

Where's the Faith? A Study in James

Discussion questions:

Do you think it is fair that so many people think of Christians as hypocrites? Why or why not?

If you had to guess, what percentage of Christians would you say are hypocrites?

When was a situation when you were hypocritical? What happened?

James challenges his readers to rejoice in the difficult situations they find themselves in. While this sounds good, do you think this is good advice? Why or why not? Do you think it is possible?

We discussed how the first step toward rejoicing in the hard stuff might be to thank God for how He will use it. What are some of the hard things you have faced in the past 12-18 months? What can you thank God for despite how difficult it was? How can you see yourself maturing spiritually because of these difficult times?

Do you think of "faith" more in the sense of "what you believe" or in "how you live"? What are the benefits to thinking about it in the context of how we live? What are the challenges in thinking about it in the context of how we live?

We believe that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Yet James calls us to a working faith. How would you explain this potential "contradiction" to someone who is new to the Bible, or at least new to the book of James?

In James 1:26 we read "Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless." Why do you think the tongue is so often our biggest problem? What, if anything, have you found helpful to keep your speech in check? When is it most difficult for you to keep your words/text under control? If James were writing his letter today, what do you think he would say to Jesus followers about their social media?

Do you agree that "giving a voice to the voiceless" is a helpful interpretation of James 1:27? Why or why not?

Who are the voiceless God has burdened you for? What brokenness of the world bothers you the most? Why that one? What are you currently doing to help? What practical "next step" could you take to address that brokenness and live a faith that God accepts? What voiceless or brokenness do you think God wants RAC to shine the light of His love into?

At the end of the message, we asked if people were willing to commit to or pray the following:

- I commit to read the book of James this week.
- This week, I commit to thank God for the hard stuff of the past year, even if I can't rejoice in the junk yet. I will take the first step of gratitude.

- God, if you show me an area where my beliefs and my life are out of sync, I will listen and I will obey and I will change.
- God, would you please give me your wisdom to see what you are doing in Rexdale and help me to join you on your mission.
- God, please show me what voiceless demographic you want me to give a voice to.
- God, if you want more of my money or more of my time or more of my talent and skills, I will listen and obey.

Which of these are you willing to commit to or pray? Why those ones? What do you hope happens as a result? What are you afraid might happen as a result?

Which of these are you not ready to commit to or pray? Why?

Just for fun:

What do you think would have been the best part of growing up as the little brother to Jesus?

What do you think would have been the most difficult part of growing up as the little brother to Jesus?