

VOLUNTEER TO OPEN IN PRAYER

BREAKING THE ICE (20 MINUTES)

When we last met, we talked about "counting it all joy when facing trials". Have you faced hardship in the past week or so when you were tempted to complain or become frustrated and then had this teaching come to mind? Were you able to apply it and how did it work out?

NOTE: We have quite a bit of material to get through tonight so if we can try to stay somewhat on topic that would be great!

PART ONE: WHAT ABOUT ANGER? (20 minutes)

- 1) In verse 19, is James suggesting that anger, in and of itself, is wrong?
- 2) What are some good reasons for being quick to listen and slow to speak and slow to anger? (James 1:19) Can anyone suggest why this is wise and where we can get ourselves in trouble if we don't heed this warning? (Prov 10:19, 10:32, 12:18, 13:3, 15:31-32)

PART TWO: LISTENING AND DOING. (50 MINUTES)

1) For Pastors and teachers, preaching on or discussing the things we are talking about tonight can be intimidating. These are not soft, comfy issues and are not always well received. And they are perhaps not pleasant things to ponder. Hebrews says that "the Word of God is sharper than a two edged sword". In other words, the Words of God can cut and perhaps wound. Paul told Timothy that some folks would rather have their ears tickled than to be told the hard truth (2 Tim 4:3-4). How do we really feel about talking about things like this? Are you comfortable with this sort of discussion? Why? Does it make you uncomfortable? Why?

2) In verses 21-23 James refers to "The Word", that which we are to do, not just hear. What does James mean by "The Word" (Heb 4:12, Psalm 119:11, John 17:17) Let's compare those verses with the following ones in section 3.

3) God has some very distinct purposes for leaving us His written word. What were some of them? Before looking at the following verses, let's discuss our ideas. (2 Tim 3:15-17, Rom 15:4, Heb 4:12, Acts 17:11)

4) Around the room, discuss the analogy that James uses in 1:23-24 . What is his point? (Deut 4:9, Deut 8:11)

5) Here is a little riddle for us to figure out. There is an often used cliché that, in a sense, parallels the idea of putting into practice the things we are taught. Let's read the following two passages and see if we can sort it out. (Ezekiel 33:31-32, Matthew 15:8, Luke 6:46).
Fill in the blanks. (_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _) .

6) In light of James 1:19, if we are merely listening to the word and not putting it into practice. If we are essentially all talk and no action, what are we doing to ourselves?

7 a) James, Jesus, Paul and others have much to say about the importance about doing and not merely hearing. Their insistence on this is because the Lord does not want us to be deceived into believing something about ourselves and our relationship with Him which may not be so. As we read these passages, lets each of us listen closely to what is being said. Keep your finger on the passage you read as we will be examining them more closely in a few minutes. (Matthew 7:21-27, Luke 6:46, John 8:31, John 13:17, Acts 26:20, Rom 2:13, Titus 1:16, 1 John 2:3, Isaiah 1:19-20)

NOTE: It would be a great idea to study these verses on your own time before coming to group. This will give you some quiet time to really think them through before group and perhaps come up with some parallel passages of your own that speak to you personally.

7 b) It is here, as Pastor Jeff puts it, "Where the rubber meets the road". At the risk of sounding very solemn, this is deadly serious business. Our eternal destiny may rest on whether we actively obey or stubbornly resist Gods word. As professing Christians, we need to look closely at these passages and then examine our hearts in light of what they say. Let's go around the room and discuss what these verses say to us. Here is an example of how we can answer these questions. Romans 2:13 says "It is not the hearers of the law who are declared righteous in God's sight, but rather the doers of the law who will be declared righteous" The answer? Whether we are declared righteous or not depends on whether we obey or not.

8) The bible says that "They will be known by their fruits"? What are these fruits? What does the presence or lack of these fruits in our lives or the lives of other professing Christians suggest? (Matt 7:20, Luke 3:8, Gal 5:22)

9) In closing, please go around the room and briefly share something you have learned about yourself. Perhaps something you would like to see changed regarding your personal walk with the Lord. We should feel free to be transparent with one another. Remember, we love each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and need to be doing all we can to help one another mature in our relationship with God. Let us pray for you!!