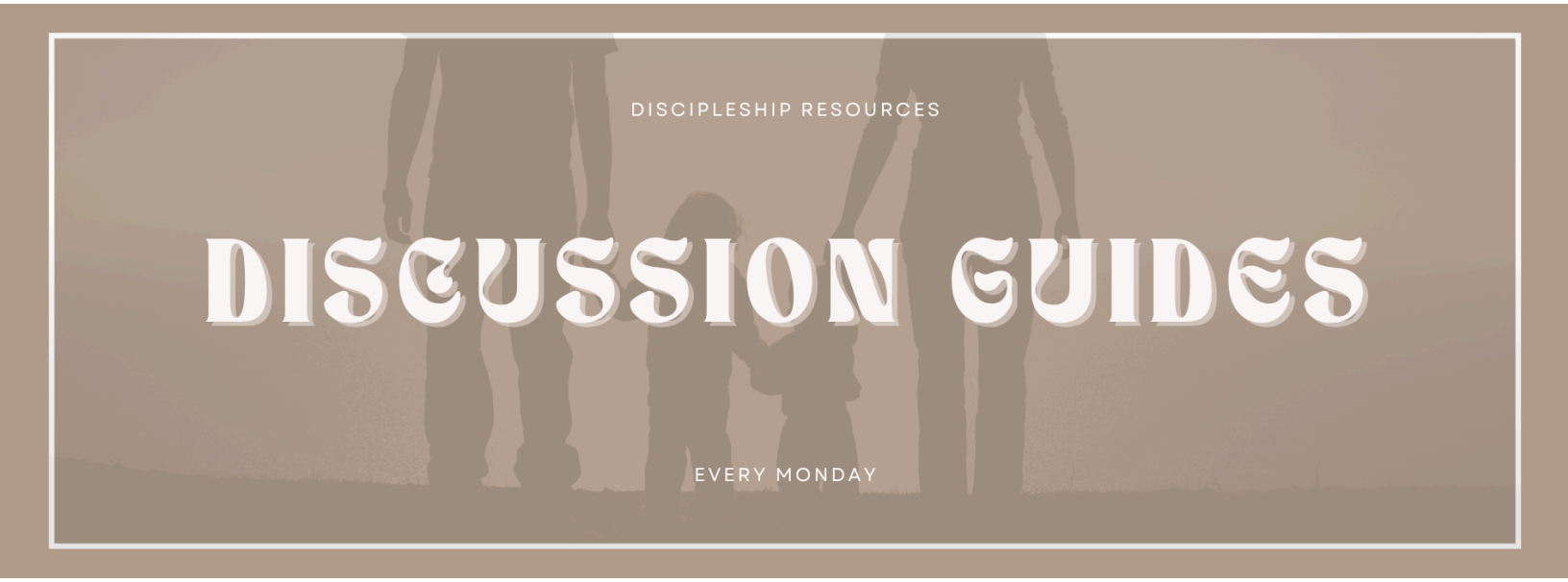


Discussion Guide

Sunday Sermon 10.25.26

What Are You Doing With Your Time?

This guide is designed to help your family or group take what was taught on Sunday and move from simply hearing the information to applying it in ways that build up and encourage one another. Feel free to adjust the depth and number of questions based on your time and the size of your group.

Access the Sermon on the Website & App:

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OVERVIEW

This week's message was drawn from the book of James, written by the half-brother of Jesus. James is a deeply practical letter addressed to believers, confronting them with honest questions about how their faith is showing up in everyday life. The central theme of this sermon is urgency: life is brief, eternity is real, and what we do with the time we have matters more than we often stop to consider.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Life is described in James as a vapor -- here for a moment and then gone. None of us knows the day or hour of our last breath, which means the time to act on our faith is now, not later.

- Trials and adversity are not accidents. God uses difficulty to make us more like Jesus, and believers are called to view pain from that perspective.

- Temptation always leads to the same destination. Desire conceives sin, and sin produces death -- death to relationships, reputations, joy, and testimony. This pattern never changes.

- Faith without works is dead. Genuine saving faith is not just a belief held privately. It is a living reality that changes how a person thinks, speaks, and acts in the world.

- The tongue is a powerful instrument. Believers are called to use the privilege of speech to build up, speak truth, and share the gospel -- not to tear down or deceive.

- Humility positions us to receive God's grace. Pride pushes God away. Walking humbly before God means surrendering our agenda to his will daily.

- We are our brother's keeper. When someone we know wanders from the truth, we have a loving responsibility to speak truth into their life, even when the culture tells us to mind our own business.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question -- Getting Started

1. When was a moment in your life when you were reminded of how brief and fragile life really is? How did that moment affect you?

Section 1: Perspective on Trials *James 1:2-3 -- James calls believers to count it all joy when they face various trials, knowing that the testing of faith produces endurance.*

2. Be honest with the group: when difficulty hits, what is your first instinct? Do you tend to ask "why is this happening to me" or "what might God be doing through this"?
3. The pastor shared that since a friend's passing, God opened up more opportunities to share Jesus than he could count. Have you ever seen God use a painful season in your life to open doors you never expected? What did that look like?
4. What is the difference between pretending to have joy in hard times and genuinely having the perspective James describes? How do we get to the real thing?

Section 2: Taking Temptation Seriously *James 1:14-15 -- Each person is tempted when drawn away by their own desires. When desire conceives, it gives birth to sin, and sin when fully grown brings forth death.*

5. The pastor compared the pattern of temptation leading to sin leading to death to the certainty of two plus two equaling four. Do you find yourself treating that pattern as that reliable and predictable, or do you sometimes think your situation will be different? Why?
6. What are some of the areas of daily life where you feel the pressure of the world trying to squeeze you into its mold? How are you currently responding to those pressures?
7. The pastor reminded the group that the enemy is not like a little brother trying to aggravate his sister -- his mission is to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). How seriously does your daily life reflect that reality?

Section 3: Doers of the Word *James 1:22 -- James urges believers to be doers of the word and not hearers only.*

8. What is the difference between attending church and being a doer of the word? Can someone do one without the other? What does that look like in practice?
9. Is there something specific God has been calling you to do that you have been putting off, assuming you will have more time to get to it? What is holding you back?

Section 4: A Living Faith *James 2:14-26 -- Faith without works is dead. True faith is demonstrated and made visible through action.*

10. The pastor drew a distinction between having a religion and having a real relationship with God. How would you describe the difference in your own words? Which one characterizes your life right now?
    James uses Abraham as an example of someone whose works proved the genuineness of his faith. What are the works in your own life that demonstrate your faith is alive? Are there areas where you are not sure?

Section 5: The Tongue *James 3:10 -- Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. James says these things ought not to be so.*

12. The pastor asked: what are you using the privilege to speak for? Take a moment to honestly evaluate. In the past week, did your words build others up or tear them down? Did they point people toward God or away from him?
13. The pastor admitted that he sometimes struggles with boldness to share Jesus because he wants people to like him. Can you relate to that? What fear or hesitation holds you back from speaking truth to the people in your life?

Section 6: Humility and God's Will *James 4:6, 10, 13-15 -- God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Life is a vapor. Our daily posture should be surrender to what God wills.*

14. In practical terms, what does it look like to start each day with the mindset of "if the Lord wills it, I will do this or that"? How is that different from how most people approach their day?
15. Where in your life are you currently walking in pride or demanding your own way rather than walking humbly before God? What would it look like to surrender that area this week?

Section 7: Turning Others Back *James 5:19-20 -- If anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone turns him back, that person saves a soul from death and covers a multitude of sins.*

16. Is there someone in your life right now who has wandered from the truth? What has kept you from saying something to them? What would a loving, honest conversation look like?

17. The pastor said we live in a world that tells us to mind our own business, but as a family of believers we do not get that option. Do you agree with that? How do we speak truth into someone's life in a way that is loving rather than judgmental?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

1. The Vapor Exercise Set aside fifteen minutes this week to sit quietly and ask yourself: if today were my last day, would I be satisfied with how I have used the life God gave me? Write down what comes to mind and bring it to your next group meeting.

2. Temptation Awareness Identify one specific area of temptation that you face regularly. Share it with a trusted person in the group and ask them to check in with you about it throughout the week.

3. Be a Doer Identify one concrete thing God has been calling you to do that you have been delaying. Set a specific date to do it and tell someone in the group so they can hold you accountable.

4. Tongue Audit For three days, pay close attention to how you use your words. At the end of each day, ask yourself: did my words today reflect someone whose faith is alive? Make note of what you observe.

5. Speak Up Identify one person in your life who does not know Jesus or who has wandered from the truth. Pray for boldness this week and look for one opportunity to speak truth into their life in a caring and honest way.

6. Surrender Your Plans Write out your goals and plans for the next month. Then go through them one by one and ask: am I pursuing these because God wills it, or because I want it? Surrender the list to God in prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER PROMPTS

Close your group time in prayer. Consider praying through the following together.

- Thank God for the gift of life and the time he has given each person in the room.
- Ask for a right perspective on trials and the ability to trust God's heart even when his hand is not visible.
- Pray for boldness to share the gospel with specific people in each group member's life.
- Ask God to reveal any area of pride and to grant the grace that comes with humility.
- Pray for anyone in the group who is uncertain about their relationship with God, that they would not leave that question unanswered.

A NOTE FOR GROUP LEADERS

This guide covers weighty and personal territory. Create space for honest answers and resist the urge to fill silence too quickly. Some group members may be wrestling with genuine

uncertainty about their own faith or carrying grief from loss. Be attentive to those moments and be willing to set the discussion questions aside if a deeper pastoral conversation needs to happen. The goal is not to complete the guide -- it is to help people encounter God through his word and through one another.