

Icebreaker: When you look in the mirror what do you see?

From last week: How did the way you spent your time reflect your priorities? Did the use of your time make you look more or less like Jesus?

Read this week's scripture and discuss:

1. The term "Sunday Christian" could describe the person in James 1:22-24, as a person who hears the word on Sunday but doesn't live it out during the week. Do you struggle with taking what you hear on Sunday through the rest of the week?
2. Why do you think James highlights being doers and not just hearers of the word?
3. In what ways do you see the law (law of God, law of the land) giving liberty (James 1:25)?
4. When was a time you served as a mirror helping someone else to see that they reflect God's image?
5. When you look at your image in the mirror, where do you see God's image and where do you see discrepancies?
6. In verses 26-27, how does James define "religion"? Do you agree with his definition? Why or why not?
7. What does it mean "to keep oneself spotless from the world" (verse 27)? Is this possible?

This sermon series is called "Working Out Our Faith." Each week, we will recommend a practice to work out your faith.

Working out your faith: Work on listening before speaking. In at least one conversation each day this week, be an active listener. Try some of these steps:

- Put your phone or laptop down.
- Make eye contact.
- Decide to be quiet before chiming in.
- Don't react in anger even if you disagree.
- When the other person finishes, ask them a follow up question based on what you heard, or summarize what you heard them say.

Reflect on how this exercise went with your group next week.

Prayer: As your group closes in prayer, please remember the following requests from our church family.

- > Prayers of comfort for Bill Nuss in the death of his father.
- > Prayers of healing for Phil Isenbarger.

Requests from ZPC's April's Prayer Calendar:

- > Pray for the clients, volunteers, and contributors of the Zionsville Food Pantry.
- > Pray for the Mission Possible event next Saturday that this day brings us closer as a community of love and sharing.

James continues this week with much information for those who already know Jesus and want to follow him. Remember that you know God's grace, and James is calling all of us as a response to grace, to live for him.

[Question 1] The person who looks in a mirror and then forgets what he looks like when he walks away is similar to the churchgoer who goes to church and forgets to do what they hear. God calls us to do what Jesus teaches, not just to know what Jesus teaches.

[Question 2] If we have studied to be good parents, and know what it looks like, but ignore that and don't parent our children, then why know it? We should be diligent about doing what the word says, not just learning what the word says. The word should change us.

[Question 3] The law can give liberty to live more freely. For example, traffic laws help people to feel free to drive comfortably. Since most people are driving the speed limit and obeying traffic laws, people can get around town safely. Following God's law can free us up to really focus on others and not worry as much about ourselves.

[Question 4] Either through words of encouragement or sometimes words of challenge, we can be a mirror to show brothers and sisters in Christ, how they are doing. Be cautious and think how you use your words when speaking to others.

[Question 5] When you look at yourself in light of God's word and God's image, where do you match up and where do you fall short? Perhaps you are good at study and prayer, but struggle with how you talk to people or with hospitality. Perhaps you are great at serving, but struggle to spend time with God. Where do you see yourself?

[Question 6] Religion is not letting your tongue (words) be unbridled. Religion is caring for widows and orphans in distress, and keeping oneself unstained or unpolluted. Certainly faith in Jesus Christ through grace is the foundation of our faith. Being a doer of the word means living out what Jesus teaches. In the first century, widows and orphans had no means to make money, and would be reduced to begging. So Christians loving them was a witness to others.

[Question 7] Keeping oneself unpolluted, unstained from the world is staying away from the world's values of money, pleasure and power. Focusing on Jesus is more about compassion, joy, and others. May we be doers not just hearers of the word.