

Discussion Guide

questions to help start or continue conversations about faith

Discussion Guides accompany [the weekly message](#).

Mosaic

A mosaic is an artistic technique that uses tiny parts to create a whole image or object. Mosaics are usually assembled using small tiles that are made of glass, stone or other materials. Typically, the tiles are square, but they can also be round or randomly shaped. The small square tiles are known as tesserae, and the rounded tiles are known as pebbles.

The term mosaic is likely derived from the Greek word “mousa,” meaning “muse.” Mosaics as an art form have been around for thousands of years. Mosaics were first discovered in ancient Mesopotamia, where small pieces of tile were found in a temple from the third millennium BC. These artifacts were random and straightforward. It wasn’t until the ancient Greeks and Romans that mosaics began to depict real-life scenes, patterns and symbols.

As years passed, mosaics became more intricate and realistic. Mosaic artwork became culturally significant all over the world. Starting the fourth century, mosaics depicting Christian scenes were immortalized in famous basilicas and churches all over Europe.

- Grab your cell phone and do a search for your favorite place to visit (the beach, the mountains, etc.) as an artistic mosaic. Choose one mosaic and take a few minutes to look at the various parts. Is there a part of the mosaic you like most? Share the image with your small group and describe why you like that part the most. Share how this part of the mosaic contributes to the whole image.

The book of James is like a beautiful mosaic the Lord inspired through His brother James. If you only look at one verse or one phrase, it is like looking at one tiny part of the whole. Parts of the image are beautiful, and even useful, but to truly see and understand the image, you have to step back and seek all the parts working together as one.

As we continue in James, remember, James is a handbook for living a victorious Christian life. None of us yet are perfect, complete and in need of nothing. But in Christ, and through Christ in us, the hope of glory, He gives you power to live the life to which He has called you. As a follower of Christ, you belong to Jesus, you have new life in Jesus and you are His prized possession.

Passage: James 1:19-27

Observation (look at the text)

- v.19 & 20: What does James instruct regarding anger?
- v.21: What are the two instructions in verse 21?
- v.22-25: What does James say about being a doer of God's word compared to only a listener?
- v.26-27: What does James say about religion?

Interpretation (understand what it means):

- v. 19 & 20: Why should we be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry? (see also Psalm 4:4-5; Ephesians 4:26-27)
- v. 21: This verse starts with "So" in the NLT and "Therefore" in the NIV and NASB. Whenever you see a "Therefore" in the Word of God, it is always good to pause and ask, "What is it there for?" When James states, "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all the remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted [in your hearts], which is able to save your souls," is this a conclusion of the instruction in verses 19 & 20 or in verses 1-20? Why? (See also John 1:1-5; Colossians 3:16-17)
- v.22-25: James references looking at oneself in the mirror and looking intently at the perfect law that sets you free? To become a doer of the Word, where must we look? When James refers to the "perfect law," what law is he referring to?
 - o Read Mathew 5:17-20; Luke 4:18-20; John 10:9-10; Galatians 5:1.
 - o When you live a life of faith, you can try to do and keep every letter of every verse of the law, or you can follow and obey the One who came to fulfill the law. Which do you prefer and why?
- v. 26: What impact do our words have on our religion? Why? (see also Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 10:19)
- James 1:19-27 is all about living a life of faith in Jesus that is seen and on display for the world around you. We all have blind spots, and unfortunately at times can be like the one who forgets what they look like. What is the litmus test that James offers to know the Word is rooted in our hearts and our faith that others see is a beautiful mosaic of Christ? (see also Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 25:31-46)

Application (apply the Word of God to life):

Take some time to read the practical applications of living your faith below. Or take some time to write your own practical application of faith. Choose one or two of the practical applications and share with your small group where God is leading you right now to practice faith this week. Take time this week to write in your prayer journal on how you are doing in living your faith and in prayer share your victories and failures with Jesus. Thank Him for the victories. Ask Him for help to overcome and have victory over the failures. In Christ, let your faith grow.

James writes in a way that first gives instruction, then provides the context for the instruction. In the western world, we tend to be very linear in our thinking. If we apply linear thinking to the book of James, we can get ourselves wrapped up in thinking that James is all about doing things first, then faith follows. But Romans teaches, "Whatever is not from faith is sin." (Romans 14:23) What is a follower of Jesus to do? When living a life of faith that is on display for the world around you, apply and practice the instruction of James from a position of faith in Christ for the glory of God the Father. Here are few practical examples from James 1:19-27.

v.19-20: Anger. Because I have put my faith in Jesus, and I am confident that I belong to Jesus, that Jesus lives in me through the Holy Spirit, and I am His prized possession, I also know, and am confident that Jesus has given me a spirit of peace, power, love, and self-control. Therefore, when I am speaking with someone who makes me so angry, I could just scream, instead, I will be still, I will listen, and if I get angry, I will remain quiet because my anger is likely rooted in my own human weakness and not in Christ. And if my anger is rooted in Christ, the Bible clearly instructs me to be angry without sinning. When I live my faith in Christ this way, my faith in Christ produces righteousness that God desires in me, and this righteousness that flows from my faith in Christ is like a light on hillside that shines in the darkness and draws others to Christ.

v.21&27b Redeemed and Set Free. I don't always do the things I want to do or that I know I should do. So, I humble myself before the LORD and receive the Word of God He planted in my heart when I first believed. I know and am confident that in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation. Still, I want to be more like Jesus, and therefore, I purpose in my heart to follow Him and Obey Him and love Him with all my heart, all my soul, and all my strength. I will ask the Lord daily to keep me from temptation and deliver me from evil. Lord give me Your Spirit of power and self-control, that I will not watch anything, look at anything, listen to anything, read anything, think on anything, say anything or put anything in my body that is not pleasing to You. In Christ, I am redeemed and set free! I refuse to let the world corrupt me.

v.22-25 Continue being a Doer of the Word. I desire to continue to be a doer of the word I have received. I will continue to assemble with the believers and live my faith in Jesus every day. I believe He has prepared good works in advance for me to do, and I will both pray that He reveals them to me and look for them throughout the week. When I see them, I will step into them and practice my faith. I also pray that I will do these good works and bless others in Christ without even knowing it. I do desire to be blessed by God, but more than this, I pray my life will be a blessing to the Lord.

v.22-25 Become a Doer of the Word. I desire to become a doer of the Word I have received. For too long I have only attended church on Sundays and not lived my faith in Jesus through out the week. I have forgotten what it means to be a doer of the Word. I have been on the sidelines far too long and I commit to the LORD to get back in the game. I believe He has prepared good works in advance for me to do, and I will both pray that He reveals them to me and look for them throughout the week. When I see them, I will step

into them and practice my faith. I also pray that I will do these good works and bless others in Christ without even knowing it. I do desire to be blessed by God, but more than this, I pray my life will be a blessing to the Lord.