

Connect Group Discussion Guide – 10/1/2023

James 1 – Faith. Action. Wisdom.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQvR0S5fB8AzraGYts4eQfg> (Posted on Monday)

Audio Only: On Spotify or Apple Podcasts: Connection Point Podcast

Highlights

- James was written 45-50 AD
 - Influenced by Matthew 5-7 (Sermon on the Mount)
 - Wisdom Literature (like Proverbs): purpose is to gain wisdom; to be more thoughtful.
 - By James, brother of Jesus (name is actually Jacob)
- What would your brother have to do to convince you that he was the Son of God?
 - James is convinced of this, but it didn't happen early or even before Jesus was crucified
 - I was only after the resurrection that James believed
 - The resurrection is the key to our faith. It's what makes Jesus God.
 - Embrace the resurrection
- Verse 1 – James sees himself as a servant, not the brother of Jesus.
 - It's written to the Jewish believers everywhere and all of them
- Verse 2 – pure joy when you have trials – if you see your trial in its purest form, you'll see opportunities to exhibit perseverance.
 - The trials develop perseverance
 - **Perseverance** – keeps you going in the direction you're supposed to go, even when you want to go in a different direction; when it's easier to turn a different direction
 - The outcome of perseverance is I will be closer to Jesus, not further away. Whatever comes my way, I'm falling forward.
 - Every time you move toward Jesus, He proves His faithfulness.
 - You can TRUST Jesus because of this.
- Verse 4 – Finish: Keep persevering until the trial is over
 - Push through the wall – you find out about yourself and the Lord. Don't give up.
 - Complete = perfect = whole
 - **Wisdom:** knowledge and practice of living like Jesus
 - You can ask God for wisdom
- Verse 6-8 – When you do ask, don't doubt
 - You become unstable, tossed around, you start to fall apart
 - **We must be confident that the LORD is faithful, guiding us toward good.**
 - This builds TRUST. As we trust, we grow.
- Verse 12 When we persevere, there is a reward at the end. We are part of God's family, eternal life.
- Verse 13 The Lord NEVER tempts you.
 - Enticed = baiting a hook
- Verse 15-16 There's something (bait) that hooks us, drags us away and it grows in us, which leads to spiritual death
- Verse 17-18 Jesus gives us truth that births us (a new life in Him) and we are the first fruits – the best
 - Humans are the only creatures made in the image of God
- Verse 19 Before you choose to react, listen.
 - In the process of speaking be slow to get angry. Anger doesn't look like God.
- Verse 22 DO!

- Verse 23 – mirror – baseball sized and shiny steel, not glass
 - Most people in 1st century didn't really know what they looked like because if they just glance in the mirror (or water), they really can't see themselves well
 - They would have to look intently; really study to remember what they look like.
 - Paul is saying, when you don't DO what the Word says, you are apathetic about what you read or heard or saw, and are just walking away. Basically you're ignoring Jesus.
 - When we hear what God asks us to do and do nothing, **we lose our identity**. We look less like Him and forget what we looked like when we did look like Jesus.
 - We forget we are children of God.
- Verse 25 the Perfect Law IS Jesus! He is the Complete or fulfillment of the Law
 - Look intently into Jesus and do what it means to follow Him and you will be blessed.
 - Where our eyes are is the direction we will go. Our path is determined by the intention of our eyes. **Who are you intently looking at? Who do you see in the mirror.**
 - Look intently into the face of Jesus and remember who He is.

Questions to ask yourself:

1. Do you trust Him in your trials? Where was Jesus in the midst of your last trial?
2. What is He asking of you that you're struggling to surrender.
3. Are you staying curious about who He is.

The Bottom Line: We become wise when the trials of our life teach us to trust Him causing us to listen and follow through with who we are called to be: a clear reflection of Him.