choose _____. (c) To whom exactly has God promised the "crown of life" (James 1:12)?
10.  In what ways do both suffering and temptations test faith?
11.  What is the relationship between believing God and resisting temptation?

Day Five

FATHER OF LIGHTS

Timing: Day 5 ~50 min.

Discussion Reading: James 1:16-18

1. ✳️61 What does James 1:16 warn against?
2. What are ways to guard against self-deception?
3. 📖61 Write a one-sentence synopsis of James 1:13-18, drawing repeated concepts together.
4. ⌚ In what ways is rebellion “essentially the attempt to take now what God won’t give” (62)?
5. ⌚ What are ways people are “duped into believing that the flesh gives and Heaven takes away” (62)?
6. 📖63-64 (a) What are some of the perfect, perfecting gifts you had in the first quarter of your life? (b) The second quarter? (c) The third quarter? (d) Your current quarter?
7. ❤️64 Did Beth’s examples stir up thoughts toward a few more of your God-given good or perfect gifts? If so, boldly list them.
8. (a) Why is it important to thank God for His gifts? (b) How do you feel when you give someone something they requested and they don’t thank you? (c) What are ways you remind yourself to thank God for His gifts?

If gals didn’t already include difficulties as part of their gifts, then ask this question to be sure everyone sees that difficulties become gifts.

9. ⌚ What is a way a hard or even nightmarish part of your life morphed into a gift?
10. 📖65 How is God referenced in James 1:17? “The Father of ... _____”

James 1:17 in *Holman Christian Standard Bible* reads, “Every generous act and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights; with Him there is no variation or shadow cast by turning.”

11. Though God is the Father of the heavenly lights, which change through the seasons and which cast shadows with the earth’s turn, what does He not do (James 1:17)?
12. ⌚ Though God created people who sometimes change their paths and are drawn away by their evil desires and then cast the shadows of sin, what does He not do (James 1:13)?
13. 📖65 What did God choose to do according to James 1:18?
14. ⌚ What stood out to you most about this week’s lesson? Why?



WEEK THREE

WORDS THAT FREE US

Before the Meeting

YOU MIGHT BE ASKED ...

Day 1

If you plan to ask question 7, review Matthew 7:2–5.

Day 5

You may want to review these passages about the judgment of believers' works for the purposes of rewards: 1 Corinthians 3:12–15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 22:12.

Day One

QUICK TO LISTEN

Timing: Day 1 ~20 min.; Day 2 ~20 min.; Day 3 ~35 min.

Discussion Reading: James 1:19–21

1. 📖71 Now let's literally "take note" of the three imperatives in James 1:19. List them in the margin.
2. 📖72 Write out Proverbs 17:27–28. What does it say?
3. (a) Why are listening skills important? (b) How can we show others we value what they have to say? (c) What's something you've done that's improved your listening skills?
4. ❤️72 Regardless of how much of an issue you have with anger, reflect on the last seven days. What kinds of things sparked feelings of anger? Get as specific as possible, down to the driver at that stoplight.
5. 📖73 Look back at James 1:20 and record the harm of anger.
6. ✳️73 How might Ephesians 4:30–31 imply that anger could affect the manifestation of the Spirit in us?

If the gals are unfamiliar with this next practice, ask someone to read Matthew 7:2–5.

7. ⌚ (a) When you're angry, do you often ask yourself if you've ever done the same thing as the person who has angered you? If so, why? (b) How does doing this help you to be slower to anger?
8. 📖76 In view of James 1:19–21, what are we to do (v. 21)?
9. ⌚📖76 Describe what happened in Zechariah 3:1–7.
10. ⌚📖76 Does anything about Joshua the priest in Zechariah 3 remind you of your own experience? If so, what?

Day Two

THE PERFECT LAW

Timing: Day 2 ~20 min.; Day 3 ~35 min.

Discussion Reading: James 1:22–25

1. (a) What are those who hear God’s word but don’t do it doing to themselves (James 1:22)? (b) What is such a person like (James 1:23–24)?
2. 🕒 Beth said, “Self-deception slithers in when we mistake appreciation for application or being touched with being changed” (78). What do you think about this statement?
3. 📖79 What does the person in James 1:25 do?
4. ✨79 What is the promise at the end of the verse? “This person will be ___.”
5. 📖80 (1) What word do James 1:12 and 1:25 have in common with Matthew 5:3–10? (2) What connection do you see between Matthew 7:26 and James 1:22?
6. ❤️81 When have you known in your heart that your act of obedience could have only been a move of the Spirit?
7. 📖81 Write an acronym drawn from the lesson using the letters WORDS.

Day Three

PURE RELIGION

Timing: Day 3 ~35 min.

Discussion Reading: James 1:26–27

1. ♥84 Name ways you manifest devotion to Christ through the course of a month. Don't be shy. It's important.
2. 📖84 Complete the sentences in the margin:
If anyone thinks he is religious _____,
then his religion is _____
3. (a) How does an unbridled tongue manifest itself? Think of as many ways as you can. (b) Jesus said, "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Matthew 15:17–19). What light does this shed on James 1:26?
4. 📖84 Stirring it up with our definition of *religious*, what do you think can be self-deceiving about manifestations of devotion?
5. ✨84 After James tells us what true religion is *not*, he sketches two quick images of what true religion *is*. From James 1:27, describe his idea of "pure and undefiled" religion.
6. 🕒📖85 What images come to mind as you picture the exploited and neglected in our day?
7. 🕒📖85 Describe how the OT prophets would agree that hands-on initiatives toward the poverty-stricken and oppressed are spiritual: Isaiah 58:5–7; Deuteronomy 14:28–29.
8. 🕒📖85 What were the Israelites to remember as they left behind part of their harvest?
9. 📖85 Social consciousness beckons each of us across the board, but the ways we could respond are as varied as our holy passions.... What about you? Where does God stir up your passion?
11. 🕒 What stood out to you most about this week's lesson? Why?

Day Four

THE FOLLY OF FAVORITISM

Timing: Day 4 ~30 min.; Day 5 ~45 min.

Discussion Reading: James 2:1–7

1.  87–88 What is the main idea and the context of each of the following verses: Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34–35; Galatians 2:6; Romans 2:11.
2. Beth said, “At the end of the day, what impresses us dictates us. We each naturally prefer those who possess what we esteem—whether money, social status, power, talent, spirituality, intelligence, celebrity, style, or beauty—and we devalue those who don’t” (89). What did you think of this statement?
3.  89 Reread James 2:4. If we discriminate, what do we become?
4.  89 How does James begin James 2:5? “_____, my dear brothers.”
5. (a) Can you hear the love in that statement? (b) James is saying some things tough to hear! How do we reconcile such tough words to those he calls “dear” or “beloved”? (c) Have you ever had to say something tough to someone you loved because you knew it was what they needed to grow? How did you feel? (d) We sometimes think that people who say things tough to hear must not love us, yet James and his half-brother Jesus often said tough things. What can we learn from this?
6.  What did God choose the poor in the eyes of the world to be or do (James 2:5)?
7.   89 The biggest qualifier of the blessed-poor is at the very end of verse 5. To whom did God make the promise?
8.  90 Describe the explanation in 1 Corinthians 1:26–29 why God tends to choose the weak over the strong.
9.  90 What feelings surface when you somehow feel dishonored? How might those feelings translate to those dishonored over their poverty?

Day Five

THE ROYAL LAW

Timing: Day 5 ~45 min.

Discussion Reading: James 2:8–13

1. 91 What does it mean to you when God follows up a statement with “I am the Lord”?
2. 92 What does our protagonist call the command originating in Leviticus 19:18? “If you keep the _____ prescribed in the Scripture” (James 2:8).
3. 92 And, for emphasis, what is this “royal law”? “Love ...”
4. 92 Record what Jesus said in Matthew 22:40.
5. 92 Look up two other segments that include the command to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Record all summations and anything else you find noteworthy in the contexts: Romans 13:8–10; Galatians 5:13–14.
6. (a) How did James explain in 2:8–9 that showing favoritism wasn’t following the royal law? (b) James’ recipients knew the royal law; why are we sometimes not good at figuring out what “loving my neighbor as myself” should look like? (c) Why do we need the Scriptures to show us what God considers to be “loving my neighbor as myself”?
7.  What’s an example of a Scripture that initially surprised you as being how God wants us to treat others?
8.  Beth said, “Our devotion to God and true religion is illustrated most poignantly on the pages of other lives. That’s where much of our story is told” (93). What do you think about this statement?

Questions 9–12 are a unit. If you’re short on time, skip ahead to question 13.

Before we move onto the broader application of the next two verses, let’s take a look at how they relate in the context of favoritism. We’ve already seen in verse 1 that we shouldn’t show favoritism and in verse 4 that when we do, our judgment is faulty.

9. Look at James 2:6–7. What is James’ first reason for why believers should not discriminate against the poor?
10. (a) Read James 2:9. What is his second reason? (b) How does favoritism break the royal law?

If gals are unfamiliar with the judgment of works, give them these verses for later: 1 Corinthians 3:12–15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 22:12.

The judgment spoken of in James 2:12–13 is the judgment of believers’ works for the purpose of rewards.

11. (a) What kind of law is the royal law (James 2:12)? (b) If we don't discriminate, we'll free others from feeling dishonored. What are practical ways to do this? (Review Beth's list of what we esteem on p. 89.) (c) How might refusing to discriminate free someone who devalues herself? (d) How is refusing to discriminate merciful?
12. Discrimination involves faulty judgments (2:4), and gives dishonor instead of mercy to those oppressed by it. (a) When our works are judged, what will happen to those who are unmerciful to people oppressed by discrimination (James 2:13)? (b) When instead of discriminating we obey the royal law by lovingly seeking to free the oppressed from discrimination, what will triumph over faulty judgments?

Now we'll return to the broader application.

13. 📖93 Look carefully at James 2:12. How are we to "speak and act"?
14. ❤️93 Think about this carefully: how could loving others as we love ourselves turn out to be liberating to us? Think practically as well as theologically and write your thoughts in the margin.

Use the following questions to draw out any areas that might have been missed.

15. 🕒 (a) Jesus said, "If you continue in My word, you really are My disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31–32). Can you think of an example of how obeying God's word led to knowing truth which in turn led to you being set from the bondage of a lie? (b) How does obedience free us from bondage to sin? (c) Were you trying to earn salvation by being good, and are you experiencing freedom from that? (d) How are we freed from the faulty judgments of this world upon which social status is based? (e) How can being freed from these faulty judgments free us from envy and anger?

Beth moved from James' teaching on offering mercy to Jesus' teaching on reconciling with others.

16. 🕒📖94 Are these thoughts about reconciliation resonating with you in any way? If so, how?
17. 🕒 What stood out to you most about this week's lesson? Why?



WEEK FOUR

LIVING THE FAITH

Day One

DEAD BY ITSELF

Timing: Day 1 ~20 min.; Day 2 ~25 min.; Day 3 ~30 min.

Discussion Reading: James 2:14–19

1. 🕒📖99 What do you think makes this segment so controversial?
2. 🕒📖99 In the margin, circle the identical phrases that serve as bookends for James 2:14–146. What are they?
3. 📖100 In the following translations of James' question in 2:14b, circle what seems to be the qualifying word or words for "faith." What words did you circle?
4. (a) Earlier James talked about not discriminating against "a poor man dressed in dirty clothes" (James 2:2). What else should believers do for the poor (2:15–16)? (b) How would this fulfill the royal law?
5. *100 According to the apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:8–10, what is the relationship between faith and works?
6. (a) What stood out to you about Beth's tender and compassionate call to examine whether we keep on saying we have faith even though we keep on having no works (100–101)? (b) Did you take away anything that can help you speak to a loved one who might be lost but thinks otherwise? If so, what?
7. ❤️101 After soaking in James 2:19, how does that revelation hit you personally?

Day Two

FAITH PERFECTED

Timing: Day 2 ~25 min.; Day 3 ~30 min.

Discussion Reading: James 2:20–26

1. (a) What was Beth's point about a spitty flower (103)? (b) Should we consider what people say if we don't like their tone? Why or why not?
2. 📖103 Complete the question from James 2:20 HCSB: "Are you ..."

If no one completes the full verse, ask the next question.

3. ⌚📖103 Fill in the rest of verse 20: "Are you willing to learn that ..."
4. ⌚ What are ways you stay willing to learn?
5. 📖104 In the margin list the two OT figures James offers as exhibits A and B along with the biographical information offered about them in James 2:21–25.
6. ⌚ How was Abraham's faith perfected (James 2:22)?
7. ✨105 List everything works accomplish according to James 2:24.
8. 📖105 In the margin, carefully observe the portions of 1 John 4:11–12. How is a similar concept in play?
9. ❤️105 In your own life, do you struggle more with superficial faith or with legalism? Why?
10. ⌚📖108 In whose genealogy is Rahab found in Matthew 11:2–16?

Day Three

CALLING ALL TEACHERS

Timing: Day 3 ~30 min.

Discussion Reading: James 3:1–5

1. 📖109 Why would a new teacher feel shaken by the first sight of James 3:1?
2. 📖110 Teachers have the capacity to mislead. What will surely happen among us according to 2 Peter 2:1–2?
3. 📖110 Carefully read 1 Timothy 6:3–5. Write a descriptive profile of a person who does not agree to sound instruction.
4. 📖110 Teachers have the capacity to be misled. According to 2 Timothy 4:3–4, how can an audience lead a weak teacher astray?
5. ✨110 Complete 2 Timothy 4:5: “But ...”
6. ❤️111 You take a turn before I proceed. Use the margin to list a few other enormous temptations for teachers, either from experience, observation, or human nature.
7. 📖112 Teachers face the temptations of both pride and humiliation. What does Proverbs 10:19a say?
8. 🕒 Beth said, “Many lessons will be taught to you before they’re profitably taught through you” (112). Why is this so?
9. How is James 3:2 both a warning and a comfort?
8. 🕒 What stood out to you most about this week’s lesson? Why?

Day Four

FIRE & WATER

Timing: Day 4 ~30 min.; Day 5 ~45 min.

Discussion Reading: James 3:6–12

1. 🕒📖 114 Look carefully at James 3:6 and complete this sentence. “It pollutes the whole body ...”
2. ❤️ 114 When was the last time you were aware of the tongue’s capacity to blister and scar?
3. ✨ 114 Glance at James 3:6 again in your own Bible. What is the source of the tongue’s fire?
4. 🕒📖 114 What was the source of the Acts 2 fire?
5. 🕒📖 115 In one sentence, write your own version of James’ point in these four verses?
6. 📖 115 James’ wording in verse 11 is fascinating. What two kinds of water does he mention?
7. The HCBS translates verse 11, “Does a spring pour out sweet and bitter water from the same opening?” Summarize the OT occurrence about which James was likely thinking (115).
8. 📖 116 What did the Lord do when Moses cried out to Him?
9. 📖 116 Does anybody else need to testify to some bitter waters that have been sweetened by the deep, plunging work of Christ? Go right ahead. Share your example with your group if you will.
10. Beth writes, “If you’re like me, sometimes you don’t even realize you still have some of that old bitterness inside of you until something foul springs like a fountain from your mouth. Jesus pinpointed the source in Matthew 12:34: ‘The mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.’” (a) What do you think about this statement? (b) How can having something awful spring out of our mouths be a first step towards healing what we didn’t know was inside?

Day Five

WISDOM BELOW, WISDOM ABOVE

Timing: Day 5 ~45 min.

Discussion Reading: James 3:13–18

1. ♥120 What happy or annoying quirks would you tell me about your family when you were growing up?
2. 📖121 List every description of each kind of “wisdom” in James 3:13–18.
3. 📖121 Where do bitter envy (or jealousy) and selfish ambition reside?
4. 📖121 If you never find yourself less tolerable than when jealousy rears its head, try to articulate why it’s so miserable.
5. 📖122 Back to James 3:14. What did he tell us not to do if we have bitter envy and selfish ambition in our hearts?
6. 📖122 List one way bragging denies the truth.

If the next concept is new to the gals, ask someone to read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

7. Beth writes, “The beautiful thing about new beginnings in Christ is that we’re one confession away from being able to say, ‘That’s the old me.’ Today could be the day for somebody new” (122). (a) Why is it important to remember this when we read Scriptures that hold a mirror to our weaknesses? (b) What’s a way you stop yourself from getting discouraged when faced with failings?
8. 🕒📖122 Fill in the blanks: “Who is ____ and has ____ among you?”
9. 📖122 The specific impact of wisdom and understanding is profound and immensely powerful. What is it?
10. 📖123 Now, offer your own example of a “what” (wisdom) and a corresponding “why” (understanding).
11. 📖123 Are the people you characterized as wise and understanding harsh? Why do you think that is so?
12. ✳️123 Draw a circle around the first three descriptions and a square around each of the remaining descriptions. What did you circle? What did you square? What was the point of drawing circles and squares (124)?
13. 🕒 What stood out to you most about this week’s lesson? Why?



WEEK FIVE

DRAWING NEAR

Before the Meeting

YOU MIGHT BE ASKED ...

Day 4

Our culture has problems with the word *judge* outside of American Idol and women named Judy. Beth sidesteps these issues by carefully distinguishing between “sinful judging,” “wise discernment,” and “proper discrimination.” But most Bible versions do not, which might surprise anyone who looked up the passages Moo summarizes on page 147. You might want to review 1 Corinthians 5 & 6, and then re-read Moo’s summary.

Day One

CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Timing: Day 1 ~25 min.; Day 2 ~25 min.; Day 3 ~25 min.

Discussion Reading: James 4:1-3

1. 🕒 Beth asked some hard questions on pages 129-130. Does anyone want to share anything about the experience of answering those questions? Was it enlightening?
2. ❤️131 Has anything good or beneficial come to you or to others as a result of your lack? If so, list every bit of fruit you can identify or even remotely discern.
3. Perhaps you don't see anything good coming out of your current lack yet. Describe a past lack for which you've seen God work good.
4. 📖132 Look up the Scriptures in the margin and describe how they color the concept of murder: Matthew 5:21-22; 1 John 3:15.
5. 🕒 (a) What's the difference between the person James describes in 3:18 and the person he describes in 4:1-2? (b) How does the person with godly wisdom show it (3:13)? (c) How do the traits of godly wisdom in 3:17 help avoid quarrels and fights?
6. 📖133 When you're struggling with an unmet desire, Psalm 38:9 is your best friend. Write the verse below. What did you write?
7. ✨133 We still have one Scripture to go. According to James 4:3, what is another reason we might harbor an unmet desire?
8. What did you think of the descriptions of self-gratification in the two paragraphs that follow this question?

Day Two

THE WORLD'S BEST FRIEND

Timing: Day 2 ~25 min.; Day 3 ~25 min.

Discussion Reading: James 4:4–6

1.  134 Record the two kinds of friendship in these passages on opposite ends of this spectrum.
2.  135 Take a glance at Exodus 33:11 and record the parties to and nature of the friendship described.
3.  136 The first key element of friendship is *faithfulness*. What did Abraham's faithfulness to God have to do with being "called God's friend"?
4.  136 How can we parallel Abraham's faithfulness as we follow Christ?
5.  (a) Just below that question on page 136 is what James calls those who aren't faithful; what is it? (b) Why do you think James used such a strong word? (c) In the Old Testament, idolatry—loving things of the world more than God—is spiritual adultery. What kinds of things has James pointed out that his readers are putting before God? (See 2:3–4; 3:9, 16; 4:1–3.)
6. The second element of friendship is *closeness*. Beth says, "You and I are invited to come face-to-face or presence-to-presence with Christ, too, but that kind of intimacy only comes intentionally" (137). What's one way you intentionally move close to Christ?
7.  137 The third element is *insider knowledge*. What is the distinguishing mark of friendship between Christ and His disciples according to John 15:15?
8. How might the following attitudes affect our desire to build our relationship with God?
 - a. "I'm not very spiritual. I can't imagine why God would want to hear me talk to Him."
 - b. "I have to spend time praying and reading my Bible or God will be displeased with me and people will judge me unspiritual."
 - c. "I get to spend time talking with God in prayer and reading the words He wants me to hear."
9. James has really gotten our attention by strongly calling us to abandon envy, selfish ambition, and friendship with the world. That could leave us feeling down. (a) What encouragement does he give us in James 4:6? (b) What are proud and humble reactions to admonitions like James'?

Day Three

ONE LIFE UNDER GOD

Timing: Day 3 ~25 min.

Discussion Reading: James 4:7-10

1. 📖 141 List the five commands in James 4:7-8.
2. ⌚ (a) Whom does God resist (James 4:6)? (b) Whom should we resist (4:7)? (c) What wonderful thing will happen when we do this? (d) How does Satan fan our pride to get us to resist God instead of Satan? (See page 142.)
3. ✨ 143 What light does Matthew 16:23 shed on Satan's schemes to frustrate our walk with Christ?

If you have time, on the next question also ask which stood out the second most, and why.

4. ❤️ 143 Which "submit to God" encouragement most spoke to you? Why?
5. (a) Does James want us to treat sin lightly (4:8-9)? (b) What kinds of things have the people been laughing over and taking joy in that they should have been remorseful over? (c) Have you ever suddenly realized the depths of your sin and been driven to tears of regret over having hurt others? (d) Under the Mosaic Law, Jews showed their repentance through sacrifices and being washed with water. How does James want his hearers to show their repentance from prideful actions that have wounded others through discrimination, cursing, selfish ambition, and fighting?
6. (a) What will happen if we humble ourselves before the Lord (4:10)? (b) How is this better than exalting ourselves through selfish ambition? (c) Does God want us to humble ourselves because He doesn't think much of us, or because He wants to work truly great things in us so He can exalt us?
7. ⌚ What stood out to you most about this week's lesson? Why?

Day Four

ONLY ONE JUDGE

Timing: Day 4 ~35 min.; Day 5 ~40 min.

Discussion Reading: James 4:11–12

1. ♥145 Now it's your turn to put yourself out there. How are you most prone to play judge?
2. 📖146 What exactly is “the royal law” stated in James 2:8?
3. 📖146 Which part of Leviticus 19:15–18 coincides with the verses we're studying in James 4:11–12?
4. (a) When James says don't slander or speak evil about others, he goes back to the passage in Leviticus that spoke about the royal law. Are slandering and speaking evil about others keeping the royal law? (b) Douglass Moo explains James 4:11 this way: “Since James contrasts ‘judging’ the law with ‘keeping’ it, he apparently thinks that failure to do the law implies a denial of the law's authority. However high and orthodox our view of God's law might be, a failure actually to do it says to the world that we do not *in fact* put much store by it.”¹ What insight does this shed on James' call for us to humble ourselves?
5. 🕒 (a) What does James call God in James 4:12? (b) Since James refers to God being the only one who can judge whether a person is truly saved, it appears the slanderers were calling into question the salvation of those they spoke against.² What does James say about this (4:12b)? (c) James spoke earlier about the quarrels and fights among church members; how does criticizing others to the point of questioning their salvation affect relationships? (d) Is this a mark of peacemakers exhibiting godly wisdom?
6. 📖146 Read Christ's words and jot down why we're much safer exercising mercy toward one another (Matthew 7:1–2).
7. ✨146 To make sure we got a major point from Romans 2:2 above, what do “we know” about “God's judgment”?
8. What are some of the things James is not prohibiting (see Dr. Moo's summary of 1 Corinthians 5 and 6 in the sixth paragraph on page 147)?

¹ Douglass J. Moo, *The Letter of JAMES* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 199.

² Moo, 199. James isn't talking about addressing sin, like he is doing. Nor is he contradicting Jesus' words, “If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him in private” (Mat. 18:15).

Day Five

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

Timing: Day 5 ~40 min.

Discussion Reading: James 4:13–17

1. ♥150 Why is the attitude that we control our destinies and can enforce the fulfillment of all our plans a little absurd?
2. 📖150 Do you think James is saying that making plans of any kind or jotting notes on monthly calendars is wrong? If not, what do you think he's saying? Or, if so, what are his grounds?
3. ✨151 Read Psalm 39:4–8 in the margin and underline every similarity in this Old Testament segment to James 4:13–17.
4. 🕒📖151 Jesus' teaching shouts over the noise of our consumerism. In your own words, what did Christ say in Luke 12:15?
5. 📖152–153 In the margin record your first reaction to each one of these verses, even if you're troubled:
 Psalm 139:16
 Acts 17:26–28
 Ephesians 2:10
 Psalm 33:10–12
6. 📖153 Just before the next question, Beth writes, "... God is the only one looking through every layer and at every implication. He also looks upon a situation in context of what *is*, what *was*, and what *is to come*. His deliberations don't just involve immediate impact. He sees our place and our positions amid carefully woven generations." Then she asks: What difference, if any, might these thoughts make in your present struggle?
7. What was your reaction to the "What if" questions on the bottom of page 153?
8. 🕒 What stood out to you most about this week's lesson? Why?



WEEK SIX

POWERFUL EFFECTS

Day One

GETTING & GIVING

Timing: Day 1 ~15 min.; Day 2 ~25 min.; Day 3 ~35 min.

Discussion Reading: James 5:1–6

1. ⌚ What did you think about this statement on p. 158 (2nd paragraph): “If humankind fails in compassion and lets oppression prosper, the land itself will tattle and the blood of innocents will wail. God will hear and, in time, He will act. He will also call see-no-evils to serious task.”
2. ✳️158 What does Leviticus 19:13 say?
3. When we’re holding our heart open before God to know if He’s happy with our actions, we may shed tears for one of the following reasons (p. 159). How do you try to determine which you’re experiencing at any given time?
 - The Devil harasses us (spiritual warfare)
 - Self-condemnation
 - Conviction (a gift from God)
 - Fear tears (fear of sinning against God)
4. ❤️162 Ancient Latin moralists used a phrase that means “the accursed love of getting.” Sit on that a second. How could such a love be “accursed”? Plan to discuss this one with your group.
5. On the bottom of page 162, Beth gave two suggestions for how “we gorged ones might ... make room in our lives for love and obedience.” (a) What did you think about the first one, “Use it or abuse it”? (b) What did you think about the second one, “If we get something, give something”? (c) Did this cause anyone to take time out this week to give some things away? If so, what did you learn?

Day Two

TO PROVE THE LORD'S BOASTS

Timing: Day 2 ~25 min.; Day 3 ~35 min.

Discussion Reading: James 5:7-11

1. ♥163 List three reasons why patience might be infinitely more challenging in our current culture.
2. How did you react to this statement in the middle of page 164: “A person has hardly begun to have a real fight on her hands until she starts serving in her full-throttle giftedness and effectiveness. She who proves a threat earns an enemy you can bet will do everything he can to make her sorry.”
3. 📖164 Flip to Job 1:8 and record the question the Lord asked Satan:
4. 📖164 How did the Lord describe Job in the same verse?
5. 📖164 Now, read Job 1:9-12. What claim of Satan became the springboard for the most legendary test in human history?
6. 📖166 What six words did you write in the margin that explains why God allows trials in the life of righteous persons?
7. 📖166 Write a one-sentence summation of Job’s response in 42:1-6.
8. ⌚ What did you think about this statement in the third paragraph on page 167: “That’s the thing about the suffering of God’s own faithful children. The end He desires to bring about is never just for those involved. It’s also for those who *hear*. For those who *see*.”
9. ✨167 What exactly was the “outcome from the Lord” (Jas. 5:11) according to Job 42:12?
10. 📖167 How does Isaiah 61:7 tie to Job in 42:12?
11. ⌚ Would someone like to read the amazing quotation from Job at the bottom of page 167?

Day Three

A YES KIND OF YES

Timing: Day 3 ~35 min.

Discussion Reading: James 5:12

1.  168 What appears to be the issue at hand in James 5:12?
2.  168 How does Hebrews 6:13 say God is unique regarding oaths?
3.   169 What are the first four words of Deuteronomy 10:21?
4.   169 In the margin list all the reasons residing in that five-verse segment (Deut. 10:17-21) why God is worthy to be our praise.
5.  169 In terms of our subject matter today, Deuteronomy 10:20 encapsulates the instruction we'll find most intriguing. At the end of the verse, what did Moses tell them to do?
6.  169 Read Deuteronomy 23:21-23 and record its basic instructions.
7.  Would someone like to read the verse in the margin of p. 169?
8. James has been quoting from Leviticus 19 all throughout his letter. Leviticus 19:12 says, "You must not swear falsely by My name, profaning the name of your God; I am Yahweh." James 4:14 says, "You don't even know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be!" What do these two verses have to do with each other? (See the last two paragraphs of p. 169 if needed.)
9.  170 On p. 170 are two Scriptures. The left column shows Jesus' words from Matthew 5:34-37, while the right column shows James' words from James 5:12. The instructions say to read each carefully and circle every corresponding portion, then draw a line between them to connect them. What did you circle and what did you connect?
10.  171 Satan is ecstatic when we make a vow and don't keep it. Can you think of any reasons why? Think of a few past the obvious.
11.  (a) Why were people swearing personal oaths by earth, Jerusalem, or their own heads (see second to last paragraph p. 171)? (b) Why did Jesus command personal oaths to cease altogether?
12. Beth said, "It would be just like God to give us the privilege to be tested soon but only so we can pass with flying colors. Let's keep an eye out for a test and ... share it with your small group" (p. 172). Did you have such a test this week that you'd like to share about?
13.  What stood out to you most about this week's lesson? Why?

Day Four

SOMETHING WE CAN DO

Timing: Day 4 ~25 min.; Day 5 ~50 min.

Discussion Reading: James 5:13–16

1. 📖 174 In verses 13-14, James roll-calls people in one of three conditions. What are each of the conditions and the prescriptions that go with them?
2. ❤️ 175 Name a few reasons why we can't be healthy believers if we disassociate all of our good feelings or merriment from God.
3. ✨ 175 "Is anyone cheerful? He should _____?"
4. 📖 175 Can you think of any good reason for this particular prescription to the glad-hearted? If so, record it.
5. Do you sing praises alone, at home with family, or mainly just at church? Why?
6. What is your favorite hymn or praise song?
7. 🎧 Which Christian music artists have you been listening to this week?

Day Five

TO PRAY & TO BE PRAYED FOR

Timing: Day 5 ~50 min.

Discussion Reading: James 5:17–20

1.  178 Could you use the reminder right about now that prayer is never a waste of time? If so, why?
2.  178 Reread James 5:14. What are the conditions and instructions?

Asa experienced God's blessings in battle, but late in his reign a prophet rebuked him for making a covenant with a king rather than seeking God's help. Enraged, he persecuted the prophet. When his feet became diseased, he still refused to seek God's help.

3.  179 Exactly what did Asa do to displease the Lord?
4.  179 In your own words, what does James 5:15 say?
5.  179 What piece of information is significant in our discussion?
6. If possible, share about a time you prayed for healing and God answered yes. How did God bring glory from that?
7. If possible, share about a time you prayed for healing and God answered no, but you saw God bring glory from it.
8. (a) Name a person who inspires you because of their faith through difficulty and prayers answered no. Why does this person inspire you? (b) What do we learn from those who remain faithful over great hardship?
9. How do you stay faithful through loss?
10. If God answers a prayer request no and we abandon Him over it, how does the thing we wanted become an idol more important to us than God?

If your group is comfortable with different opinions, this next question could be interesting.

11.  180 Beth says, "Until [God raises us up to His glorious presence] . . . , I can tell you what this woman is going to do: I'm going to believe God for healing—for those I'm interceding for and for myself—until He clearly tells me no. What about you? You don't have to agree! Please share your true stance.
12. James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to one another." (a) If you've sinned against someone and they know it, why is it a good idea to confess your sin to that person and apologize (Matthew 5:23-24)? (b) If you're working to overcome a sinful habit, how might it help to have a trusted accountability partner to whom you honestly confess how you're doing?
13.  Many Christians who travel without a spouse have accountability partners to quiz them on how they face the extra temptations inherent in trips; do you think that's a good idea? Explain.



WEEK SEVEN

ON THE WAY HOME

Day One

SCRIPTURE'S LAST GLIMPSE

Timing: Day 1 ~25 min.; Day 2 ~25 min.; Day 3 ~25 min.

Discussion Reading: Acts 21:13-25

1. 187 What was Paul's response in Acts 21:13-14?
2. Does Paul's response surprise you? Why or why not?
3. (a) If possible, describe a time you felt impressed by God to do something difficult and costly. (b) How might obeying God's commands be costly on earth (for instance, not lying, apologizing to those we've wronged, avoiding sexual immorality)?
4. 187 Now, read Acts 21:15-19 where you find our James mentioned. What was the context and James' involvement?
5. 188 A wave of relief must have washed over Paul in the first part of Acts 21:20. How did James and the elders react?
6. 189 In the margin briefly record what James and the elders requested from Paul (Acts 21:20-25)?
7. 189 Paul did as they asked and 1 Corinthians 9:20 best explains why. What was Paul's perspective? Respond in the margin.
8. 190 Some Jews from Asia saw Paul in the temple. They seized him and accused him of bringing a Gentile into a strictly prohibited area. They were wrong but convincing enough that the whole crowd howled with the wolves. Read Acts 21:30-36 and record the results in the margin.
9. 190 A plan intended to protect Paul and keep him from further trouble ironically tumbled him into the fury of it. Picture yourself in the situation. What if you'd been James? How do you think you might have responded with the news? Share your thoughts in the margin.
10. "Sometimes we mean well and things don't turn out well. And, still, God gets it done" (p. 190). What help could Paul and James' situation give you when you fear your good intentions have cost others?

Day Two

PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT

Timing: Day 2 ~25 min.; Day 3 ~25 min.

Discussion Reading: Psalms 116:15

1. 🕒📖193 Read Acts 24:27 carefully. How much time passed?
2. 🕒📖193 What governor took Felix's place?
3. 🕒📖193 What happened to Paul?
4. Festus died in AD 62. In the months before his successor arrived, the High Priest Ananus arrested and murdered James. What struck you the most about James' martyrdom?
5. (a) What does Psalm 116:15 (the verse we began with) tell us about how the Lord feels about the death of His saints? (b) Why do you think this is? (c) How does He feel about your death?
6. ✨195 Although the Scripture doesn't record James' death, it tells us about a similar death: the martyrdom of Stephen. What did Stephen say as he was dying?
7. ❤️195 What would you most like to ask James, should you meet him in Heaven?

Day Three

NOT ONE STONE

Timing: Day 3 ~25 min. If you've less time than that, skip the optional questions or plan to finish next week.

Discussion Reading: Luke 19:28-44

1. 📖196 What do you have on your timeline?
2. ❤️197 What does Galatians 3:29 mean to you about your identity?
3. 🕒📖198 What was the occasion described in Luke 19:28-40?
4. 📖199 What was Jesus described as doing in Luke 19:41?
5. 📖199 According to Luke 19:42, why?
6. ✨199 What did Jesus specifically prophesy in Luke 19:43-44?
7. How does the fact that James and the apostles were willing to die rather than recant their testimony of having seen Jesus resurrected strengthen their witness?

If the gals struggle with the next question, ask what it would take for them to believe their own sibling was the Lord of glory.

8. James called his half brother, "our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory" (James 2:1). Why is James' willingness to die for this belief a particularly strong testimony?
9. 🕒 What stood out to you most about this week's lesson? Why?

Day Four

LIVING STONES

Timing: Day 4 ~15 min.; Day 5 ~60 min.

Discussion Reading: Mark 13:1-4, 14

1. 📖201 Something in AD 70 happened of tremendous significance. What was it?
2. 📖201 In Mark 13:1, one of the disciples called Jesus to look at several specific objects. What were they?
3. 📖201 To be sure we draw the most obvious link to our previous lesson, how did Jesus respond in Mark 13:2?
4. 📖202 What two questions did the disciples ask Jesus in Mark 13:4)?
5. 📖202 What did Jesus say to do “when you see the abomination that causes desolation standing where it should not”?
6. 🕒📖202 Fasten your attention to AD 66. Did you document what happened that year? What was it?
7. 📖203 How is Christ depicted in 1 Peter 2:6?
8. ❤️203 What two-word term did Peter give to believers in Christ in 1 Peter 2:5? “You yourselves, as ...”
9. 📖203 What exactly were they (and are we!) being “built into”?
10. ✨203 What insight or inspiration does 1 Peter 2:5,9 bring to your faith walk?
11. 🕒 Let’s read together the framed verse on page 205.

Day Five

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Timing: Day 5 ~60 min.

Discussion Reading: Instead of beginning with a reading, each person can read the verses selected on page 209

1. 📖📖208 How would you describe your finishing feelings?

Have everyone share their answers to chapter 1, then chapter 2, etc.

2. *209 The principle question on page 209 says, “Write the Scripture reference and the concept that stood out to you most and, as much as space allows, why it resonated.” Please read us the verse you selected and then tell us why it resonated, beginning with chapter 1.

James 1

James 2

James 3

James 4

James 5

James' Life

3. ♥211 What do you want to do in light of what you've learned?