

True Religion

THE BOOK OF JAMES

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Acts 1:1-11

NOTE: As a guide, use these questions to help with group discussion. Not all questions are needed. Select the ones that will best serve your group as you grow in Christ together through His Word. Soli Deo Gloria.

ICE BREAKER:

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT IN CONTEXT:

What is the significance of James describing 'the sin of partiality' immediately after his final instructions at the end of chapter 1?

Why is partiality (judging with 'evil thoughts' [v 4]) such a subtle sin, often going unnoticed or even justified as not-that-bad? What does this partiality reveal about our view of others? And our view of 'our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory' (v. 1) and His 'honorable name' (v. 7)?

Compare the motivation of the three quotes from those being partial (v. 3) with the motivation from Scripture in the three quotes James includes in verse 8 and 11.

CONNECTING TO JESUS AND HIS GOSPEL:

Jesus said that the second greatest commandment was to 'love your neighbor as yourself,' (Mark 12:31 [compare Lev 19:18]). How does showing partiality neglect this commandment? How does it neglect the first commandment to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,' (Matt. 22:37 [compare Deut 6:5])?

How does the Lord's Prayer (and Jesus' comments right after) help us understand the mercy of forgiveness (Matt 6:9-15)? How does Jesus embody mercy?

LIVING OUT THE TRUTH:

Why do you think partiality is considered a minor sin when it clearly goes against Jesus' desire for his children? When being partial 'with evil thoughts' (v. 4), what does it say about us? About our view of others – those we favor and those we dishonor? What does it say about our view of God and His grace (see v. 5)?

Read Galatians 3:28 as a group; include v 26-29 for context. How does v. 28 help your understanding of what partiality means for Christians? What is the difference between a basic distinction and the sin of partiality with evil motives? Does our unity in Christ eliminate every distinction, every gifting, about us? Why or why not?

Pray with and for one another: To be 'unstained' by the sin of partiality; To rejoice in the 'royal law;' To rest confidently in the 'law of liberty' and the mercy we have received from God, through Jesus.

PARENTING MOMENT & FAMILY FOCUS:

Read James 2:1-13 together. Talk together about what it means to show mercy to someone (mercy: being kind to someone, especially when they've made a mistake or are in trouble, and choosing not to punish them when they could). Talk about how to treat everyone (not just some people) with the same kindness the Lord shows toward us. and what that looks like in everyday life.



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