

Reconstruction: Injustice
James 2:1-13
Growth Group Discussion Guide

Begin with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you all through God's word, and to lead your discussion.

Opening Questions (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- When you hear the word “injustice,” what’s the first thing that comes to mind?
- We’re thinking about the concept of deconstruction during our current sermon series—that some people dismantle and even desert their Christian faith, for a number of reasons. Some people cite the problem of injustice as the catalyst for their deconstruction.
 - How would you say that Christians have historically been part of the problem of injustice, rather than the solution?
 - In your own experience, has this issue posed any problems for your own faith? Why or why not?

Read James 2:1-13, then discuss the questions below.

- What problem seems to be happening among James’ readers (vv. 1-4)?
- What are some practical ways that believers in our time and place might be guilty of the same problem?
- In v. 5, James gives the first reason why the Christian faith cannot be used to support oppression and injustice. How would you state this reason in your own words?
- What does it mean that “God has chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith?”
- Read Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 1:26-29. What light do these words shed on this idea?
- How does the Beatitude in Matthew 5:3 relate to this principle?
- Back in James 2, what is the essence of James’ point in vv. 8-11?
- In v. 12, James makes a statement about how we can see our treatment of the poor and oppressed align more with God’s. What principle does he give us to shape our actions, in your own words?
- (Leaders, Pastor Josh stated it this way: *The more you know and understand God’s mercy to you, the more you will be moved to show mercy.*)
- What is James talking about when he says, “the Law that gives freedom?” The same phrase shows up in James 1:25. See that reference for further insight.
- How might our lives change if we “speak and act” in light of this reality?
- In v. 13, to what is James referring with the terms “mercy” and “merciful?” If you’re unsure, read Luke 10:25-37, especially v. 37.
- One common misunderstanding of this passage (and the rest of ch. 2) is that James is contradicting the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, and that he is teaching a salvation by works. What light does v. 17 shed on this supposed problem?
- What does it mean that works of mercy are not *means* of salvation, but rather *evidence* of salvation?

- Pastor Josh said on Sunday that if we don't see acts of mercy flowing out of our gratitude to God, we may still not understand the gospel, for it will necessarily produce works of mercy. Agree or disagree?

APPLICATION

- Practically speaking, if the biblical teaching on injustice is so clear, why and how have Christians gone so off-track over the years? Where is the gap between information and practice?
- At this point, how would you answer someone who said, "I can't be a follower of Jesus due to the long history of injustice that has been carried out by his followers?"
- What are some needs in our church body, our immediate community, or our broader world, of which you are aware and which we might band together to meet?
- What practical steps are you feeling challenged or encouraged to take as a result of this discussion?

Sharing/Prayer

- As always, take some time to share areas where you need people to pray for you. Spend time praying for these needs, as well as for the matters that were shared during your preceding discussion.