

THE BOOK OF JAMES

Remember the plan from last week -- How is your planning going for your service project?

James really plays hardball in today's passage. Once again, **WAKE UP!** Hand out post-it notes to each person - **have them quickly list each distraction in their lives right now on separate post-its.** Stick them up on a wall (out of sight of the group discussion). Ask one person to surrender all these things to Jesus right now.



Now get busy with this passage! It's awesome stuff. **Read James 2:14-26.** This passage has always been very controversial, because one of the main (if not THE main) beliefs of Christianity is that we are saved by faith alone. But on a first reading, it seems that James is saying that we are saved by our own works!

But remember, what James cares about is that we "hyper-hear" (obey) God's word. That is, once we are saved by faith, that will show up in our lives! Otherwise, we aren't really listening, are we?

Let's break things down: What is "FAITH"? As a group, come up with an acronym for the definition of faith:

F =

A =

I =

T =

H =

What is God saying to you through this passage? How can small group pray for you this week?

LEADER'S GUIDE

Clearly, they need to struggle with what it means to actually "believe," and act on that faith in a manner that actually involves trust and risk.

OLD TESTAMENT

After they come up with the acronym, have them read a story of faith. For a group of girls, it might be great to have them read a story they may not be as familiar with. Have them read **1 Samuel 1:1-2:11**. For a group of guys, have them read the story of Isaac referenced by James (**Genesis 21:1-7, 22:1-19**).

In both stories, have the students explore the very real implications of faith portrayed in these stories. Because Abraham and Hannah believed certain things, they responded with their actions. As James, *"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? ... In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."* (2:14, 17)

In the last question, don't settle for cheap answers about homework or "stress." Have them really think a seemingly impossible situation they are facing, and invite them to face it with faith.