

More Than a Manual

Scripture and Background Information for January 29-Feb 4.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

For most Christians we hear about the importance of the Bible to our understanding and growth in our faith but if we are honest, that's not exactly our experience. Instead, we find it confusing, boring, or irrelevant and instead of consistently engaging with Scripture, we find that we avoid Scripture itself. God designed Scripture for so much more than what we often experience. This series is an invitation to view Scripture the way God intended and to begin to engage with it in fresh ways that help you understand more of its purpose and find the One behind it all along.

Background for James 1:22-25:

Throughout this series we have spent a lot of time talking about what the Bible is and the authority that it should hold in our lives. This week, we switch gears from speaking about the infinite value and authority that the Bible holds and begin to address how we should respond to the message of Scripture.

To accomplish this, we will be going through James 1:22-25. James is a book that focuses on what all Christians, regardless of circumstance, should do considering the truth they have received which is the Gospel that was preached to them. The letter discusses things like what we should do when facing trials (James 1:2), when we are tempted to play favorites (James 2:1-13), or how to use our speech in ways that are glorifying to God (James 3). Overall, it is a very practical book that offers advice on how to live wisely as individuals and in community with others. Therefore, James 1:22-25 serves as a call for James' audience, and for us today, to act on the beliefs we have as Christians. We are to be "doers of the word," who hold fast to God's perfect law. This law is not a burdening list of rules, rather it is the truth that God has revealed throughout His Scriptures about who He is, who we are, and what we should do in relationship to Him. Ultimately, James is telling us that we are to live our lives in obedience to Christian truth, which is recorded in the Bible, no matter what is happening in our lives.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. In verse 25 God's law is described as, "perfect," and a, "law of liberty." In what ways is His law perfect and freeing? Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?
2. At the moment, do you feel as if you relate more to the person who is a hearer of the word who forgets their face after looking in the mirror or the one who is a doer and doesn't forget? What helps and hurts your ability to be a doer of the word?
3. What do you think is the nature of the blessing received by those who are doers of the word?
4. As you have continued to read the gospel of Luke on your own what new insights do you have about God or yourself? What questions do you have?