

EXTREME FAITH

WISDOM FROM THE BOOK OF JAMES

Discussion Two:

Taking Responsibility for Our Life (James 1:19-27)

Looking in the mirror is not always fun, especially first thing in the morning! Of course, staring at the mirror and admiring oneself can be unhealthy. In our passage, James gives several intense insights and does not sugar coat his diagnosis of our tendencies toward sinfulness and selfishness and sometimes willful ignorance of our true condition. Just as we start feeling condemned, the author reminds us that God's Word is in us and it can deliver us from our sin. James is unsparing in his exposure of our speech and reminds us that God is looking for service toward the vulnerable, not boastful and fancy words.

Opening conversation:

When have we listened to good advice and then ignored it, to our regret? When did we follow good advice and see good results?

Reading #1: James 1:19-21

Key idea:

Our first verbal reactions are often ungodly, and we need to reflect before we speak and allow God's Word to determine our thinking and speech.

- Parallel scriptures: Psalm 119:1-8; Proverbs 12:22-23; Matthew 5:33-37
- Question: What kinds of information or news gets you really upset? What "sets you off?"
- Question: How has good helped you in your reactions and speech?
- Insight: Our initial feeling in a situation is not yet a sin...reactions simply are what they are. It is what we do with them that matters. The more of God's Word we have in our hearts, the more we can respond with grace and wisdom, instead of anger and pride.

Reading #2: James 1:22-25

Key idea:

We need the Lord's help to know our hearts and see things as they are. And taking time to meditate in God's Word will help liberate us from sin. Biblical meditation is not some weird mystical practice – it is focused concentration on the scripture and humbly asking the Holy Spirit to bring insight and application. Memorizing God's Word gives us a great treasure chest to draw from when we are under pressure.

- Parallel scriptures: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 19:12-16; Psalm 119:30-32
- Question: When has a passage of scripture helped you during a difficult time?
- Sharing: Share a favorite verse or passage from the Bible and why it is so meaningful for you.

EXTREME FAITH

WISDOM FROM THE BOOK OF JAMES

Insight:

It takes time to develop new habits. Experts say the first 3-4 weeks are the most challenging. Soon, a new habit becomes the new normal for our lives. Let's make a habit of meditating on a key verse from the Bible every day.

Biblical meditation is not some weird mystical practice – it is focused concentration on the scripture and humbly asking the Holy Spirit to bring insight and application.