

James - Back to Basics - Oct 1

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

In less than a minute per person, describe your favorite summer 2023 memory.

In less than a minute per person, what do you look forward to about the final 3 months of the year (October, November, December)?

DIGGING DEEPER

We opened the series on the Book of James, it opens with this sentence (vs. 1): "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings."

1. Pastor Nik described the context of James' opening verse, what stood out to you?
2. When James says "the twelve tribes scattered among the nations" what does James mean by that? In other words, who are the "twelve tribes" and why were they "scattered" among the nations?
3. Take a moment and read aloud Acts 8:1 and 1 Peter 1:1. Here are two examples of how the dispersion of Christians took place. While leaving your hometown under duress (persecution) would be difficult...What is the benefit of this happening to the Jewish (and Gentile) Christians in James/Peter's day? How could this reframe our "relocating" for various reasons today?
4. James says Christians ought to "consider it pure joy" when trials show up at our front door. Briefly describe things you'd consider "trials" either generally or personally. Please keep your answer short so others can share. How is it possible to receive trials with joy? Write about a time you navigated this? What happened and how did you respond?
5. James says trials/tests develop perseverance, maturity and a completeness in Christ. In your own words, describe what that might look like.
6. As the conversation continues, James shifts to the need for wisdom. Where do you need wisdom now?
7. If James says it's as easy as asking God, why is it that sometimes we look everywhere else but to prayer, for our answer?
8. Why does James add, "who gives generously to all without finding fault"?
9. In verse 6 James says, we must "believe and not doubt" when we're praying to God for wisdom. What could it look like to doubt? What could it look like to believe? What do you do?
10. Describe being "double-minded"?

MAKING IT PERSONAL

1. From Sunday's content, where do you feel most challenged from the message?
2. What is something you can do practically when a test of your faith shows up, so that you pass the test and grow in maturity in Christ?
3. This week when a trial comes, take a moment to briefly write down what happened and what you did to face it. (Whether good or bad.) Be ready to share it with your group at the start of next week's time together.

James - Back to Basics - Oct 8

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Describe the book of James in three words.

What do you think of when you hear the word, barnacles?

DIGGING DEEPER

Today, we heard part two of James: Back to the Basics from Evan.

1. Read James 1:12-18. What do you think James means when he reminds the Church to never say we are being tempted by God?
2. What are some practical ways we can cultivate thankfulness in our lives for the gifts from God?
3. Read James 1:19-21. Why do you think James stresses the importance of hearing, speaking, and anger in this passage?
4. Read James 1:22-25. What would it look like to only be a hearer of the word? What does it look like to be a doer of the word?
5. Read James 1:26-27. What are some practical ways we can love people who aren't able to give back?
6. Evan brought up the analogy of theological barnacles when it comes to keeping ourselves unstained from the world. The idea being that there are cultural ideas we may believe that aren't actually biblical. Can you think of any?

MAKING IT PERSONAL

What is it about trials that can let your guard down where temptation is concerned?

Where in your life do you need to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slower to become angry?

James - Back to Basics - Oct 15

Getting to Know You

1. You're visiting a cafe with a friend. What drink would you order in mid-October?
2. If you could take a long weekend anywhere to enjoy Fall, where would you go? Why?

Digging Deeper

In Part 3 of James: Back to the Basics, we walked through all of James, chapter 2. Take some time answering the following questions as you dig deeper into this week's message.

1. Chapter 2 opens, "How can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?" What are some reasons people show favoritism?
2. Read James 2:5 and Matthew 5:3. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? How much do you relate to being poor in spirit?
3. Read James 2:8-11 & 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. How are these verse connected?
4. Pastor Nik described what it means that the law brings freedom. Recap in your own words, what He said? Read also James 1:21, 25, 2:8 and John 13:34 for more insight.
5. Starting at 2:14 the conversation shifts toward faith and deeds. In your own words, explain verse 17
6. "What you believe determines how you behave." Agree or disagree? Explain.
7. Why do you think James feel the need to explain "demon faith" when he says, "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder."? (vs. 19)
8. Nik used the idea of marriage to help describe how faith and deeds go together. Was that helpful? Why or why not? Can you think of other analogies to describe faith and deeds?

Make it Personal

1. What Character traits do people see when they see you?
2. How has your faith changed you?
3. How do you expect your faith to change you moving forward?

In Part 4 of “James: Back to the Basics”, we walked through James 3:1-18. Spend some time answering these questions as we dig deeper into this week’s message!

Getting to Know You:

1. What is your favorite activity to do on your own, or with your family, during the Fall season?
2. What is your favorite kind of candy? What is your least favorite and why?

Digging Deeper:

1. What are some examples that you have witnessed, or experienced, of words being used in a positive way? What about in a negative way?
2. Read James 3:1-5. James uses the illustrations of a bit in the mouth of a horse, and a small rudder that steers a ship. What is James telling us about the power of the tongue with these illustrations?
3. The wind in verse 4 can be understood as the trials and temptations we face in life. How can trials and temptations influence our speech? What can we do to guard against letting trials and temptations dictate what we say?
4. James 3:5-7 deals with the destruction that the tongue is capable of. Why do you think James compares our speech to a “tiny spark”? Read Proverbs 13:3 for more insight.
5. Pastor Jesse discussed what it means when James says the tongue “is set on fire by hell itself”. In your own words, how would you summarize the meaning of this statement?
6. Read James 3:9-12. After reading this verse, what do you believe James is telling us about how our speech is connected to the condition of our hearts? Read Luke 6:45 to go deeper.
7. In James 3:13-18, James continues discussing the condition of the heart and also “wisdom from above”. How does this section of verses relate to our conversation about our speech?
8. James 3:18 says “And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.” How can you use your speech to plant seeds of peace?

Making it Personal:

1. Honestly reflect on the impact your speech has had on others around you - is it primarily positive or negative?
2. If the impact of your speech has had a negative impact on others, ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart. What in your heart needs to change?
3. Identify one relationship in your life that is broken or struggling - how can you use your speech as seeds of peace?
- 4.

James - Back to Basics - Oct 29

Getting to Know You

1. Discuss the appropriate time to decorate for Christmas and start listening to Christmas music. Express your opinion and why. :)
2. In October would you rather...
 - a. Drive the North Cascades Highway and picnic toward the summit with a view of Ross Lake (Google it. It's gorgeous!).
 - b. Drive over Hwy 2 to Leavenworth and window shop downtown, or
 - c. Walk around Greenlake in North Seattle, take in the fall colors while people-watching, and eat at a cafe across the street from the lake?
 - d. Sit and sulk that summer's over. ;)

In Part 5 of James: Back to the Basics, we walked through all of James, chapter 4.

Digging Deeper

1. Describe a time when you've been sideways with someone because of a selfish desire, jealousy or envy. How was the situation resolved?
2. Read James 4:3. Give examples of how we can pray selfishly.
3. Read James 4:4. Why is James being so candid about "friendship with the world"? (Hint: Pastor Nik talked about this and related it to "worldly wisdom" in James 3:15-16.)
4. Describe how "Go Fish" ended up in the message. How does it resonate with you?
5. Read James 4:6-8a (The first half of verse 8) and verse 10. This is the "great grace" of this section of scripture.
 - a. How accepting are you of God's grace when you are confronted with how you've messed up?
 - b. How gracious are you when others come to you for forgiveness?

6. While this seems so disheartening, why does James take the time to include these lines in his care for the church: “Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.”?
7. From verse 11, what are other words or phrases for the word “slander”?
 - a. Read also James 3:9 (from last week’s message). On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your struggle with slandering others? Why?
8. How does James 4:13-16 relate to the rest of today’s conversation?
9. Would you say you do well at involving your faith to impact your day-to-day decisions? How do you do so?

Making It Personal

- How can you combat envy, jealousy, or selfishness as you go about life before next Sunday? In other words, what situations can you foresee where you may struggle with these vices and overcome them?
- What is something you can do practically to lift someone up or be a blessing to them in the next couple days?
- Write out a prayer in a few sentences that would intentionally involve Christ in an upcoming decision/situation in your life. Would you be willing to read it to your group? If so, go for it! 😊