

## 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!

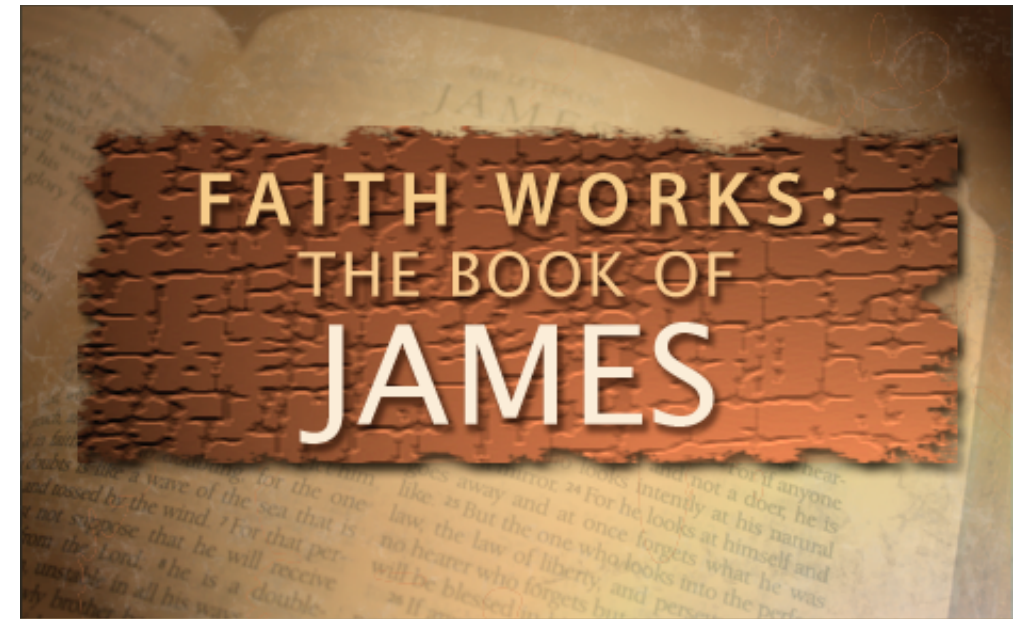
Remember, the focus is not on getting through the material and you may not cover all the questions. If the discussion is fruitful then allow group members the time they need to discuss, process, and grow with the information.

### 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.



## 6. Taming the Tongue (James 3:1-18)

## WAY IN

Who is the most talkative person you know? What is their favourite subject?

issue for Christians? (use this passage, your experience and also Matthew 12:36,37 as you reflect on this question).

indicator of what is going on in our hearts? (see Matthew 12:34,35)

## WAY OUT

How could you use your tongue to be a source of life to someone this week? Think of a specific person who you could bless, or encourage and pray for them.

## Read James 3:1-18

### Key Text: James 3:10

Out of the same mouth comes blessing and cursing: my brothers and sisters, this should not be!

4. How do the images from nature highlight the inconsistencies of the tongue (v.11,12)? Is anyone aware of this inconsistency in their own use of the tongue? What causes it?

## DISCUSS

1. Who is this passage primarily addressed to (v1)? Why does James give the warning at the end of verse 1?
2. Which three images does James use to describe the tongue in verses 3-6? Think about each one: what do they tell us about 'the tongue'?
3. It's odd that this body part is singled out for such treatment. (He doesn't warn about the use of the elbow or the knee!). Why is the tongue a particular

5. James focuses on the destructive power of the tongue, but he also hints that it can be used for good (9,10). How do Proverbs 18:4 & 21 describe the tongue's positive effects?
  - Can anyone think of a time when someone else's words have been a source of life to them?
6. In verses 13-18 James describes two different sources of wisdom (v15 & v17). He suggests that the heart described in v17, will control the tongue very differently to the heart described in v 15. How is the way we use our tongues an

### Commentary Notes: James 3:11-12

Can a salt spring produce fresh water" (v 11-12). As we look at the world, this principle is very clear: a product is always consistent with its source. A source of one kind is not going to produce something of two kinds. Fresh and salt water will never flow from the same spring. Fresh water comes from one kind of source; salt water from another. There is no such thing as a blended source that can produce both. The product always matches the source. The product is therefore always a reflection of the source. What you end up with shows what you started with. Fruit is always in line with its source. If someone wants some fresh olives, it is no use looking for them among the fig trees; fig trees are for figs. And if it's figs you want, there's little point rummaging through the grapevines for them. As carefully as someone might look, they will never find raspberries on an apple tree, or bananas in a field of potato plants. It is the same when it comes to the tongue. What we say is an issue precisely because it reflects what is going on underneath. The kind of fruit in evidence indicates what kind of tree is producing it. The type of language we speak indicates what kind of heart lies behind it. It shows us what is really going on under the surface. If you want to know what someone is really like, spend time listening to them talk. More than anything else, the tongue shows what kind of people we are.

Allberry, Sam. James For You: Showing you how real faith looks in real life (God's Word For You) (pp. 98-99). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.