

James: Practical Discipleship for Everyone

1. James 1

Aim: To learn more about wisdom literature and to consider, individually and corporately, which themes of wisdom God especially wants to draw to our attention this summer.

Choose from Question 1, 2 or 3 and then move on to Q4.

1. Experience - Who are the wisest people you know? Share with the cell group what makes one of those people wise, in your opinion.
2. Expectation - The book of James is a wisdom writing of the New Testament. The five books of wisdom in the OT are Proverbs, Psalms, Job, Song of songs and Ecclesiastes. From what you know of the OT books:
 - a. How would you describe this type (genre) of literature?
 - b. What might you expect from James?
3. Explanation - (Perhaps you can show a picture to represent each of these?)
 - a. Wisdom literature tends to lay themes and soundbites (aphorisms) down side by side with no obvious connection to one another - see Proverbs especially - and yet, **like a patchwork quilt**, the effect is that each separate theme can be considered both for itself but also in relation to others, all together offering wisdom for those who seek it.
 - b. Themes also tend to repeat themselves in new sequences and with new angles, and the effect for the reader is a little **like waves on a beach** - water in new waves (wisdom) keeps sweeping, washing and crashing on the grains of sand (part of ours lives), which collectively changes the appearance of the beach (us) over time.
- c. What do you find helpful about those pictures/images? Can you invent others that might work too?
- d. What effect might you expect the wisdom literature in James to have on you over the coming weeks?
4. Exercise - Allow the full 'patchwork quilt' (ref. Q3a) of James to be uncovered and meditated upon, by reading the whole book round the cell, section by section perhaps. To keep concentrating, members may like to take notes, draw pictures, jot down questions or key quotes, highlight their own Bibles etc.
5. Evaluation -
 - a. IF you have time, consider how chapter 1 acts as an introduction to the rest of the book.
 - b. Respond in small groups, in discussion and/or prayer, about what God has brought to mind during the exercise in Q4. Perhaps this is a theme he wants you to follow over the coming weeks as it repeats throughout the book?