

Leading a Small Group Discussion

1. Prepare

Work through the materials and think yourself into your group meeting.

2. Pray

Pray before your group meeting.

3. Don't talk too much

Your job is to get people thinking and talking and keep the discussion moving from member to member rather than talking to the members.

4. Be A Good Listener

So simple yet so hard to do. Don't just listen to what people are saying – actively listen. The best leaders listen with their eyes and ears.

4. Don't Answer Your Own Questions

The whole purpose of asking the question is to create an environment where group members feel safe to share. It's not about getting the right answer. When people are silent with some of these questions, embrace the silence: this might be where the introverts are thinking and the Holy Spirit is speaking!

5. Encourage Responses

If no one really speaks you could say something like, "Paul, you look like you were going to say something..."

6. Ask Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions help group members to say more than a simple yes or no. Use 'what?' or 'how?' questions to get people to open up.

7. Try To Involve Everyone

Your group might be too big if everyone isn't able to speak their thoughts. Groups of over eight members will have difficulty doing this. In those cases, it might be best to divide the group into smaller groups for some of the time.

8. Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing!

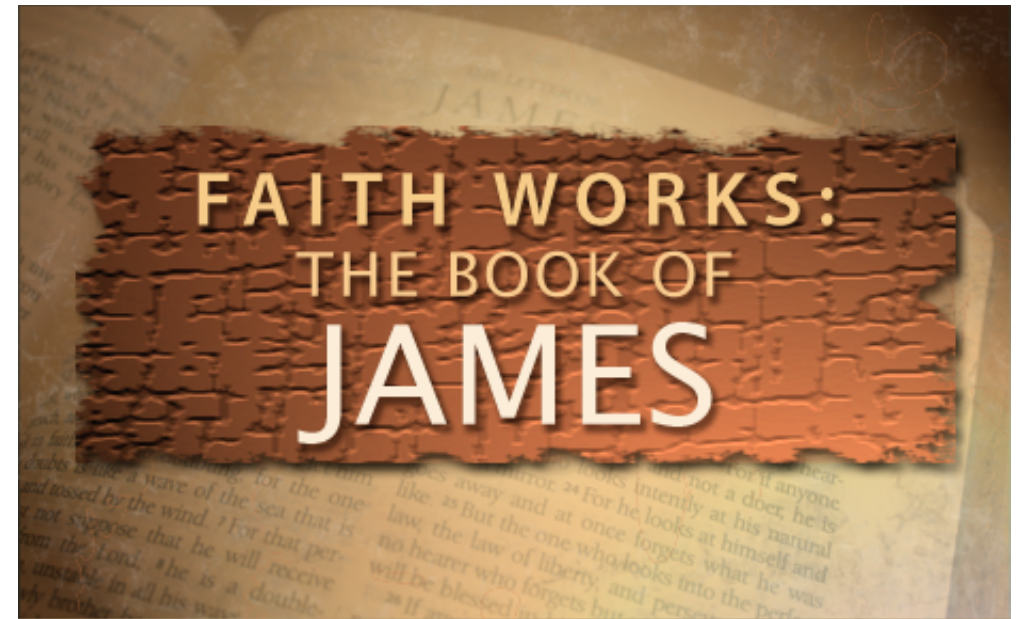
Remember, the focus is not on getting through the material and you may not cover all the questions. If the discussion is fruitful then allow group members the time they need to discuss, process, and grow with the information.

9. Manage the Time

Keep an eye on the clock. Don't let things get bogged down in interesting but irrelevant discussion. Bring things back on track and take the initiative to move things on when it feels right.

10. Leave time for application.

Make sure people have time to think about the difference that this discussion will have in their daily 'frontline' lives.



Discussion Guides for Small Groups

James - Words, words, words

WAY IN

Can you think of a time when someone's positive words made an impact on your life?

suggest can obstruct that life-seed growing? (Mark 4:13-20). How can we guard against this happening?

8. What do you learn about what God desires in these verses?

WAY OUT

Pray for anyone who is struggling to put into practice something that God is saying to them at this time. Pray that they will have the Spirit's help to be a 'doer' not just a 'hearer'.

Read James 1:19-27

Key Text: James 1:21

Humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you

4. Why would a Christian listen to God's word, and not do what it says? How could you avoid this tendency?
5. What do these verses say about being an authentic Christian? Imagine you had to summarise them in a conversation with a non-Christian who had asked you, "so what is a real Christian"? What would you say?
6. According to verses 27-29, how do people who think they are religious differ from those who are truly religious?
7. In verse 23, the phrase "looks at his face in the mirror" could also suggest, "take a long look at who God created you to be". How does that interpretation add to the verse's meaning?

DISCUSS

1. How can being quick to listen and slow to speak helps us be slow to become angry? (v19)
2. Why do you think that human anger cannot bring about the righteous life that God requires (v20)? Can you think of examples where you or someone you know has tried to do God's kingdom work in anger? What was the result?
3. James tell us that God's word was planted in us. (21) What does Jesus

Commentary Notes:

Becoming a Christian does nothing whatever to remove a person from the sphere of temptation. It is no good looking on earth for a situation that only exists in heaven! Just as Christ's coming into the world did not banish temptation universally, so His coming into the human heart does not banish it personally. Temptation is one of the universal and inevitable facts of life. It is the testimony of the ages that for the Christian temptation is not removed. One of the loveliest descriptions of what God has done in saving the Christian is in Paul's words that He has 'delivered us from the Kingdom of darkness, and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son' (Colossians 1:13 RSV). In the irresistible and sovereign grace of God we were plucked out of 'the snare of the devil', having been 'taken captive by him at his will' (2 Timothy 2:26), and brought into the family, fellowship and kingdom of God's own people. But mark this! Although we have been taken for ever out of Satan's grip and possession, we have not yet been removed from his interest and attention!

Not Hearers Only volume 1 – John Blanchard