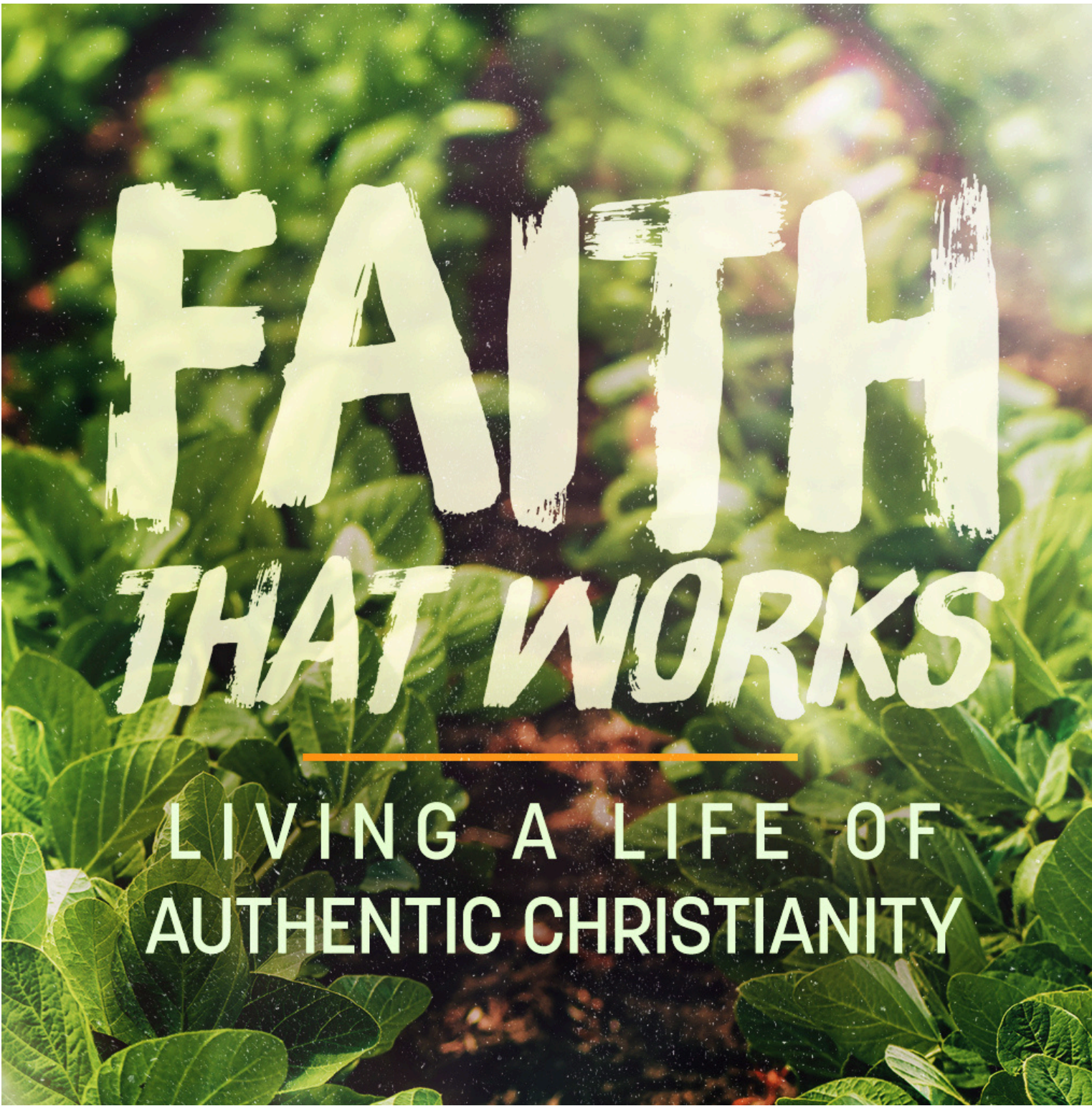




FAITH *THAT WORKS*

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

WEEKS 5-8
LEADER GUIDE



FAITH THAT WORKS

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

WEEK 5

WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

DISCUSS

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

NOTES

[illegible]

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

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LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

Can you share an example of a time when someone's encouraging words gave you a major boost, or conversely, a time when careless words caused lasting damage?

[illegible]

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

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[illegible]

(Open for discussion. Both the bridle bit and the rudder are small parts, yet they control big things! Both must overcome contrary, powerful forces in order to properly guide the whole thing. This requires careful attention and the control of a strong hand to guide them safely. In the same way, our words carry great potential to affect others. We must be responsible to direct them the right way! To do this, our tongue must overcome the “contrary” force of our old sinful nature. On our own, we do not possess that kind of strength, but Christ does!)

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(Open for discussion. Our words can stir people to action, either good or bad. Those who teach or lead others face stricter judgement. They must be sure they use the tongue to share God's truth, and then live out what they teach! We must allow Christ to take our thoughts captive and use our words (tongue) to glorify God!)

What is “trash talk”? Where does it often take place, and what is the goal? What effect does it have when used successfully? How does this relate to what James is teaching us?

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LIVING A LIFE OF
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As evidenced in the Great Chicago Fire, fire burns and hurts, and the burn scars remain long after healing. The same is true for harsh, careless, or hurtful words! Once they have spread, we cannot correct them. They can do permanent damage and continue to spread, ruining reputations and causing heartbreak.

[illegible]

LIVING A LIFE OF
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(Open for discussion)

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LIVING A LIFE OF
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NOTES

(Open for discussion. We can talk about God and what He has done and profess to be Christians, but then be quick to put others down, be impatient in traffic, gossip, seek to appeal to others through flattery, use manipulation to get what we want, complain, exaggerate our circumstances, lie, etc. This is dangerous because our inconsistency reveals a heart problem! We can ruin the gospel message we are to proclaim when we speak words without thought or with evil intent. We can also tarnish our reputation as followers of Christ.)

LIVING A LIFE OF
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Can a bitter person naturally produce sweet, encouraging words? How do we address the source (heart) rather than just managing the symptoms (words)?

(Open for discussion. A bitter person can't naturally produce sweet, encouraging, life-giving words, just as freshwater cannot be drawn from the ocean, because the words we speak are evidence of the heart! Our source of true Living Water is Christ, and He provides us with the cleansing we need to encourage others. In the same way, we can only affect the fruit we bear by looking at the roots. A tree's root system is the key to strong, sturdy growth, and the deeper they grow, the more durable they become. Our roots are able to take hold and grow deep when we spend time with God in prayer and in His Word.)

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LIVING A LIFE OF
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This passage reminds us that “death and life are in the power of the tongue”. What does this tell us about the weight of our everyday conversations? How does it challenge the ideas of “they’re just words” or “I was only joking”?

(Open for discussion. We often overlook the things we say because we often respond on impulse, without thinking. We forget that, though they may seem to be “just words”, hurtful words wound deeply and often permanently. When we are able to control our tongue, we show that our attitudes and impulses are under God’s control, not our own, as we grow in likeness to Christ!)

FAITH THAT WORKS

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Our words always yield real consequences - either life or death. They are the fruit that reveals the state of the heart, and we must use them with restraint. The following proverbs contrast worldly speech (death) with godly speech (life), and give us the consequence of each. For each passage in the chart below, determine the worldly and godly speech and the result or consequence of it.

Passage	Death (Worldly)	Life (Godly)
Proverbs 11:11	Mouth of wretched - tears down, overthrows	Blessings of upright - exalt, build up
Proverbs 11:13	Gossip/Slander - reveals secrets	Trustworthy - gains confidence, keeps things covered
Proverbs 12:13	Rebellious, evil speech - traps and ensnares	Righteous speech - escapes from trouble
Proverbs 12:18	Rash words - like a piercing sword	Wise words - bring healing
Proverbs 12:22	Lying - abomination to the Lord, detestable	Faithful - His delight
Proverbs 15:1	Harsh - stirs up anger, wrath	Soft, gentle - Turns away anger, wrath
Proverbs 15:2	Mouth of fools - foolishness, folly	Tongue of wise - commends knowledge, makes it attractive
Proverbs 15:4	Devious, perverse - breaks the spirit	Gentle, healing - gives life

FAITH THAT WORKS

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NOTES

Read Proverbs 23:15-16

According to this passage, why should we pursue wise words? How can we practically train our hearts and desires to align with God's wisdom rather than be influenced by the world around us and its desires?

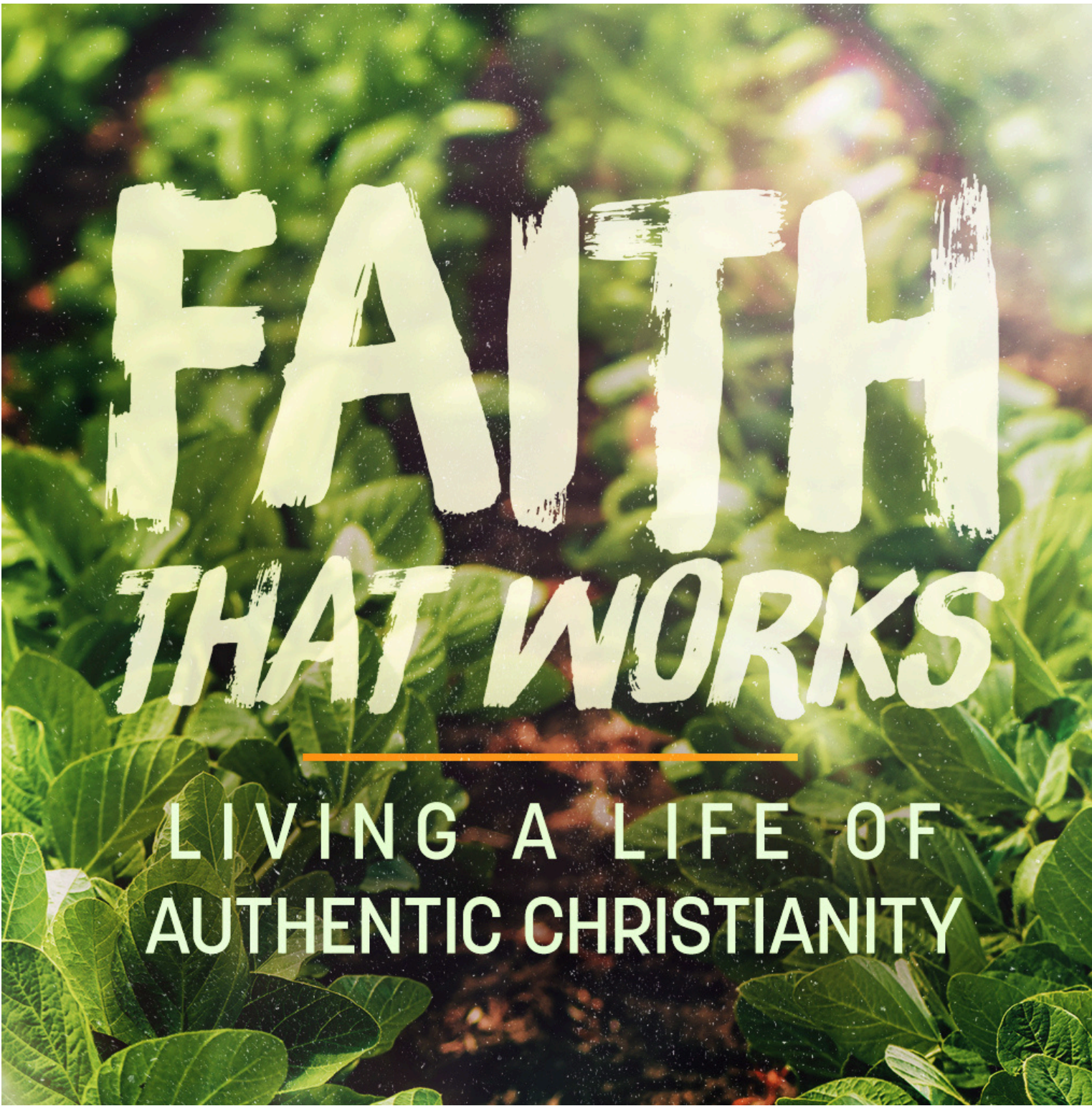
(Open for discussion. The words we speak reveal the state of the heart. If we are followers of Christ and growing in Him, our words should reflect His nature and wisdom. Just as we can find joy in giving our parents or teachers a sense of pride and satisfaction by pursuing the right path, we bring our heavenly Father much joy when we follow His leading! When we honor God with the lives that we live, it is worship!)

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

Consider the following as you pray together:

- ## NOTES

[illegible]



FAITH THAT WORKS

LIVING A LIFE OF
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WEEK 6

WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

DISCUSS

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.

LIVING A LIFE OF
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LIVING A LIFE OF
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James 3:13-18; Psalm 19:7-14

(Choose 1 or 2)

Who do you consider to be the wisest person you have ever known, and how is that wisdom exhibited in their daily life?

Has there ever been something you were willing to pursue at all costs? Why?

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LIVING A LIFE OF
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(Open for discussion. The world often views “smart” or “wise” based on factual knowledge or experience, but James taught that true wisdom enables us to use knowledge correctly.)

“Knowledge enables us to take things apart, but wisdom enables us to put things together and relate God’s truth to daily life.” [Warren Wiersbe]

LIVING A LIFE OF
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(Open for discussion)

[illegible]

FAITH THAT WORKS

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NOTES

James describes earthly wisdom as being unspiritual, sensual, and demonic. Have you ever thought of it this way? What do these words mean in relation to this wisdom? How does this description help us better recognize worldly wisdom?

(Open for discussion. Earthly wisdom is not from above; it is based on a worldly way of life. “Unspiritual” describes it as being based on the mental and emotional ideas of fallen human beings, rather than from God. “Sensual” is the opposite of spiritual. “Demonic” means it is of the devil, used to corrupt the relationships God desires. Worldly wisdom will seek to cause disorder and evil acts, in the form of disturbances in personal relationships all the way to anarchy and other severe public upheavals. Fellowship and unity cannot survive under these!)

LIVING A LIFE OF
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(Open for discussion)

Read James 3:17-18

According to this passage, how would you define true wisdom? How can we tell the difference between wisdom that is from God and earthly wisdom?

(Open for discussion. True wisdom is not based on self-interest or conflict. It comes through Christ alone and is revealed to us through the Word of God. It produces right relationships between people, and doesn't act or pretend, but is honest and genuine. It can be measured by the depth of one's character. Earthly wisdom exalts man, robbing God of His glory. Any wisdom that doesn't come from God is destined to fail, no matter how successful it may seem at the time.)

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LIVING A LIFE OF
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NOTES

(Open for discussion)

When have you seen someone exhibit true godly wisdom? How can we move away from following worldly wisdom while still living in the world?

LIVING A LIFE OF
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(Open for discussion. Humility represents a spirit that is not arrogant or self-seeking. Meekness describes one who relates to God with dependence and contentment, exhibiting gentleness and kindness toward others even when disagreements arise, being reasonable on the demands made of others.)

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FAITH THAT WORKS

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DIGGING DEEPER

Read Psalm 19:7-9

Use the chart below for the following: What names does David use to refer to God's written Word? What words does David use to describe God's law? What phrases does he use to describe the effect God's Word has on us?

Names used referring to God's written Word	Words used to describe God's Word	Phrases that describe its effect on us
Instruction/Law (verse 7)	Perfect (flawless, complete, lacking nothing)	Revives the soul (convert, transform, refresh the soul)
Testimony (verse 7)	Sure/Trustworthy (infallible, unwavering, immovable)	Makes the inexperienced wise (enables us to stand firm against false teaching)
Precepts/Statutes (verse 8)	Right (guides us down the right path amid life's complexities)	Makes the heart glad/rejoice (excites & empowers us with His truth)
Commandment (verse 8)	Pure/Radiant (Clear, lucid, shines brightly, reveals truth)	Enlightens/Lights up the eyes (learn His truth, guide us)
Fear [Reverence] (verse 9)	Clean/Pure (no impurity, filthiness, defilement, imperfection, flawless)	Endures forever (permanently relevant, eternally true)
Rules/Ordinances/Judgements (verse 9)	True/Reliable (reliable, stable)	Altogether righteous (reveal His divine standard, help us obey)

LIVING A LIFE OF
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(Open for discussion)

Read Psalm 19:10-14

Why does David compare God's laws to gold and honey? When has the Word of God been sweeter than honey or worth more than gold in your life?

(Open for discussion. God's Word gives us the guidelines and direction needed to live a spiritually healthy and fulfilled life. In it, He gives us everything we need to live in His will.)

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FAITH THAT WORKS

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NOTES

Why is it so hard for us to see our own mistakes and hidden faults without help from God? How does God's truth bring those things to light?

(Open for discussion. Our own conscience isn't enough to help us live a godly life. Because of our own sinful nature, we cannot see our sin on our own. By reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word, we can recognize and acknowledge our sin, repent of it and find forgiveness in Him. His truth also helps us to know how to live in order to guard our hearts in order to keep us from sinning.)

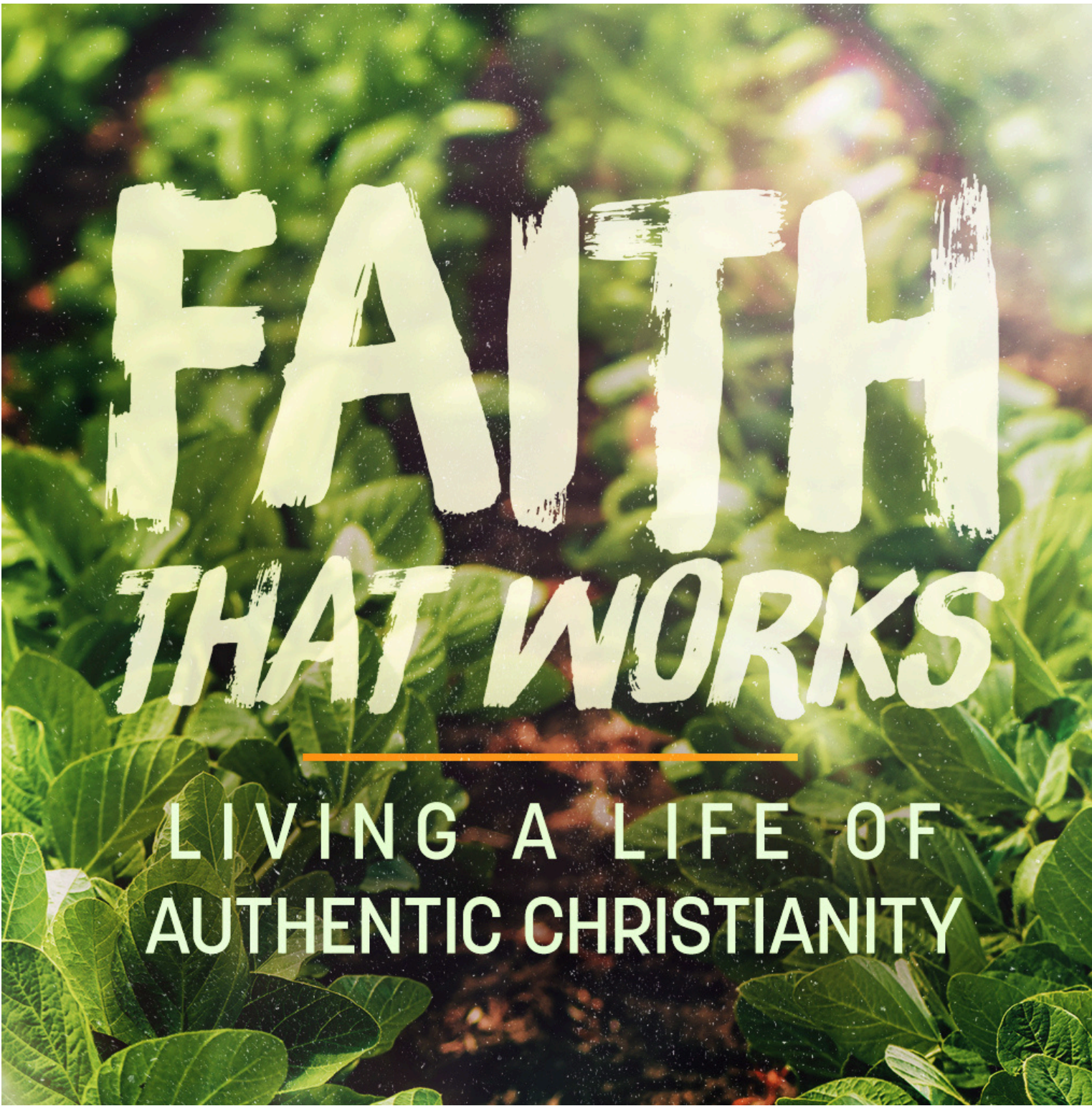
"The most important thing we can do in our local churches is measure our ministries by the Word of God, not by the wisdom of men. The many battles among Christians, the church splits, the absence of purity and peace, all suggest that something is wrong. Perhaps that 'something' is the absence of the wisdom of God." [Warren Wiersbe]

LIVING A LIFE OF
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NOTES

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- Which of these two types of wisdom - earthly or heavenly - has been most visible in your life or reactions this week? Do you rejoice when others succeed, or do you harbor secret envy and criticism? Do you feel burdened when others fail, or are you glad?
- How do envy and selfish ambition express themselves in your life or create disorder in your relationships? What can you do this week to combat them? What godly traits do you most need to develop in your life?
- How can you actively plant seeds of peace in a tense situation this week? Who around you needs to experience God's mercy through your actions?
- Do you long for and desire God and His Word more than anything else in your life? What is one physical or digital distraction that often crowds out your desire for scripture? Give that to God this week!



FAITH THAT WORKS

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WEEK 7

WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

DISCUSS

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.

LIVING A LIFE OF
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LIVING A LIFE OF
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James 4:1-10; Psalm 24:3-6

LIVING A LIFE OF
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(Choose 1 or 2)

How do you typically respond to conflict?

How do you usually react when you don't get something you really want or feel you deserve? Why do you think this is?

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LIVING A LIFE OF
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NOTES

What are some common things that cause arguments and fights in everyday life? According to James, what is at the root of these fights and quarrels, and how do they tend to start?

(Open for discussion. Our arguments and fights today are typically caused by our own selfish desires. The Greek word for desires or pleasures is related to the word hedonism, which is the philosophy that the chief purpose of living is simply to satisfy self. This leads to greed and envy of others, which results in fights and quarrels.)

[illegible]

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(Open for discussion. Selfishness always leads to war. When we have selfish desires, we create a war within the heart, which will eventually lead to a war with others. Those who battle sin and self will always be unhappy. Instead of being thankful for what they have, they complain about what they don't have. They are at odds with others because of envy and jealousy. Any time we seek pleasure at the expense of others, we are fighting against God, which is sinful. Our own sinful desires are what drive us, and will eventually control us, affecting our relationship with others, as well.)

“Hedonism is the uncontrolled personal desire to fulfill every passion and whim that promises sensual satisfaction and enjoyment. The desire to fulfill these pleasures comes, of course, from selfishness, which is opposed to God and the Word of God.” [John MacArthur]

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(Open for discussion. When our motives are driven by our own pleasure, selfishness, and greed, we often don't go to God with our needs. Other times, we ask, but with wrong motives. When we do so, we are much like the prodigal son, seeking to use all that God has given us for our own pleasures and desires. God hears the prayers of the righteous, so we must be sure that we ask with the right heart attitude, and in accordance with God's will.)

Read James 4:4-6

What are some of the symptoms that indicate a person being a “friend of the world” in society today? How is it exhibited through daily habits, media choices, and cultural values?

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LIVING A LIFE OF
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NOTES

(Open for discussion. Humility does not mean that we are weak and powerless. Rather, we understand that our salvation comes through Christ alone, and know that our total dependence must be on God! We can rely on His strength and proclaim His truth faithfully and confidently, in order to glorify Him and not ourselves. When we take our focus off of Him and put it on ourselves, we fall into Satan's trap of independence and pride. Only by staying close to God and relying on Him can we be strengthened and stand against the enemy!)

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

James gives us the plan of defense against our enemy: Submit to God. Draw near to God. Humble ourselves before God.

(Open for discussion)

Submit comes from a military term that meant for each person to get into their proper rank. True submission only occurs when we understand that God is greater than us and worthy of more honor and praise. In the spiritual battles that we face, unconditional surrender to God and His ways is the only way we can achieve complete victory!

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LIVING A LIFE OF
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(Open for discussion. Examples: We can worship Him, spend time studying His Word and applying it to our lives, confess our sins to Him and seek His cleansing and forgiveness, have intimate, personal fellowship with Him - a true relationship, not just an act, we avoid evil actions and compromises, and commit fully to Him.)

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FAITH THAT WORKS

LIVING A LIFE OF
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What does it look like to grieve over sin in your life? How does that lead to humility? What does true humility look like practically, beyond just a feeling or momentary thoughts?

(Open for discussion. When we grieve over our sin, we see it as God sees it. We recognize our own unworthiness and are broken by our sin and the separation it causes between us and God. We acknowledge that on our own, we cannot overcome it, but through Christ alone we can find forgiveness! Humility comes from a heart that follows after Him and seeks to honor Him above everything else as we live for Him.)

NOTES

DIGGING DEEPER

Read Psalm 24:3-6

How do clean hands and a pure heart differ, and why does God look at both?

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

NOTES

Knowing that true righteousness is a gift from God, not based on our own merit, how should it change the way we live and worship?

(Open for discussion. On our own, we can never be righteous, but Christ provided the way for us. Only through repentance and faith in Him can we receive it. As a result, we should walk with integrity, living in accordance with His standards and teachings, because we desire to please Him alone.)

LIVING A LIFE OF
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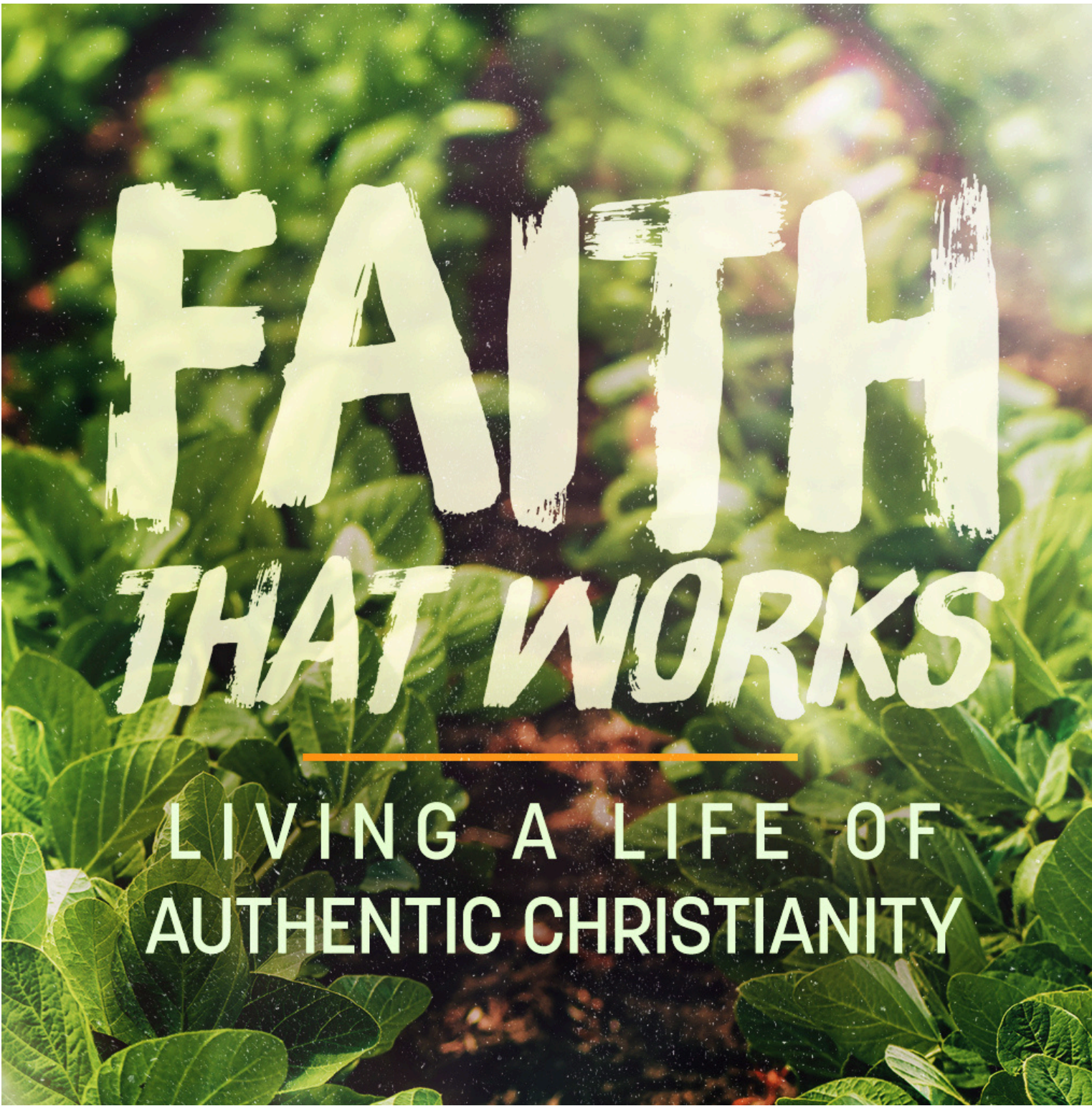
(Open for discussion. We are to understand that our total dependence is on God, knowing He can satisfy our every need. We can live it out by setting aside time for studying His Word, worshiping Him, going to Him in open and honest prayer, and living in obedience to His will, as we sanctify our lives to live for Him.)

LIVING A LIFE OF
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NOTES

[illegible]

- When you find yourself in the middle of an argument or confrontation, do you seek to understand what desire is really motivating you? How often is the true reason based on unmet personal desire or want? Do you pray about this desire?
- In what area(s) of your life do you seek the approval of society over the approval of God? What is one step you can take this week to acknowledge your own insufficiency and Christ's complete sufficiency in that area of your life?
- What is one specific area where you need to actively submit to God instead of holding on to control?
- How do your daily actions (clean hands) and inner thought life (pure heart) reflect a person who desires to draw near to God? What hidden thoughts or secrets are pulling you away from God?



FAITH THAT WORKS

LIVING A LIFE OF
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WEEK 8

WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

DISCUSS

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.

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NOTES

A vapor is any substance in a gas state that is normally a solid or liquid at room temperature. It is formed when low pressure turns a liquid or solid into a gas, usually appearing as fog, smoke, mist, or steam. In meteorology, vapors typically appear as fog or mist. Fog is a low-lying cloud that touches the ground, forming when the invisible water vapor cools down to its dew point. In many climates, fog is an essential part of the ecosystem, as it provides moisture to areas that receive little to no rain. One such area is in the Middle East. The dry desert regions are prone to water scarcity, and fog helps to sustain plant life and agricultural systems. In desert areas, heat escapes quickly at night from the sand and arid climate and quickly cools the air directly over it. Fog forms overnight in the valleys and coastal plains as the coastal humidity meets the rapidly cooling desert ground. As the moist air comes in off of the surrounding bodies of water, airborne dust and sand help the water vapor to condense more easily, and the calm winds prevent it from scattering. It dissipates very quickly, however, once the sun comes up and starts to evaporate the fog layer.

[illegible]

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NOTES

James 4:11-17; Jeremiah 9:23-24

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(Choose 1 or 2)

When you hear the word “judgemental”, what kind of picture or person comes to mind?

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[illegible]

LIVING A LIFE OF
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Read James 4:11-12

(Open for discussion)

(Open for discussion. Godly discernment involves us remembering our place in the big scheme of things. We are simply God's servants. We cannot act like God in passing judgement on others, but must first examine our own lives, seek His direction, and only then, go help others as we seek to honor God. When we are not in the will of God, we become troublemakers!)

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[illegible]

FAITH THAT WORKS

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NOTES

Why do you think it is so easy for us to slip into the role of a “judge” rather than a “doer” of the law? How does it reflect a lack of trust in God’s ultimate judgement when we speak evil of our brothers and sisters in Christ?

(Open for discussion. Our own pride can lead us to be critical of others. It is God’s place alone to judge, enforce His laws, and fulfill His purposes. When we try to judge others on our own, we violate God’s law to love our neighbor as ourselves, and we try to play God. The will of God always comes from the heart of God, and it is always for His glory and our good!)

Read James 4:13-15

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

NOTES

James is not condemning the act of making plans, but rather arrogant self-sufficiency. How do you typically react when an unexpected interruption completely derails your day or long-term agenda? In what area of your life do you find it most difficult to surrender control of your family, career, or finances to God?

(Open for discussion)

FAITH THAT WORKS

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NOTES

James describes the nature of human life by comparing it to a vapor that vanishes quickly. Why do you think we so often forget this? How should this reality change the way we map out tomorrow, this week, a year, or even life?

(Open for discussion. Life is brief and uncertain! We can't say we believe in God, then live as if He doesn't exist, yet we seem to do it often as we lose focus. The world and its ways can distract us from the things of God, convincing us that we can do anything we put our minds to! But we must remember that only God knows what is to come! We must seek Him first as we plan our goals, listen actively for His voice, and seek His direction diligently! Our goals will only disappoint us if we leave God out of them! In order to not waste our lives, we must choose to invest in eternal things and live for Him each day!)

FAITH THAT WORKS

LIVING A LIFE OF
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NOTES

Read James 4:16-17

What does it look like to boast in your own strength or security in a modern, self-reliant culture like ours? How can we practically say “if the Lord wills” instead of boasting in our own strength?

(Open for discussion. We often see this when people act as though they can handle everything on their own, without God. Others may knowingly tout claims that are untrue or don't work, claiming to do something they cannot, all for their own glory. The only “boasting” we do should be in the Lord, what He provides for us, and in our weaknesses that help us to learn more of Him!)

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

(Open for discussion)

(Open for discussion. Just as doing wrong is a sin, so is NOT doing right! We are called to actually live out what God has called us to do. We must act from the heart, not just in our actions or words. When we choose to obey God's will, we are following His plan for our lives. When we get out of His will, He will help to bring us back through correction and discipline, because of His love for us. So because of our love for Him, we ought to do what He commands us to do! When we do His will, it is an act of worship!)

NOTES

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LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

NOTES

What do wisdom, might, and riches represent in our culture? Which of them is most tempting for people to put their trust in today?

(Open for discussion)

How do these temporary human pursuits fade or fail us when we face major life crises? Why is it so easy for us to put our trust in our own strength or resources when life gets hard?

(Open for discussion. Some of our greatest stumbling blocks are the things that people value the most: wisdom, strength, and riches. But these things will not last and they cannot guarantee God's blessings! In fact, God rejects the things that we boast about because they rely on our own abilities and accomplishments. It is easy for us to lose sight of God and His ways and to focus on the things that we can see first hand.)

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

NOTES

What does it look like to actively “boast” or take pride in God rather than in personal achievements? How does knowing His character change the way we respond to people and situations in our daily lives?

(Open for discussion. This requires true obedience, not just an act! He helps us to put our values into the right perspective and live in a way that draws people to Him!)

LIVING A LIFE OF
AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY

Consider the following as you pray together:

- When was the last time you criticized or gossiped about a brother or sister in Christ, tearing them down instead of building them up? How can you make it right? What practical step can you take this week to start criticizing others less often?
- Do you genuinely submit your daily schedule and major life decisions to God's authority, or do you make your own plans first and just expect God to bless them? Where do you struggle most to depend on God's leading and direction? How does viewing your life as a temporary vapor that vanishes quickly change the way you prioritize your time, goals, and career ambitions this week?

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LIVING A LIFE OF
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- ## NOTES

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FAITH *THAT WORKS*

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