



Adulting

Accept

Snooze

Expositional study on the book of James.

*The #1 catalyst for spiritual growth is reading and reflecting on the Bible.
Use these questions for personal study or as part of a community group experience.*

WEEK 6 OF 7

10/22/2017

Note to Leaders: John discussed the courageous this week. Heroes jump to action and serve selflessly. The letter of James talks about actively pursuing peace, living selflessly and walking humbly. This week as you discuss James 3:18-4:10 with your group, get them to think about how their faith (or lack thereof) drives their pursuit of peace and selflessness.

Sermon Questions

1. Have you met someone you would consider a “hero”? What qualities make them a hero in your eyes?
2. How did John’s description of a hero cohere with or challenge your image of a hero?
3. Re-read James 3:18-4:10. What is something that spoke to you out of this passage?

Discussion Questions

1. John stated that the humble are heroes. How does humility impact the situations and relationships described in James 3:18-4:10?
2. Humility and selflessness go hand-and-hand in these verses. What does James identify as the antithesis to these? Where do these actions and attitudes stem from?
3. In 4:6, James quotes from Proverbs 3:34, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Have you seen this principle at work in your life? Or in a recent situation?
4. Jesus challenges his followers to be meek (Matthew 5:5). How would you describe “meek”? Can meek be courageous?
5. Can you be meek without being humble?
6. Can you identify a situation in the past week where humility could have helped you become a source of peace? How would the response or attitude have been different?

7. James 4:7 gives the command to “submit yourselves, then, to God.” How does this affect our pride, quarreling, fighting and lead us to selflessness and humility?
8. The selfless are active. How can you live selflessly this week? First, as it relates to your relationship with God. And, second, how it relates to others.
9. What thoughts reflect selflessness?
10. What does selflessness look like at home? At work? On social media?

Background Comments

James begins in 3:18 stating that “peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness”. Here the conduct that James speaks of is peacemaking. Those who actively pursue peace through selflessness and humility, as revealed in Christ, create such an atmosphere that the fruits of faith can grow and flourish. With this in mind, James turns to topics of human desires and motives. Actions and attitudes—identified specifically as quarrels and fights—reflect something much deeper within us. These actions do not reflect wisdom or “true religion” but reveal where our allegiance lies, 4:8 (“double-minded” or “restless” referring back again to James 1:8 and 3:8). In this context, frustrated evil desires and motives serve as a breeding ground for division and strife. This results from one individual feeling that their desires are more important or valid than the others, so they fight for what they feel they have right to (compare Romans 14:7-21).

James introduces the concept that being friends with the world means hatred toward God. He places these two in contrast because the motives, desires and actions of each are diametrically opposed. This is seen in the fruit of each. For those who accept the grace of God and follow Jesus are to take up peace, truth, justice, humility and selflessness. While these may be reflected in part in non-Christian, the motive and desire of each remains distinct. In Matthew 5, Jesus presents a paradigm shift. He describes those who are weak by the world’s standard as those who are truly strong. The humble are heroes. The meek in fact inherit the earth. Numbers 12:3 states that Moses was more humble than any other man on earth, and yet, God used him to take down the most powerful force at that time. Humility and meekness do not reflect passivity or weakness. Instead, with a heart aligned with Christ and pure motives, the meek transform the world by their love, peacemaking, truth and good works. The Christian life is a call to active selflessness that confronts evil and pain with humility and hope.

Prayer Requests

Take a few minutes to go around the room and ask if anyone has something they would like prayer for. Write these down as they are being shared.

Additionally, challenge people to begin praying about the step of maturity God may be calling them to during this series.

Finally, pray together. You can pray the prayer below or your own prayer that incorporates the requests represented in the group.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, this week I am reminded that you chose selflessness instead of revenge. Peace and humility instead of pride and harm. May you grant me grace to be humble and strength to trust in you so I am free to pursue peace with others. Create in me a meek and peacemaking attitude that builds up rather than tears down. In your name I pray, amen.