

The
New
Testament
in a Year

Week 13

James 2 – Mark 1

This week's reflectors are

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General Questions for Reflection

You might pick one part of each chapter
and think about these questions.

- What does this tell me about God
(including Jesus and the Holy Spirit)?
- What does this tell me about our world?
- What does it tell me about me?
- What does it say about following Jesus?
- Is there something here I'd like to learn
more about?

Why not use these thoughts to shape your
prayer today.

Monday

James 2

Now that we are into the 2nd chapter
of James, we are certainly getting the
message that our faith must be
shown in our actions. If our faith is
not accompanied by action then it is
“dead” (vs. 17).

Like the late June Callwood
(journalist, author, activist) would say
“Apathy is evil” and “Innocent
bystander is an oxymoron”. We must
show faith in Jesus by what we do
and say.

James makes a specific point for us
not to show favouritism.

*How do we show favouritism, maybe
without realizing it (eg. rich vs poor)?*

*If faith can lead to action, can the
reverse be true that action can lead
to faith?*

*What ‘faith-in-action’ is God calling
you to?*

*How can you, as a follower of Jesus,
make a difference in someone’s life
today?*

Tuesday

James 3

Oh how true, that one minute we say
things that bring about good and the
next minute we say things that hurt
others, ourselves and God. Luke
6:45 reminds us that “what you say
flows from what is in your heart.”
Perhaps like a bit in the mouth of
horse, if we can control our tongue
then we can start to change our
attitudes and our hearts.

*What attitudes in your heart do you
need God to start changing?*

*What can you say to someone today
that would bring about good?*

James has talked about faith twinned
with action. Now he adds in humility.
It seems that faith should lead to
action which should lead to humility.
Humility then leads to more action.

*Ask God how he wants to bless you
with humility and wisdom today.*

What action might that lead you to?

Wednesday

James 4

James 4 can be summed up in verse 6, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” If we are humble we ask God to give us what we need, not what we want. Sometimes our wants are materialistic (of this world) and not what God desires for us.

Ask God what you should be asking for and ask that he bless you with that.

Muslims will often say ‘insallah’ (God willing) after everything they say. Verse 15 speaks of this idea that although we may make plans, we must be humble and be prepared for how God may change those plans. In all things (even our planning), we must submit ourselves to God (vs. 7).

What plans do you need to submit to God today?

How can you better live your life in tune with God (and expect the unexpected)?

Thursday

James 5

Many things can pull us away from trusting God. For the rich (most of us Canadians fit in this category), it may be wealth that pulls them away from God. For the poor (and those suffering), it may be impatience that pulls them away from God. In the end, the question is the same “Will we trust God?”

What is a barrier to you trusting God?

James ends with the importance of prayer. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to “Pray without ceasing.” James tells us to pray in all situations and to pray for each other and with each other.

What situations tend to pull you into prayer (eg. when things are going well, when you are worried)?

Where do you need to expand your prayer life, so that you pray in all situations?

Is there someone you can pray for today? Someone who needs you to pray with them?

Friday

Mark 1

Mark tells us the story of Jesus’ earthly life in a very fast-paced style. Apparently, the word “immediately” occurs 42 times in Mark (we will have to count as we read).

By the end of Mark 1, Jesus has been baptized, had 40 days in the desert, called his first disciples, and miraculously healed many.

What is it about Jesus that is attracting the interest of so many? Why are some so willing to leave their lives (eg. fishing) and go with Him?

What is it about Jesus that attracts you to follow Him?

In the whirl of all this activity, Jesus goes to a quiet place to pray (vs. 35). If Jesus needed to pray, how much more do we need to take time in a quiet place to connect with God!

Where can you go, and in what part of your day, can you find quiet time with God?