

Community Group Discussion Guide

Step 01: Recap what our current series is all about.

Note: Remind the group what series we're currently on (since not everyone will have been at church recently) and read through the series description provided below to refresh everyone on what it's all about.

Series Title: Live on Mission

Description: The Church has never been about collecting Christians that simply agree with Jesus' teachings. We are supposed to be a force for good; for justice; for love. There are things Jesus commanded and commissioned us to do and he expects us to do them! We want to be a church that is intentionally living on mission.

Step 02: Recap of this week's message.

Note: Read through the message outline with everyone briefly. You can stop and make comments as you see fit or read straight through it. Make sure you take time to read through the main text.

Message Title: The Real Deal

Main Text: James 1:26-27

Supporting Texts: Matthew 12:34, John 14:15, Exodus 22:22, Deuteronomy 10:18, Psalm 68:5, Isaiah 1:17

Message Outline:

James is warning us that despite our best intentions, it's possible to have a faith that works for us, but is worthless to God. Genuine religion (faith)—James says—has 3 essential markers:

Point 1: Controlled speech that demonstrates a changed heart.

— Our mouth speaks what our heart is full of. If our speech is crude, course, harsh, slanderous—then we would do well to consider the state of our hearts.

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Point 2: Clear separation from the ways of this world.

- It's Jesus' desire for us to live a holy life!
- When it comes to ways of living (i.e. right and wrong, standard of living, ethics and morals, etc) we take our cues from Jesus.

Point 3: Sacrificial care for the vulnerable.

- Caring for orphans and widows has been part of God's expectation for his people since the very beginning.
- Visit = genuine care for; meeting the needs of; standing in the gap for.

Step 03: Lead group discussion.

Note: Do your best to keep the discussion going. Make sure you have read through the questions beforehand and are primed with thoughts of your own. Make everyone get specific with *how* they will apply this message in their own lives and in community—*no vague ideas allowed!*

Specific to this week's message:

1. What were your thoughts about James' markers for pure religion?
2. How can we take Jesus' command to love orphans and widows more seriously? What would this look like for you?

General questions:

3. How did this message encourage you? How did it convict you?
4. What is your plan for applying this message to your personal/daily life?
5. What might it look like for us to live this out in community?

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6. Was there anything about this message that stood out to you?