



Week 46: James

Study Guide for the week of Nov. 9-15

Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, take time to ponder James 3:5-12.

Spend some time and reflect on your speech. When have you used your speech to bless another person? To curse another? Are you aware of the power of your speech? Is the childhood rhyme, “sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me” actually true? Have you ever been blessed by the words someone spoke to you? Cursed by the words someone spoke to you?

Take a few moments at the end of each day this week and ask God to show you first where you used words to bless and where you may have used words to curse another person. Ask for an increased awareness of the power of your words and for God’s power to use words only to be a blessing to others.

Discussion starters

1. There are many reasons for unanswered prayer. Reread James 1:6-8 and 4:3 to discover two of those reasons. What other reasons for unanswered prayer can you name? Have you experienced unanswered prayer? How did/are you dealing with it?
2. How do you define pure religion? How does the world define it? How does James define pure religion (James 1:27)? Is this a new definition? Hint: read Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8; Jer 7:5-11. How can we practice religion that is pure?
3. Psychologists and sociologists know that people cannot act in opposition to their core beliefs. James was centuries before his time in understanding this. Reread James 2:14-26. Is James saying good works are needed to be in a relationship with God (salvation) or is he arguing that faith naturally leads to actions? Could people guess your faith by just watching you?
4. What is your experience of prayer? Have you had the opportunity to pray in and with a group? Have you had the chance to have someone pray for you face-to-face? What were those experiences like? As you end your small group time, spend some time praying for each other – whether they are cheerful or suffering – and know that your prayers are powerful (James 5:16).

Bible verse to memorize: James 2:17