

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, November 13, 2011

Passage: James 5:7-12

Memory Passage: James 5:7-8

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 5:7-12.** How are verses 7-12 connected to vs. 1-6 (notice the “therefore” in v. 7)? What connections do you see between vs. 7-12 and the rest of James’ letter (see especially 1:2-5, 12, 4:1, 11-12)? What connections do you recognize from Jesus’ teaching in His Sermon on the Mount?

(b) How many times does James address his hearers as “brothers” in these verses? Remembering that James refers to both men and women with this term, what does this tell you both about his tone in this section and his affection for his audience?

(c) What commands does James give you in vs. 7-12? Do these commands seem burdensome or joyful to you, and why? In what ways do you struggle with obeying these commands in your daily life?

(d) *Family:* Ask, “What does it mean for one to be patient?” Help them in their discussion by asking questions and pressing what they say, but eventually get to a definition similar to: “Being able to wait without becoming angry, annoyed, or anxious; being slow to lose one’s temper when confronted with irritating people or situations.” Say, “Give some examples of times when you were not patient, and times when you were patient.” These real-life situations will help your family see the need for our study this week. Then **Read James 5:7** and discuss the example of the farmer. Bring out important truths such as: Upon whom the farmer waits; what work the farmer did; why it is necessary for him/her to be patient; what worry/anger/anxiousness will or won’t accomplish; the rewards of waiting; the need for the rains; etc.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 5:7-12.** The first command James gives us is, “Be patient.” What does it mean to be patient? Is this a virtue that is easy or difficult for you? What situations or people cause you to think or act without patience? What are the results when you are not patient?

(b) In James’ illustration of the farmer, why does the farmer need to be patient? Has the farmer been passive prior to waiting? What is in his control after he/she plants? Are the rains necessary and what does the farmer do to ensure their arrival? What details can the farmer control in the growing cycle and what details are out of his/her control? Upon what rewards does the farmer wait? What beliefs/convictions cause the farmer to expect the rain and wait on the fruit?

(c) James has used the illustration of the farmer to twice command us (vs. 7-8) to be patient. Think of a situation in which you have recently lost your patience, or a recurring situation that consistently tries your patience and apply the answers to your questions in (b) to that situation.

(d) *Family:* **Read James 5:7-9.** Draw your family’s attention to the phrase “coming of the Lord” (the 2nd coming of Christ) and show them that the first time the phrase is used it is to describe the length of time we are to be patient, and the second time it is used to give the reason for the command for us to “establish” our hearts. **Now Read 2 Pet. 3:10 & 15.** Explain that these verses are in answer to scoffers who claimed that the Lord is never going to come, even though He promised He would (3:3-8). Teach your family the connection between God’s perfect patience and salvation, and the connection between God’s perfect patience and our call in James 5 to be patient until Jesus returns.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 5:7-12.** “Establish” in v. 8 translates a Greek word that means, “to make fast, establish, confirm.” It is used of Jesus’ unmoving, settled determination to accomplish His work on the cross in Luke 9:51—“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he *set* his face to go to Jerusalem.” What does it mean to “*establish* your heart,” and what are some specific steps that you can take to obey this command?

(b) What reason is given in v. 8 for the need to establish our hearts? Why is it important to establish our hearts in light of the Lord’s coming? How are we to understand the statement that the coming of the Lord “is at hand” in light of the fact that almost 2000 years have passed since James wrote it?

(c) **Read 2 Pet. 3:1-15.** We are also told that we are to be patient “until the coming of the Lord” (v. 7). What do patience and Jesus’ second coming have in common? What is the connection between us being patient and Jesus’ second coming?

(d) Why would grumbling against someone cause you to be judged (James 5:9)? What has “grumbling” to do with patience (or the lack thereof)? What motivation is given to us at the end of v. 9 to not grumble and end up being judged? Who is this judge and when will he come? Ask the Lord to remind you, the next time you are tempted to grumble, about His role of judge and your role of being patient.

(e) *Family: Read James 5:9.* Ask, “Why will we be judged when we grumble against others?” Begin a conversation about what it means to grumble against someone using examples from your own family’s relationships. **Then Read 1 Cor. 3:11-15** and explain to your family that on Judgment Day no true believer’s salvation will be in question or danger, but their works (i.e. being patient with others vs. grumbling against them) will be evaluated as we receive our reward in heaven (also explain that our rewards will be laid at Jesus’ feet for His glory, not ours). **Read again James 5:9** and reemphasize the importance of being patient with people rather than grumbling against them.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 5:10, Jer. 18:18-23, 20:1-18, 26:1-15, 37:11-16, 38:1-6.** As you read about some of Jeremiah’s life, how is he an “example of suffering and patience?” How did he “remain steadfast?”

(b) Write down several principles from your reading in Jeremiah that you can implement in your own life to guide you in suffering with patience. You might want to write these principles down on a note card or send yourself an email/text/facebook message that will remind you to implement these principles the next time someone “gets under your skin” and you are tempted to grumble against them or lose your patience with them.

(c) *Family:* Lead your family through (a) & (b) above. You will probably want to read the passages before your study and summarize the plots, only reading one or two verses for each section. Write your principles on your white board, and leave it up throughout the week using it as a reminder to suffer patiently, and not to grumble against each other.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 5:7-12.** Since we just spent 5 months in Job, think back on what you learned and write down several ways in which Job was steadfast. Now think back to the Lord’s actions in Job and write down how His purpose (lit. “end,” so referring to the Lord’s ending result or final purpose) was shown (see especially Job 42:10-17).

(b) Is James forbidding us from being sworn in before a testimony given in a court of law? How do you know? If you are not sure, check out some of the ways Paul (Rom. 1:9, 2 Cor. 1:21, 1 Thess. 2:10) and even Jesus (Matt. 26:63-64) placed themselves under oaths.

(c) How could one who is grumbling against others and having trouble exercising patience be prone to swearing oaths (cf. Peter’s actions in Matt. 26:69-75)? Why is it so important to speak the truth? Do you struggle with speaking the truth? How does the Lord’s compassion and mercy (v. 11) motivate you toward remaining steadfast in your character, especially in light of Jesus’ second coming?

(d) *Family: Read James 5:12.* Explain that “swearing” in this verse refers to making claims like, “Cross my heart & hope to die” or “I swear on my grandmother’s grave” or “As God is my witness” to prove to others that one is telling the truth. In NT times an oath could be used to try to tell a lie as if it were true and not be held accountable (cf. Matt. 23:16-21). James’ point is to say we should always be known as people who speak the truth so that people would never need to be reassured with these kinds of phrases that what we are about to say is actually true. Needing these phrases would imply that there are times that we don’t speak the truth but this is not one of them. Use this time to emphasize that lying is not something that believers do (Col. 3:9) because we are God’s children and He does not lie (Tit. 1:2, Heb. 6:18).

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Until He Comes

In James 5:7-12 we are given answers to 7 questions concerning how believers must suffer patiently in light of the coming of the Lord.