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COMMUNITY GROUPS

RIVERS CROSSING CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide

October 8, 2024

Foundations of Faith Week #1 / Pastor Paul Taylor

Who Is James?

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | Do you have a favorite book of the Bible? If so, share about why this particular book means so much to you.
2. Group Challenge Review | Last week, you were encouraged to spend time reading through James and investigating the book's background. Use the following questions to review that experience and set up your discussions about the book of James.
 - a) Were you able to read (or listen) through James? If so, how was your experience? Was there a verse or passage that resonated deeply with you?
 - b) What, if any, questions, did you wrestle with while reading James? Were there parts of the book that created tension in your mind or heart, perhaps with what you believe about Christianity, have read elsewhere in the Bible, or how you live?
 - c) If you did any historical/background study on James, what did you discover?

For additional resources on the book of James, check out the following:

The Gospel Coalition | Introduction to James:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/james-introduction/#overview>

DIVING DEEPER

3. Why do you think Pastor Paul spent much of his first sermon in our series answering the question – Who Is James? Did you connect with any aspect(s) of James' story?

In addition to knowing about the author of a biblical book, what other information can enhance our ability to understand and interpret the Bible?

James 1:1 (NIV) – James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

4. Pastor Paul shared that James' life was radically transformed by his recognition of Jesus not just as his savior, but also as his Lord.
 - a) How would you describe the difference between seeing Jesus as your savior and seeing Jesus as your Lord? How are these two aspects of Jesus connected?

Acts 2:32-39 (NIV) – ³²God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. ³³Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴For David did not

ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand³⁵until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”³⁶“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”³⁸Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

b) Read the following Bible passages as a group. What do they indicate about the lordship of Jesus and how we’re to respond to Jesus as Lord?

Luke 6:43-49 (NIV) – ⁴³“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. ⁴⁵A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. ⁴⁶“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. ⁴⁸They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

Colossians 1:15-23 (NIV) – ¹⁵The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. ²¹Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²²But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

James 4:4-10 (NIV) – ⁴You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? ⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” ⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

5. **Group Study** | Read and Reflect on James 1:1-27

a) What key themes/ideas does James emphasize in the opening of his letter?

b) What stands out to you from the beginning of James? Explain why.

TAKING IT HOME

6. James' life reminds us that it's not about how we start, but how we finish. Regardless of where we are on our spiritual journey, growth is always possible. Where has God been growing you this year? How has that impacted your life and relationships?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING - THINGS TO KNOW

1. 2024 Discipleship School | Discipleship School is a one-year program that helps Christians from all backgrounds become fully engaged followers of Christ. The school helps students learn to hear God's voice clearly, experience a full and free life, develop intimacy with God, develop Christlike living, and understand their spiritual gifting. For more information, or to apply for the Discipleship School, click on the link: <https://riverscrossing.com/discipleship-school/>
2. Serve at Rivers Crossing | One of the marks of a fully engaged follower is their willingness to invest into God's kingdom with their time, talents, and resources. We have opportunities to serve all throughout the week! Find the team that's the right fit for you and partner with us to create an environment for people to become fully engaged followers of Jesus. Learn more at <https://riverscrossing.com/serve-here/>