
TALK IT OVER

A Faith That Helps Me See the Truth

James: A Faith That Works When Life Doesn't - Part 27

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Open your group in prayer, and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the provided questions in the message notes, or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions towards the end of the document.

Message Notes

Talk It Over

"People always think they're doing the right thing, but in the end it leads to their death."

Proverbs 16:25

"The human mind is the most deceitful of all things. It is incurable. No one can understand how deceitful it is." Jeremiah 17:9 (GW)

Question 1

As we continue to grow in a faith that works when life doesn't, what do the verses above say with regard to our need to develop a faith that helps us see the truth?

SOME WAYS I DECEIVE MYSELF

1. When I think I've earned & deserve all I have

God said, *"I will punish the king of Assyria for his prideful arrogance. He claims, 'I've done this all by myself. By my own strength I've won these battles and by my own clever wisdom, I've captured many nations and made myself wealthy.'" Isaiah 10:12-13 (NIV)*

"Don't be deceived, dear brothers and sisters. Every good gift you have is a perfect present from God above. It has come down from the Father who created all of the heavenly lights." James 1:16-17

Question 2

Read Isaiah 10:12-13 and James 1:16-17 aloud in your group. James says that, *"Every good gift you have is a perfect present from God."* However, we often feel like we have earned and

deserve the good things in our life. Discuss why it is so easy to feel entitled rather than giving God the credit for all that is good.

2. When I think hearing God's word means I've obeyed it.

"Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. You must do what it says to do!"
James 1:22

Jesus: *"Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them!"* John 13:17 (NIV)

3. When I think I'm mature but don't control my mouth

"If you think you are religious but you do not control your tongue, then your religion is worthless and you deceive yourself." James 1:26 (TEV)

Question 3

According to The Message version of James 1:26, we're *"self-deceived"* if we set ourselves up as *"religious"* by merely *"talking a good game."* How do the things you've said this past week to co-workers, neighbors, family and friends measure up to what James 1:22 above says? What is Jesus' promise in John 13:17 if we not only hear God's word - but do what it says to do?

4. When I assume my viewpoint is what God thinks

"You say to God, 'My beliefs are flawless and I can't be blamed for anything.'" Job 11:4
(NIV/NJB)

"The Lord says, 'My thoughts are completely different from yours! And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my views are higher than your views.'" Isaiah 55:8-9 (NLT)

Paul: *"I was once convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth."* Acts 26:9 (NIV)

"The Lord said, 'Some people claim to speak for me, but they're deceived and lying! I didn't even speak to them, much less choose them to be my prophet! Their messages come from worthless dreams, useless predictions, and their own imagination. Therefore, I'll punish these people for claiming to speak my will even though I never sent them!'" Jeremiah 14:14-15

5. When I confuse keeping current with being wise

"Don't fool yourself. Don't think that you can be wise merely by being up-to-date with the times."

1 Corinthians 3:18 (Mes)

God says, *"You are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless."* Jeremiah 7:8 (NIV)

6. When I think I have the right to judge others

"God is the only lawgiver and judge. He alone can save and destroy. So, who do you think you are, to judge someone else?" James 4:12 (TEV)

"If you think you're something when you're really nothing, you are only deceiving yourself."
Galatians 6:3 (TEV)

Question 4

We learn in Isaiah 55:8-9 above that God is completely different from humans in how he thinks. His ways, actions, thoughts, and plans are much higher than ours, just like the sky is higher than the earth. This means his ways are better, more valuable, and more significant. Yet we say to God as in Job 11:4 that our beliefs are perfect and we are blameless for what goes wrong. Discuss how this attitude prevents us from the freedom of just trusting God for a faith that helps us see the truth.

7. When I think wrong friends won't influence me

"Don't fool yourself. Bad companions will ruin good character." 1 Corinthians 15:33 (TEV)

8. When I think I can sin without consequences

"Do not deceive yourselves; no one makes a fool of God. You will reap exactly what you've planted." Galatians 6:7 (TEV)

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8 (NIV)

Question 5

The law of the harvest is a universal law - what we sow we will reap. If we sow to please our sinful nature, we will reap a harvest that doesn't last. If we sow to please the Spirit and promote our spiritual growth, we will reap a harvest that will last forever. Discuss how our culture misleads us about living for ourselves, and how we can better direct our sowing to please God and lay up treasures in heaven.

HOW CAN I WORK ON MY BLINDSPOTS?

1. Ask God for clarity

Job: "Teach me what I cannot see; if I've done wrong, I will not do so again." Job 34:32 (NIV)

2. Ask my small group for help

"Fools think they need no advice, but the wise listen to others." Proverbs 12:15 (NLT)

"Look closely at yourselves. Test yourselves to see if you are living the faith." 2 Corinthians 13:5 (NCV)

3. Ask Jesus to change me

"Jesus said, 'I have come to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are really blind.'" John 9:39b (NLT)

David: *"None of us can see our own errors; So, deliver me, Lord, from my hidden faults!" Psalm 19:12 (TEV)*

Question 6

In the first half of the message, we covered eight ways we deceive ourselves in developing a faith that helps us see the truth. What are the ways you're deceiving yourself based on upbringing, surroundings, and friends, etc.? According to the verses above, what are some ways you can see the truth?

Question 7

The good news is we're not left alone to discover and adjust our vision - we have the tools above. We know that God's mercies are *"new every morning."* Ask God for clarity as you consider the areas that have come to mind as you've studied this lesson. Talk about how your small group can help you. What is your prayer for change?

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message!

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?*