

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

James 1:12-18

LEADER'S STUDY

My Bad Yields to His Good

James 1:12-18

What is happening?

James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote this to Jewish Christians scattered across the region surrounding Israel. Though most of us are Gentiles and we live in different times, the letter addresses some of the same issues we all have to deal with in our present topsy-turvy world. Like us, they faced trials caused by opposition from others as well as economic issues, illness, and a variety of other difficult situations. But the problems weren't all external. As with people today, many of their greatest struggles came from within.

It's easy to point the finger at others because there's so much evil in this world, wherever we look. We think, "If only *those people* would get their act together, everything would be so much better!" But "the other guy's" actions aren't the core issue, and the true conflict is not "us v. them." All sin arises when humans reject God's authority—and if you're a human, you're part of the problem!

Where is the gospel?

Genesis 3 tells us how sin first entered the world and permanently stains the soul of everyone born since the Fall. Everyone except Jesus, that is. It is only He who withstood the test of sin and earned the crown of life, and it is only He who can impart this gift to us, bringing us into a supernatural new life when we say "Yes!" to Him by faith. There's no hope in trying to justify our sin, nor in blaming others for our situation. Instead, He invites us to confess our sin and trust in Him for redemption. Our sin is great, but His grace is greater; it provides the payment for ALL of our sin and leads us into a new way of life.

As you prepare for this week, ask yourself questions like these: Do I blame others for circumstances that are of my own doing? How can I trust God in situations that are truly out of my control? How can my response to difficulty open the door to healing? Is there any real danger in making small compromises with sin? Can what's right or pleasing to God depend on the situation? How is God calling me to think and to live differently? How does this change my perspective today? How is God calling me to respond based on this scripture?

Spend some time reading and meditating on this passage as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word. Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear "I" statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scriptures: Genesis 3; Proverbs 3:5-8; Jeremiah 17:9-10; John 3:17-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; 1 John 2:15-17. What other places in scripture speak this same truth?

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INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ James 1:12-18
and meditate on it.

Read in the ESV or similar word-for-word translation.

Read it again in the NLT to get a thought-for-thought perspective. (The New Living Translation is particularly helpful with this passage)

Try to summarize the passage in your own words.

Every verse of scripture points to the gospel. Look for how this passage points to Jesus and what He has done.

POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS

These are just questions you might ask to help your group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer all of these as a group

What is significant, surprising or confusing from these verses?

What seems to be the main point of this letter?

How does this portion of scripture point to Jesus and the gospel?

What parts of this passage are challenging to your current way of thinking?

What did you discover or learn about God and His character from this passage?

What parts of this passage can you relate to?

Look at one or two key words and define them really clearly, then look at them in context with that definition. Does this change your understanding?

Why did God bring me to this scripture today?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

How is God calling you to obey, based on this passage?

or

What is your "I will" statement?

(Encourage everyone to steer clear of "we" or "us" or "Christians" statements)

With whom are you going to share what you have learned?

(This is a critical part of growth that is often overlooked. If we can share it with someone else it means we really understand it, it cements it in our own minds, it makes us accountable to the truth and it blesses the one who hears it. Rom 10:17)

Based on this passage, what can we pray about and how should we pray?