

Lesson 15

NT Book: James

Book Theme: Faith Works

Key Verse: James 1:22

Summary: Although he started out skeptical of Jesus' claims and ministry (John 7:5), Jesus' brother James later came to saving faith in Jesus as God's Son and became one of the key leaders in the church at Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18-19, 2:9). In the book that bears his name, James speaks against hypocritical Christians who claim to know Jesus, but whose lives do not appear any different than unbelievers. That kind of faith is of no use to the world we live in, just like a dead body is of no use (2:20). We are to be doers of the word and not hearers only. James writes a lot about good works as the fruit of faith, not the root of faith. In other words, "works" are good deeds that are a result of our salvation, not a requirement for our salvation. Actions speak louder than words when it comes to what we believe; James is calling the church to action so the world can see that faith works in our broken world.

Video: Jesus' brother encourages Christians to take action

Teaching Points:: Strategies for putting God's words into action

Class Time

Review Activities

- Review flash cards
- "Name that Verse" - Choose a verse from previous weeks, but don't tell anyone what it is. Simply say, "I'm thinking of a verse." One child starts the "bidding" by saying, "I can name that verse in ____ words." The bidding will start with a high number; the next child can lower the number or can pass if he/she thinks the number is too low already. When no one wants to go lower, challenge the person with the lowest bid to "Name that Verse," and read the appropriate number of words of the verse. If the child can name the reference that goes with the verse, he/she gets a point. Start again with new bidding and a new verse. Alternatively, start by giving the reference and challenge the kids to quote the rest of the verse with as few "starter words" as possible. In this scenario, the bidding could get down to "0 words" if the child knows the whole thing.

Small Group Activity

- "Look Intently" - Read James 1:22-25. Use the printable I Spy Game or provide a variety of objects on a tray. Have kids "look intently" for about a minute. Then write down (alone or with a partner) as many things as they can remember were in the picture/on the tray. Talk about the way we read our Bible. Do we read it quickly so we can get done and check it off our list? Or do we take our time to pray, read things slowly and several times to let it sink in and let it become a part of us? Ask kids if/how/when/where they read their Bibles. One way to "hear and do" this week is for everyone to do the take home page. Talk about it next week as a group (or have kids bring back their take home page with answers written on it) to see who followed through.

Large Group Activity

- "Simon Says on Steroids" - The leader will write a long and ridiculous list of things for kids to do on the whiteboard or a piece of butcher paper. After hearing the instructions and looking intently at the list, half the class will turn their backs to the board and try to do in order everything that was written while the other half of the class checks them; switch groups. Make a new list and play again, as long as interest allows. Every so often, repeat James 1:22 together.

Take Home Page

- Send a take home page with each child and encourage them to spend time with God during the week.



New Testament - Lesson 15

James

Theme: Faith Works

Key Verse: But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

James 1:22

James

Although he started out skeptical of Jesus' claims and ministry (John 7:5), Jesus' brother James later came to saving faith in Jesus as God's Son and became one of the key leaders in the church at Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18-19, 2:9). In the book that bears his name, James speaks against hypocritical Christians who claim to know Jesus, but whose lives do not appear any different than unbelievers. That kind of faith is of no use to the world we live in, just like a dead body is of no use (2:20). We are to be doers of the word and not hearers only. James writes a lot about good works as the fruit of faith, not the root of faith. In other words, "works" are good deeds that are a result of our salvation, not a requirement for our salvation. Actions speak louder than words when it comes to what we believe; James is calling the church to action so the world can see that faith works in our broken world.

This Week

Read James 1. Verses 1-18 highlight how faith works in times of trial and difficulty. Based on verses 2-4, why should we rejoice in times of trial and difficulty?

What do verses 9-11 teach us about money and possessions?

In verses 22-25, what illustration do we find about why we must not only HEAR the Word, but also DO the Word?

Are you hearing any commands in this chapter of James? What should you do as a result?