

# BLUEPRINT

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## FOR A FAITH THAT WORKS

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Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church  
James 1.19-27 | June 30, 2019  
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### I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue engaging the book of James, in our series *Blueprint for a Faith that Works*. After discussing trials from outsiders (verses 1-12) and temptations from within ourselves (13-18), we now turn our attention to God's truth, planted within our souls.

### II. Connecting with One Another

Have you ever wished you could take back something you said?

### III. Study the Text

#### a. Read James 1.19-21.

James writes that "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." This is a clear example of why James is considered wisdom literature, like the Old Testament books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job.

How are these three directives interrelated? When have you seen someone follow this instruction? When have you seen someone ignore it? What was the result in each case?

#### b. We previously engaged verse 20 during our *Vices and Virtues* series on the seven deadly sins.

Why do you think James so emphatically teaches about the limits of human anger? Why is patience considered the opposite of anger? Why not kindness? Where did you see human anger this week? What did it accomplish, if anything?

#### c. N.T. Wright concludes, "We always imagine that when the world is out of joint, a bit of our own anger will put things straight."

When have you tried to make things right through your own anger? What were the results?

#### d. According to verse 21, what are we supposed to do instead of getting angry? What other stories or passages of Scripture does this remind you of?

#### e. James has already used the metaphor of a planted seed in this first chapter, and returns to it again here. What are the actions he calls us to? Fill in the words below:

Therefore, \_\_\_\_\_ all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and \_\_\_\_\_ the word planted in you, which can save you.

What moral filth and evil is prevalent in our world? How can we get rid of it? How do we humbly accept the word already planted within us?

#### f. Read James 1.22-25.



How is “merely listening to the Word” deception? When – or perhaps, why – would someone take a fleeting glance at God’s Word, quickly forgetting what it says? How should these verses inspire our Bible reading? Why?

- g. James is convinced that the “perfect law” brings freedom. How could that be? Think of examples. How could a law bring freedom?
- h. When have you been blessed by doing God’s Word (as described in verse 25)?
- i. James’ idea of “doing” faith – as opposed to passive faith – involves the whole body, like Jesus’ assertion that the Greatest Commandment is to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Which part of your body is most resistant to living out your faith: Heart? Soul? Mind? Strength?

- j. Read James 1.26-27.

James gives another example of self-deception, followed by examples of “pure and faultless” faith.

The first recalls Jesus’ words in Matthew 15.11: “What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

Why do you think James says that such people’s religion is worthless?

- k. James’ pure and faultless faith is inspired by the constant refrain through the Scriptures to defend those who are vulnerable, like in Deuteronomy 10: “[God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.”

How does this engage the second half of the Great Commandment, quoted above?

Why do you think this was so important to James? How can we live this kind of religion in our world today? Think of as many answers as you can!

#### IV. Pray

- a. Confess to God the ways you are impatient and/or angry,
- b. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you strength to “clear out the weeds” from around the soil of your heart that the implanted Word might take root and grow even more,
- c. Pray that you would have “eyes to see” those in need in our community and around the world – and that you would have the courage to do something about it, in Jesus’ name.

#### V. Digging Deeper

- a. There are lots of related passages to check out, if you have time: Psalm 119.1-40, Proverbs 4.1-4, 7.1-3, Jeremiah 31.31-34, Matthew 5.21-22, 7.21-27, 12.34, 13.1-9, Luke 8.21, 18.11-12, John 13.35, 14.21-24, 15.1-5, 14, 17.17, Romans 2.13, 5.8, Galatians 5.16-26, Ephesians 1.13-14, 4.26, Philippians 2.4-9, 1st John 2.4, Rev. 3.17.

