

DAY 2: Read Acts 10:19-35

Just before this passage, Peter has the vision of the sheet with unclean animals lowered to him with the command to kill and eat. He is told not to call anything impure which God makes clean.

1. How does this passage add to your understanding of James 2:1-4?

2. Does Peter's unease about being in the centurion's home detract from his mission? Why or why not?

To Dig Deeper: Who is Cornelius and why is it helpful for us to know about him?

DAY 3: Read James 2:5-7

1. Does this passage say that God is responsible for particular people being poor? Why or why not?

2. Why are poor people in a better position to be rich in faith? How does showing favoritism dishonor the poor?

3. Read Proverbs 30:8. Why does the writer ask for "neither poverty nor riches"?

4. In what ways do the rich exploit us, according to verses 6 and 7? Are there examples of this in our own society? In what ways do we exploit those who have less than we do?

DAY 4: Read James 2:8-11

1. What does James mean when he speaks in verse 8 of the “royal law”?
2. Rabbinic teaching about the law was different than Jesus taught. They believed that they received credits for doing good and lost credits for breaking a law. One could do more good than bad and still have a positive credit. Where do you see this belief or idea still in practice?
3. What do verses 10 and 11 mean when they refer to keeping the law? What is Jesus’ teaching on the law in Matthew 5:17-30?
4. Read Galatians 2:11-14. Peter is found to be showing favoritism. What example does Paul set regarding how to stop the behavior? Can you cite similar behavior in today’s church?
5. Matthew 5:3 speaks about the poor in spirit. How are the poor in spirit related to the believers in James 2:5 who are poor in the eyes of the world?

DAY 5: Read James 2:12-13

We must be ever mindful that we are no better than any other. It is sinful for us to think otherwise. We are all sinners, in need of a Savior.

1. Verse 12 refers to the “law that gives freedom.” What does this mean? What is the “law of freedom”, or in some versions the “law of liberty”? (See James 1:25, John 8:32, Romans 8:2, Galatians 6:2)
2. In verse 13, what are the meanings of the terms “judgment” and “mercy”? Can you think of examples of mercy triumphing over judgment? (See Luke 6:36-38, and Proverbs 21:13.)

3. Matthew has a lot to say about our need to be merciful. Read Matthew 5:7, 6:14-15, 7:1-2, and 18:22-35. How do these verses help you to understand James 2: 13? Do you have difficulty with forgiveness? How do you show mercy to those who harm you? How have others shown mercy to you in a meaningful way?

DAY 6: Reread James 2:1-13

1. Memorize James 2:1. How do you live this out? What challenges you about this verse?
2. Write down two or three things that this passage teaches about what it means to be a disciple of Christ. In what ways do others recognize you as a Christian?
3. Look up the lyrics to the hymn "In Christ There Is No East or West". Meditate on the line "All Christly souls are one in Him throughout the whole wide earth". How can we better show this unity?