

Getting to Know You

1. Would you rather... (give a brief explanation of your choice)
 - a. Read a great book alone at a coffee shop?
 - b. Watch a movie with a best friend or spouse at home?
 - c. Go to a concert with a group of friends?
2. In your opinion, what are four words that best describe what it means to be a great friend.

Today we discuss the last chapter in James' letter (ch. 5). His discussion is sort of an "everything but the kitchen sink" ending. Below let's dive into the content.

Digging Deeper

1. Chapter 5 opens with a rebuke to the rich, who exploit the poor for their own gain. James talks about their financial gains being "rotten," "moth-eaten," and "corroded." Many of us say we're not rich so how does this conversation apply to us? (For help, see Matthew 6:19-24 and Luke 12:13-21.)
2. Pastor Nik read this prayer to sum up the financial conversation:

"My resources aren't mine, I am a manager. Therefore, I take care of my life, my family and those I manage or work for me. AND I invest in things that have an eternal impact. It's not either/or, it's both/and. I believe as I manage my resources as a generous steward, God will provide for me and multiply my investment. I don't give in order to get, but I believe God will bless me."

How does this prayer resonate with you? Would you say you struggle with being generous? Why or why not?

3. Read aloud James 5:7-8.
 - a. Have you ever experienced persecution? If so, what happened and how did you respond?
 - b. What are ways Christians throughout history experienced persecution?
 - c. What about persecution in the Jerusalem church (this letter is written to them as they were "scattered among the nations").
4. James 5:11 says, "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy." This is an echo of a sentence used throughout the Bible. Depending on our past, we struggle to see God in that light. And even currently, when we mess up and sin, it can be hard to ask for forgiveness and lean into his compassion and mercy. Why is that? What is it we need to embrace? What do we need to let go of?
5. From verse 13: Would you say your life is marked by prayer and praise as regular habits/disciplines? Why or why not?

6. Not a question but a reminder: James 5:14 says, “Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.”

On most Sunday mornings you’re invited to receive prayer at the end of worship. You can also receive prayer on Wednesday nights from 6:30-7:20 at the church. We believe God is a healer and want you to receive it as we pray for you.

7. James 5:16 says to confess our sins to each other. Many Christians believe confessing to the Lord is enough, so why would James tell us to confess our sins to each other? In other words, what is the benefit of doing so?
8. Read James 5:19-20. The end of this letter basically sums up what we’re supposed to be doing with our lives. Where else in the Bible can we find a similar answer? In your own words, what does this look like?

Making It Personal

- Taking from Matthew 6, Jesus says where your resources are directed reveals the condition of your heart. Would you say you’re in a healthy place with generosity or do you feel challenged to take a step in that direction?
- James says “be patient and stand firm.” (vs. 8) What could that look like if you experience more and more persecution as time goes on?
- What is one thing you can do to increase your prayer/praise quotient starting tonight? (Examples: Commit to praying for ____ minutes as I start my day. Create or find a worship playlist in Spotify and listen to it on my way to/from work. Create a “thankful” list for November, adding one or more things daily. Carve out 20 minutes weekly to stop—stop talking, scrolling, watching, reading, etc. and try to tune into the Holy Spirit’s work in our heart. Hint: During this time, prayerfully ask the Lord, “Where am I missing it?” “Is there anything I need to make right with You?” “Is there anything I need to make right with others?” “Is there anything I need to hear from you but I’m too distracted until now?”)