

JAMES: A FAITH THAT WORKS

Don't Just Listen, Do Something

Small Group Discussion Guide

How to Use This Guide

Work top down. Page 2 continues the conversation.

Pick four or five questions — not all of them.

Leader Notes on page 2 are for you, not to read aloud.

Key Scripture Passages

James 1:22 NKJV

Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.

James 1:19, 21 NIV

Quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger — and the word planted in you.

James 1:22-27 NIV

The man in the mirror, the tongue, and the religion God actually accepts.



Talk It Over

Opening Icebreaker

Low-stakes. Just get people talking.

- **What's something you've looked up how to do more than once — and still can't do?**

Discussion Questions

Move at the group's pace. You will not get to all of these.

- **What did you notice about the order James puts these in** — quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry? Why do you think listening comes first?
- James compares the hearer-only to someone who looks in a mirror and immediately forgets what he saw. **What's strange about that picture? What is a mirror normally for?**
- Verse 21 says to humbly accept the word *planted* in you. **What does planting suggest about how change actually happens?**
- Verse 25 says the person who continues in it will be blessed *in what they do* — not blessed for what they know. **What's the difference?**
- James picks two tests of real religion: what you do with your tongue, and what you do for orphans and widows. **Why those two? What do they have in common?**
- **Where are you most likely to be quick to speak instead of quick to listen** — and who feels that most?



Talk It Over

Discussion Questions

Continued — these move from the text into real life.

- **What's something you've known you should do for a while and haven't done?**
What's the actual reason — not the one you'd give out loud?
- **What's one thing you'll do this week for someone who can't pay you back?**

Going Deeper

Optional. For groups ready for harder territory.

- James says a religion that doesn't keep a tight rein on the tongue is *worthless* — not weak, worthless. **Where does your faith look most convincing from the outside and least convincing in how you talk about people?**

Prayer Focus

Pray specifically, by name.

- **Listening:** For the relationship where someone has been doing all the talking and knows it.
- **Follow-through:** For anyone who keeps walking away from the mirror and forgetting what they saw.
- **The overlooked:** For the people in our church and neighborhoods with no one obligated to check on them.

Leader Notes

Where it usually stalls:

Everyone agrees listening is good and the conversation goes nowhere. Ask who specifically they don't listen to, and why that person is harder.

The other stall:

The “haven't done” question can turn into a round of self-criticism. One honest answer each, then move on.

Where it goes off-track:

Orphans and widows becomes a debate about programs or politics. Bring it back to who in their life has no one obligated to show up for them.

The other derail:

Someone hears “their religion is worthless” as losing their salvation. James is measuring the worth of the practice, not their standing with God.