

CHURCH AT THE CROSSING
SIX-WEEK SPIRITUAL GROWTH JOURNEY



LIFE HACKS FOR TOUGH TIMES

THE BOOK OF JAMES

SPIRITUAL GROWTH GUIDE

A Note from Pastor James

Hello Church Family,

I am looking forward to all God will do during this season as we journey together through the book of James.

My prayer for each of us as we dive into Scripture over the next several weeks is to experience the presence of God in a new and fresh way. I am praying that the Holy Spirit will speak truth, love, and hope into your life each day as you encounter the wonderful and amazing Word of God.

Please join me in praying for God to challenge and change us through His Word.

Blessings to you, my friend.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Roberts', with a stylized, flowing script.

James Roberts
Senior Pastor

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How to Use this Book

Welcome to our study of our new message series, "Things Jesus Never Said." For the next six weeks, we will focus on three things as a church:

- Attend a weekly service online or in person: Thursday 7:07 PM, Sunday 9:30 AM and 11 AM.
- Join a group
- Spend time individually with God each day

To get the most out of this journey, we encourage you to participate in all three. This book is a tool to help achieve these goals.

For each one of the six weeks, you will find the following resources here:

- A space for sermon notes
- That week's Group Guide (basis for your group discussion)
- A sample S.O.A.P. written by a staff member to start off your week
- A S.O.A.P. passage and guide for each of the remaining days for you to use in your time with God (with a day off to catch-up if you need it)

We have designed each week of this book to begin on Sundays. If you want to start on a different day of the week - no problem! Also, if you have found another model helpful and beneficial in engaging Scripture, please feel free to use that! S.O.A.P. is just one of many tools which help us to see what is happening in a biblical passage and how God might want us to apply that to our lives.

Make this book your own! Not everyone's journey looks the same, but what is important is that we are all moving toward God together and with intentionality.

Other Tips For Your Devotional Time

You can expect that your S.O.A.P. devotional time will take about 15-20 minutes each day. It isn't a strict rule to be followed, but a model that you can use to interact with God. Some days might be easier than others, some days might involve more insight than others.

Please reference the S.O.A.P. examples as a template for how others have used this tool. Everyone brings their own style and personality to this tool. That's good! This is your time with God; it doesn't need to be done in a rigid and rote way.

The most important part is that you exercise these spiritual muscles. God will speak! All we have to do is be willing to spend time with him.

It can be helpful to decide ahead of time where and when you will spend this devotional time in Scripture and with God. If it helps to decide and commit to that here and now, go ahead! You may want to share these with your group for accountability and encouragement.

The place I will spend my time with God each day for the next 6 weeks:

The time I will spend my time with God each day for the next 6 weeks:

S.O.A.P. Instructions and Tips

Sometimes it can be hard to know how to get something out of reading your Bible. We don't want to just read, we want the words to transform us, give us hope, guidance, and help us become more like Jesus. The S.O.A.P. tool is one way to help dig in deeper.

What does S.O.A.P. mean?

S– The S stands for Scripture

As you read that passage for each day, be on the lookout for words or phrases that strike you. Take a few minutes to physically write them down, making yourself slow down and take them in.

O– The O stands for observation

Ask yourself questions like: What is happening in the passage? Who is the audience? What do you learn about God and people? Are there any examples, promises or commands to note? Sometimes it can help to record these things in a bullet list.

A– The A stands for Application

This is an opportunity for God's Word to become personal. Reflect on the following: what is God saying to me? How can I apply what I just read to my own personal life? What changes do I need to make? Is there a step of faith that I need to take?

P– The P stands for Prayer

Prayer is two-way communication with God. What do you sense God may want you to take away from your time? A step you need to take? Ask Him for help and encouragement if you need it. Use this time for confession and repentance if you need to, in order to restore your intimacy with him.

Overview

The book of James is an epistle, or letter, that is part of the New Testament. The interpretation of this letter is to instruct Christians on how to live and demonstrate their personal faith through their actions, not just through their speech. James provides illustrations and reminders on how to bring both ideals together as one, not thinking of them as separate entities. We are unsure of the target audience James was writing to as they are referred to as, "...the twelve tribes scattered among the nations..." (James 1:1). It could have been the Jewish Christians or the Gentile Christians of whom were suffering from persecution and poverty at that time. James was urging them to rid their beliefs of worldly desires and replace it with Christian beliefs and teachings as modeled by Christ.

Author & Dates

It is widely believed by scholars that this letter was written by James, the brother of Jesus. James was an apostle, a disciple of Jesus, and a leader in the Jerusalem church. Paul referred to James as a pillar in the Jerusalem church in Galatians 2:9, indicating his status. Scholars believe this book was written between AD late 40's – AD early 50's.

Key Themes

- God is a giving, unchanging, gracious, compassionate, and merciful God.
- Through the tests and trials of life, God will give you patience and endurance to journey through it. Ask for it fervently in prayer and believe it with an unwavering heart.
- When difficult situations arise, pray and respond in a Christ-like way no matter the situation or circumstance.
- Serve everyone around you, not for recognition or praise. Do so with a servant's heart as modeled by Christ.
- Always obey God through your daily actions and speech. Don't just do it when it is convenient for you as God will not honor that.
- God will give the final judgment in all things. Through that, He has given us the promise of everlasting life with Him in heaven through His son, Jesus Christ.

Week 1: James 1:2-18

Sermon Notes

What stood out to me...

One thing I learned about God...

One thing I can apply to my life...

How I'm going to pray this week...

Week 1: James 1:2-18

Group Guide

Break the Ice (15 Minutes)

- What is your favorite TV show and why?
- What do you do to cheer up when you're feeling down?
- In your family, who does everyone lean on in hard times?

Check In (10 Minutes)

- What is one thing you would like to get out of this six-week journey?
- Pray, thanking God for those present, and ask God to lead your discussion.

Learn Together (15 Minutes)

Read James 1:2-18

- According to James, what should be a Christian's attitude when facing trials? How often is this your attitude in your own hard times?
- Why is perseverance important? What reward comes with persevering in the faith?
- What does it mean to be a 'double-minded' person? How can one avoid being double-minded?
- Why do we blame God for trials and temptations?
- Why do you think James ends this thought with "do not be deceived"? In what ways are we deceived/ in danger of being deceived regarding temptations? What are the dangers involved for us?

Act On It (15 Minutes)

- How have the trials you've experienced brought you closer to (or pushed you further away) from God?
- How does this passage conflict with our culture of instant gratification? How should our example of handling trials stand out as light in a dark world?
- We live in a world that is desperate need of hope. What hope does James say God has for us? How would you communicate this to people in difficult situations that you encounter?
- When do you find it hardest to pray?

Pray Together (10 Minutes)

As your group time closes, your group leader will give any updates or news that you might want to take note of. You will also pray as a group. Use this space to write down how you can pray for your group members throughout the coming week.

Week 1: James 1:2-18

Sunday Example S.O.A.P.

Author: Andrea Capsel

Scripture:

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business. Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. (NIV)

Observation:

- James speaks directly to the trials and temptations you will experience. He reassures us that we will gain perseverance, wisdom and trust in God.
- God gives us strength and endurance to get through trials. By seeking Him through it, we gain wisdom and strengthen our relationship with Him.
- James instructs us that when asking for wisdom, one should believe with their whole heart, and seek wisdom from Him and the bible. We shouldn’t sway back and forth, nor have little faith in what God can do.

- James reminds us to not rely on ourselves. We should rely on our unchanging, merciful God who has given us the promise of Heaven.

Application:

James is very direct to his readers in that we will experience hardships in life, and that it can be difficult to get through. We are to fully rely on God and fully trust that He will give us strength, wisdom, and courage to face whatever is in front of us. I've experienced difficult times in my life. At times, I wasn't even sure if God was hearing my prayers or trusting that He would lead me through it. Despite feeling that way, I was still seeking God and asking Him to show me what to do, and I was looking for Him in the little things every day to find encouragement. I can say with confidence that God brought me through it and my faith and trust in God is so much stronger because of it. I can look back and see how God was protecting me, guiding me, and how He blessed me through it. God hears you; God sees you, and God is with you through it all!

Prayer:

God, even in the hardships I have faced in life, I know you are steadfast and never changing. You have shown me such mercy and love, and you give me strength each and every day. God, I thank you for walking with me, for carrying me through the tough times, and for strengthening my trust and relationship with you. You have blessed me and shown me your unwavering love and I am so thankful. Please help me continue to seek you first no matter the circumstance. I pray all these things in your name, amen!

Week 1: James 1:2-18

Monday S.O.A.P

Scripture: James 1:2-11

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 1: James 1:2-18

Tuesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: James 1: 12-18

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 1: James 1:2-18

Wednesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 29:3-12

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 1: James 1:2-18

Thursday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 3:3-10

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 1: James 1:2-18

Friday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 2: James 1:22-27

Sermon Notes

What stood out to me...

One thing I learned about God...

One thing I can apply to my life...

How I'm going to pray this week...

Group Guide

Break the Ice (15 Minutes)

- Why do we tend to surround ourselves only with people who agree with us? Do you have any friends who challenge you in a good and healthy way?
- How do you react when you are in church or reading the Bible on your own and something rubs you the wrong way?

Check In (10 Minutes)

- What was one thing that stuck out to you from your devotion time last week?
- Pray, thanking God for those present, and ask God to lead your discussion.

Learn Together (15 Minutes)

Read James 1:22-27

- Summarize verses 22–25. What is James's point here?
- What promise did James give to the person who studies God's Word and practices it?
- Why should we never walk away from time in God's Word without finding at least one way to apply it to our lives?
- Why is it so important for James to mention the tongue in verse 26?
- In verse 27, what is so significant about having a desire to care for orphans and widows? Why would James highlight it as a mark of genuine faith?

Act On It (15 Minutes)

- When was a time you wish you had been "quick to listen" and "slow to speak" (v.19)?
- In what area of your life could you do a better job at applying God's Word rather than merely listening to it?
- What can you do to protect yourself from being "polluted by the world" (v.27) in the coming week?
- What can we do this week to help one another live out the truth of the gospel - the perfect law of freedom? When and where do you need reminders of who God is and who you are in Christ?

Pray Together (10 Minutes)

As your group time closes, your group leader will give any updates or news that you might want to take note of. You will also pray as a group. Use this space to write down how you can pray for your group members throughout the coming week.

Week 2: James 1:22-27

Sunday Example S.O.A.P.

Author: Tim Lucas

Scripture:

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive ourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Observation:

- James is very concerned with his recipients understanding what true spiritual growth is. Not just learning things but putting them into practice in a way that gives life.
- He also shares that not doing what the word says causes confusion in our lives and the lives of others.
- The way to blessing is by approaching the word with a confidence that following it will bring freedom and joy.
- Another emphasis here is the connection between spiritual maturity and what words come out of our mouths.
- Then, he moves very practically to how we can show that our 'religion' is pure and meaningful; by caring for and providing things for orphans and widows.

Application:

- One of the ways I can work toward applying this in my life is to ask the Holy Spirit to help me put into practice what I read in my time with God.
- Then, I can ask God to help me recognize opportunities in real time to do what the word says.
- Recalling to mind that freedom, joy, and blessing come from walking in God's ways.
- Be aware of those around me who are in need (such as widows and orphans) and be exceedingly generous toward them.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for loving me and speaking to me personally. Help my faith to increase and my trust level to deepen in you, especially when you call me to things that seem outside of my control. Time after time in my life you have provided for me. You are faithful, lead me to a greater dependence and obedience in my daily walk with you.

Week 2: James 1:22-27

Monday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: James 1:22-27

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 2: James 1:22-27

Tuesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Proverbs 18:12-18

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 2: James 1:22-27

Wednesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Zechariah 3:6-10

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 2: James 1:22-27

Thursday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Romans 1:1-10

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 2: James 1:22-27

Friday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Romans 6:15-23

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 3: James 2:14-26

Sermon Notes

What stood out to me...

One thing I learned about God...

One thing I can apply to my life...

How I'm going to pray this week...

Group Guide

Break the Ice (15 Minutes)

- What is the worst product you have ever bought that just didn't function as advertised?
- Are you more likely to act without thinking or think without acting?
- What kinds of things might keep us from putting our faith into action in our workplaces, our neighborhoods, and other parts of our lives outside of the church?

Check In (10 Minutes)

- What stood out to you the most from this week's message?
- Pray, thanking God for those present, and ask God to lead your discussion.

Learn Together (15 Minutes)

Read James 2:14-26

- What kind of faith is condemned in verse 14? In what ways does this still happen today?
- What is the relationship between faith and deeds, according to James?
- Summarize verses 22–25. What is James's point here?
- What promise did James give to the person who studies God's Word and practices it?
- Why should we never walk away from time in God's Word without finding at least one way to apply it to our lives?
- Why is it so important for James to mention the tongue in verse 26?

Act On It (15 Minutes)

- Is there an area of your life that you haven't given over to Jesus? If so, why? What is one positive step you can take in that direction?
- Why is it so easy for us to receive truth without reflecting on it and putting it into practice with our lives?
- How does what we say reveal what's in our minds and hearts? What do your recent words reveal about you?
- Which of the following is most difficult for you: listening intently to people, being slow to speak, or being slow to get angry? What can you do to grow in this area of your life?
- Find time this week to commune with God alone. Pray and confess to God how you have been showing favoritism. Ask for God's forgiveness, for the opportunity to ask forgiveness from the individual(s), and to show you how to avoid that in the future.

Pray Together (10 Minutes)

As your group time closes, your group leader will give any updates or news that you might want to take note of. You will also pray as a group. Use this space to write down how you can pray for your group members throughout the coming week.

Week 3: James 2:14-26

Sunday Example S.O.A.P.

Author: Sarah Whitney

Scripture:

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless[a]? Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Observation:

- You cannot have faith without action
- James gives a practical example: A person who is cold and hungry cannot be fed and nourished by telling them to be warm and well fed. You must give them food and warmth.
- Let your actions be louder than your words
- Even demons believe that there is one God

- James gives an example from the old testament: Abraham had great faith in God and proved it by being obedient, even when it meant sacrificing his son, Isaac.
- God blessed Abraham, because of his faith through action and obedience (by providing a ram)
- Righteousness is when you act because
- of your faith
- James gives a second example from the old testament: Rahab (from Jericho) and the spies. Rahab had faith in God and acted on her faith by helping the spies.
- Faith + action is everything!

Application:

Something that stood out to me was how straightforward James was in explaining faith and action (works) and how your actions should be the outward expression of your faith. You can't see faith, but you (and others) can see your faith when it is lived out through your actions. I see how easily this passage connects to where we currently are as a church family. Now is the time to live out the faith we have in Jesus and meet the needs of those around us! Each day we have the opportunity to Go. Love. ONE MORE by serving others because of our love for Jesus. So, where is God calling me to act? To serve? How can I be the hands and feet of Jesus? Loving God = Loving others. Let's do this together, church family!

Prayer:

Father, thank you for loving me right where I am! I pray that you will open my eyes and my heart to those around me. Help me know how to live out my faith so that my words and my actions align with your Word. Give me courage to always live out my faith, even in difficult times. Amen.

Week 3: James 2:14-26

Monday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: James 2:14-19

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 3: James 2:14-26

Tuesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: James 2:20-26

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 3: James 2:14-26

Wednesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:3-10

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 3: James 2:14-26

Thursday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Titus 1:10-16

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 3: James 2:14-26

Friday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:1-11

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 4: James 3:1-12

Sermon Notes

What stood out to me...

One thing I learned about God...

One thing I can apply to my life...

How I'm going to pray this week...

Week 4: James 3:1-12

Group Guide

Break the Ice (15 Minutes)

- What is one of the most meaningful, kind things that has ever been said to you?
- Think of a time when you said something you shouldn't have. How did you deal with it?

Check In (10 Minutes)

- How has your faith been growing throughout the last few weeks?
- Pray, thanking God for those present, and ask God to lead your discussion.

Learn Together (15 Minutes)

Read James 3:1-12

- Why is it such a big responsibility to be a teacher, especially for the Scripture?
- What do the examples of the bit, rudder and fire teach about the importance of watching what we say?
- In light of verse 8, what hope do we have in relation to controlling our tongues?
- How do verses 2 and 10 make you feel about what you say? How will they prompt you to pray?
- How does this section relate to the overall theme(s) of James?

Act On It (15 Minutes)

- How is it that we can lose awareness of just how powerful our words can be? What helps us grow in that awareness?
- How does understanding Jesus as God's "better word" help us better understand how we should use our words?
- Jesus and the apostles Peter and Paul were not always very "tame" when it came to the tongue. When is harsh language acceptable?
- What are some practical steps you might take to help control your "tongue" in a godly way?

Pray Together (10 Minutes)

As your group time closes, your group leader will give any updates or news that you might want to take note of. You will also pray as a group. Use this space to write down how you can pray for your group members throughout the coming week.

Week 4: James 3:1-12

Sunday Example S.O.A.P.

Author: Sam Bate

Scripture:

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Observation:

- Not all of us are called to be teachers.
- Despite the tongue being a small part of the whole body, it can cause a lot of sin and pain by itself.
- God has called us to say only good things about each other.
- We, as humans, are going to make mistakes and sin.

- With the same mouth we can praise God and also curse another person.

Application:

In these verses, there are so many great images of how powerful words can be. The one that really stood out to me was the image of how words are like a spark that can set a whole forest on fire. We are called to be mindful of the power that our words hold and the impact that they may have on other people. Along with the words that we say to others, I think we should also take a step back and look at what we say to ourselves sometimes. If the words we say to ourselves are negative (salt water) then how can we later expect to have an encouraging word for someone else (fresh water). This verse also reminds me of all of the good that we can do with our words. We can pray for a friend who is going through a lot. We can worship the Lord when good and bad things are happening in our own lives. We can choose to turn a negative word into one with encouragement and power.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, please let me be a good word in a world of sin. Please help me to understand and apply what I have read today to my life personally, thereby becoming more and more like you each and every day. Lord, when it seems easy to say something negative I ask that you give me two good things to say instead. Our words are powerful and with you, become meaningful.

Week 4: James 3:1-12

Monday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: James 3:1-6

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 4: James 3:1-12

Tuesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: James 3:7-12

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 4: James 3:1-12

Wednesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Matthew 12:30-37

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 4: James 3:1-12

Thursday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: 2 Peter 2:17-22

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 4:James 3:1-12

Friday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:1-7

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 5: James 4:5-17

Sermon Notes

What stood out to me...

One thing I learned about God...

One thing I can apply to my life...

How I'm going to pray this week...

Group Guide

Break the Ice (15 Minutes)

- What is something you thought you would have accomplished by this point in your life, but haven't?
- Are you a long-range planner, or do you take one day at a time?

Check In (10 Minutes)

- When did the message of James seem especially relevant this past week? How did you apply what you're learning to your daily life?
- Pray, thanking God for those present, and ask God to lead your discussion.

Learn Together (15 Minutes)

Read James 4:5-17

- What is the root of fights and quarrels?
- Ponder verse 3. Is every desire a good desire? How do you tell the difference between a good desire and a bad one?
- Read verses 4-12. How would you summarize in one sentence what James is saying here?
- Read verses 13-17. What are some ways you sometimes act or speak with overconfidence? Why do you do this?

Act On It (15 Minutes)

- When you fight, do you seek to understand what desire is really motivating you? Do you pray about this desire? Where do you need to improve?
- What "desires" seem to drive the world around us? What can we do to overcome the lure of the world?
- How can pride affect your relationship with God? How does it affect your relationships with other people?
- In your opinion, can self-assertiveness and humility co-exist?
- How does the cross give hope to those of us who haven't done the right thing? How does that hope lead us to humility?

Pray Together (10 Minutes)

As your group time closes, your group leader will give any updates or news that you might want to take note of. You will also pray as a group. Use this space to write down how you can pray for your group members throughout the coming week.

Week 5: James 4:5-17

Sunday Example S.O.A.P.

Passage: Matthew 6:5-15

Author: John Drake

Scripture:

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. "This, then, is how you should pray: "'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Observation:

- Prayer is not a show for people, but a conversation with God.
- We can speak honestly and simply to God. He is not moved by big words and fancy phrases.
- Recognize Him for who He is – honor Him. Tell Him so.
- Recognize He wants to provide for us – ask Him for the things we need.

- Recognize He wants to lead us in good ways - trust and ask Him to do that.
- Realize that forgiving others is our choice, but God directly links our willingness to forgive others to His willingness to forgive us.

Application:

For me, praying to God in private just seems more real. Just He and I. I can throw off every mask and pretense when I talk with Him and know He listens to my heart. Nothing scares Him. But I have to get a handle on this forgiveness thing. Sometimes I struggle when I have been wronged or treated badly. It really helps me when I can pull back on the reins a bit to think of my own shortcomings and my need for God's forgiveness. That is when I become more aware of the "power" of forgiveness in my own life. It is so freeing. I forgive others because it can be a life changer for them. I forgive others because I want to experience God's forgiveness to the fullest in my own life.

Prayer:

Father, I want to speak with you today in simple words and thoughts. Thank you for always being up for an honest conversation. Forgiveness is a big thing. Jesus, you offer it to me that my life would be changed forever. It is an expression of Your love. How convincing it can be for others to realize you are willing to forgive them, if I can first show them some of the same...right here in real time? You know I often wrestle to come to a place of gifting that to others, but I need your forgiveness, and so do others. Who do I need to forgive this week? Holy Spirit please give me the power to do so. In Jesus name, amen.

Week 5: James 4:5-17

Monday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: James 4:5-10

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 5: James 4:5-17

Tuesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: James 4:11-17

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 5: James 4:5-17

Wednesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Galatians 5:22-26

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 5: James 4:5-17

Thursday S.O.A.P

Scripture: Colossians 1:24-29

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 5: James 4:5-17

Friday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 6: James 5:13-20

Sermon Notes

What stood out to me...

One thing I learned about God...

One thing I can apply to my life...

How I'm going to pray this week...

Group Guide

Break the Ice (15 Minutes)

- What is a luxury you don't think you could live without that didn't even exist 100 years ago?
- What is one thing for which you have a very difficult time waiting?

Check In (10 Minutes)

- How have you seen God at work in your life throughout this journey?
- Pray, thanking God for those present, and ask God to lead your discussion.

Learn Together (15 Minutes)

Read James 5:13-20

- How does James instruct us to respond to the joys and pains of life (v. 13)?
- What do you think verse 16 means?
- How does James use Elijah as an example for his readers (vs. 17-18)?
- The main focus in 5:13-20 is prayer. What implications does this carry with regard to James' discussion of the person who wanders away from following Jesus in 5:19-20?

Act On It (15 Minutes)

- How does the farmer image relate to our waiting? What situation in your life could take a lesson from the farmer?
- Have you ever confessed your sins to other trusted believers and received prayer? in what way can that experience bring forgiveness, healing and new life?
- How is confession and prayer a part of the healing process? What is the connection between the physical and spiritual areas of our life?
- When have you come the closest to wandering from the faith? What (or who) helped bring you back? How does that demonstrate the healing body of Christ?
- Share one or two things you have been challenged by as we have studied James. How can we encourage each other to stay on track for Jesus?

Pray Together (10 Minutes)

As your group time closes, your group leader will give any updates or news that you might want to take note of. You will also pray as a group. Use this space to write down how you can pray for your group members throughout the coming week.

Week 6: James 5:13-20

Sunday Example S.O.A.P.

Author: Lauren Miller

Scripture:

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.[a] Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Observation:

- James tells us there are many circumstances in life that call for prayer and praise (suffering, happiness, and sickness).
- When James tells us to “call for the elders of the church”, he is telling us to call on others to pray with us, not to just pray alone.
- James encourages us to confess our sins and pray together in community with others.

- Elijah was a man just like us and God heard and answered his bold prayers.
- James concludes his letter by encouraging us to pray for our brothers and sisters who have wandered from the truth.

Application:

After reading this passage of scripture, I feel called to pray with more faith. It is encouraging to me that James uses Elijah as an example in this passage. Elijah was a human just like me with weaknesses, sins and doubt. God looks past our weaknesses and forgives our sins. He looks for our faith and when we pray with faith there is great power. After reading this scripture, I am also encouraged to turn to my small group for support and prayer. I am reminded of the importance of confiding in a friend to confess my sins and pray together.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for your grace that looks past my weaknesses. I praise you for your great power that lives in me. I pray that I am reminded that the “prayers of a righteous person have great power.” Grow my faith to pray bold prayers for healing. I pray for my brothers and sisters that are far from you. God. I pray they are reminded of your steadfast love. I pray for opportunities to show them and speak to them about your redeeming grace. Thank you for hearing my prayers and growing my faith. Amen.

Week 6: James 5:13-20

Monday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: James 5:13-20

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 6: James 5:13-20

Tuesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Acts 1:1-8

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 6: James 5:13-20

Wednesday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: Acts 5:33-42

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 6: James 5:13-20

Thursday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:1-12

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

Week 6: James 5:13-20

Friday S.O.A.P.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Observation:

Application:

Prayer:

References

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2. Gilbert, G., Packer, J. I., & Ortlund, D. C. (2013).
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