

## 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!

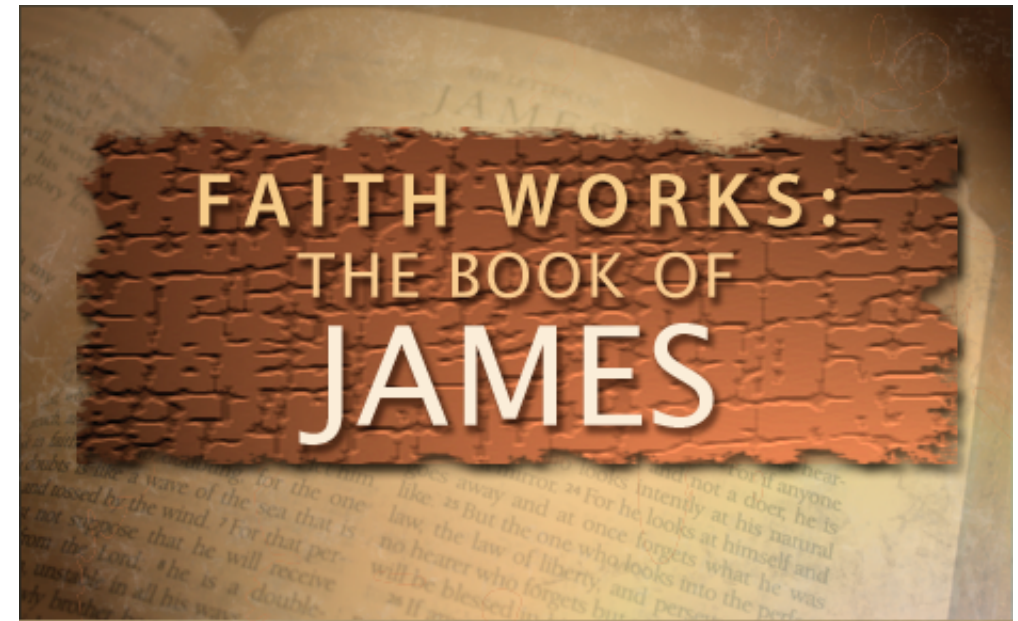
Remember, the focus is not on getting through the material and you may not cover all the questions. If the discussion is fruitful then allow group members the time they need to discuss, process, and grow with the information.

### 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.



## 8. Boasting & Wealth (James 4:13-5:6)

## WAY IN

What would be your most treasured possession? *or* If you suddenly came into a lot of money, what is the first thing you would buy?

## Read James 4:13-5:6

### Key Text: James 4:14

Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow.

## DISCUSS

1. How would you describe the two attitudes to the future found in 4:13-17?
  - Which do you find more commonplace amongst your friends? What is the significance of that for them?
2. James compares life to a mist. How is this helpful in shaping our attitudes to daily life? (Or do some find it unhelpful?). How does Jesus' parable in Luke 12:13-21 address this issue?

3. In 5:1-6, James highlights three dangers associated with excessive wealth: hoarding (3); extravagance (5) and injustice (4,6). Discuss each one:

- Hoarding: in what ways can we 'hoard' wealth and why is this wrong? (see Matthew 6:19-21). Is there an acceptable way to hoard wealth? (see Proverbs 6:6-8).
  - Extravagance: how do we work out what is extravagant and what is acceptable? (is there any insight in Matthew 6:28-32)?
  - Injustice: how can the acquisition of wealth lead to injustice? (see 5:4, and Luke 16:19-31). How can we gain and use our wealth justly?
  - What is the purpose of our wealth according to 2 Corinthians 9:11?
4. If you were mentoring a new Christian, how would you broach the subject of how to handle money and possessions? What advice would you give them?

## WAY OUT

Are there ways in which people feel moved to respond to this session? How could you encourage one another to act?

### Commentary Notes: James 5:1-6

God is concerned for the poor and the oppressed. Throughout the Old Testament he instituted laws to protect them. Prophets like Amos condemned those who exploited the poor and vulnerable (Amos 5:11-12; see also Jeremiah 22:13 and Malachi 3:5). And no such acts today go unnoticed by him. The unpaid wages cry out to him; the cries of the harvesters reach his ears (James 5:4). No one else may notice or care. But God sees, understands, and promises to act...

Those of us in the comparative wealth of the West need to reflect on our responsibility as consumers—to think about the kinds of companies we're supporting and how they treat their workers in far-flung and impoverished places. Wilful ignorance really is no defence. Our purchasing habits might well be furthering forms of injustice, and we have an opportunity to make a difference through the choices that we make. It is incumbent on us to care about such things and to do all we can to support upright companies and avoid those that deliberately hurt and exploit the economic vulnerable. So it is all too apparent why these rich people are to "weep and wail", and why such "misery ... is coming on" them (v 1). It is not wrong to be rich. The crime is not being wealthy, but hoarding, extravagance, and injustice. The problem is not having money but loving money (1 Timothy 6:10). Wealth is therefore dangerous. When we understand the judgment of God on such attitudes, we will think twice before wanting to be like the ungodly wealthy around us:

Allberry, Sam. James For You: Showing you how real faith looks in real life (God's Word For You) (p. 131). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.