

## 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!

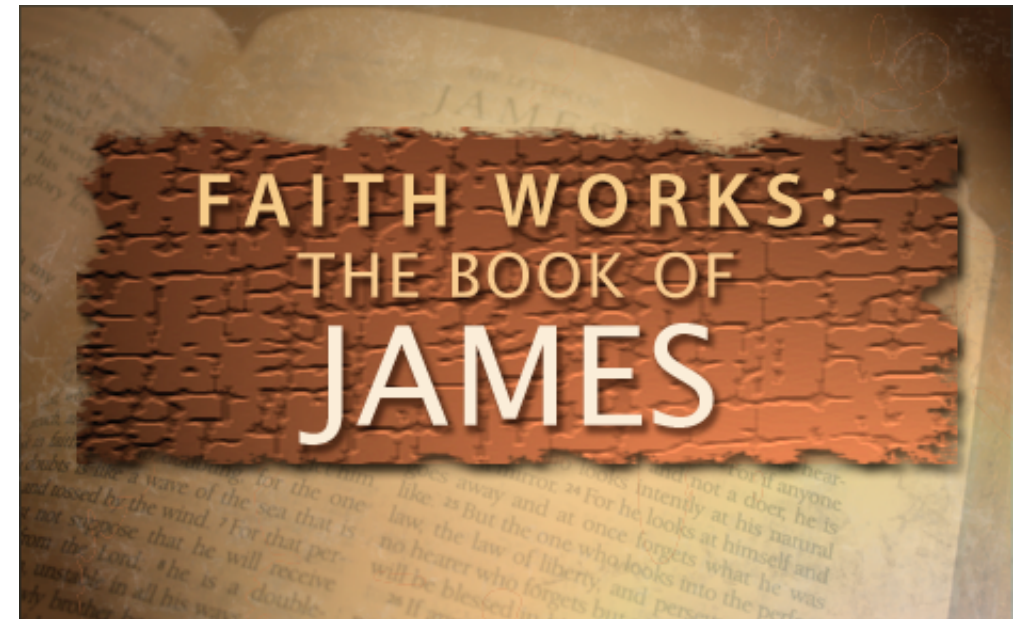
Remember, the focus is not on getting through the material and you may not cover all the questions. If the discussion is fruitful then allow group members the time they need to discuss, process, and grow with the information.

### 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.



## 7. Submitted or Seduced (James 4:1-10)

## WAY IN

There is a saying that ‘we hurt the people that we love the most’. Is that true, and if so why would we do that?!

## Read James 4:1-10

### Key Text: James 4:6

But he gives us more grace

## DISCUSS

1. What does James identify as the cause of quarrels and broken relationships (v1,2)?
  - What do you think he means by ‘the desires that battle within you’? Where might these desires come from?
2. What reason does James give for unanswered prayer (3)?
  - What might be some examples of right and wrong motives for prayer?
  - How might these insights shape the way we pray for ourselves?
3. Why is *adultery* (v4) an appropriate image of ‘friendship with the world’?
  - What does it mean for us to have friendship with the world in the sense that James uses the phrase? Try to think of practical examples.
  - Why does friendship with the world make us ‘an enemy of God’? (4)
4. God’s grace (his undeserved kindness and power at work in our lives) is the cause of us being able to walk away from friendship with the world and ‘submit ourselves’ to him (v7).
  - How have people in the group experienced God’s grace? How has it impacted their faith-journey?
5. In verses 7-10, there are at least 10 instructions for the person who received God’s grace?
  - What are the things that James encourages believers to do - and what is God’s response?
  - How do group members respond to this list?

- Imagine you were reading this list with a new Christian. What questions might they have and how would you answer them?

## WAY OUT

Are there situations where humility could help you become a source of peace this week?

### Commentary Notes: James 4:1-3

Christians allowing these desires to erupt into conflict are forgetting God’s grace: “You do not have because you do not ask God” (James 4:2b). Prayerlessness is a sign that someone is trying to run things in their own strength, for their own sake, and under their own authority. Prayerlessness arises from a sense of independence from God—so that instead of praying about our desires, we indulge them. Rather than trusting in the Father, who delights in giving good gifts to his children (Matthew 7:11), we ourselves decide what is good and seek to gain it through our own efforts. As well as forgetting the grace of God, James’ readers also forget the goodness of God: “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures” (James 4:3). God is utterly pure—his eyes are too pure to look on evil (Habakkuk 1:13). But James rebukes his readers for only turning to God so that he can rubber-stamp their own agenda, rather than submitting to his. This is a huge misunderstanding of what prayer is for. Think about the Lord’s Prayer (see Matthew 6:9-13). When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he pointed them to pray for God’s concerns (his name, his kingdom, his will) before our own (of provision, pardon and protection). The purpose of prayer is not to try to get God to do what we want; it is actually a means by which we align ourselves to his priorities. Part of the point of prayer is to remind ourselves of what God wants. But for many of James’ readers, prayer seems to have been a means of co-opting God into their plans—of using him to further their own purposes. Little wonder, then, that they did not receive the things they prayed for.

Allberry, Sam. James For You: Showing you how real faith looks in real life (God's Word For You) (p. 107). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.