

Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer

2. Welcome any newcomers

3. Read James 1:26, 27 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator: Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions, James 1:26, 27

April 27, 2014

Title: Prince or Pretender?

I was born and raised in Massachusetts. But let me be quick to add that I'm a Southerner by choice. I love collards, grits, barbecue, sweet iced tea, okra and tomatoes, and Duck Dynasty. And after nearly 50 years of living in the South, I think I speak Southern. Or at least I've lost my Boston accent—almost. My Southern-born wife and children like to point out my slips of the tongue when sometimes my 'er' sounds like 'ah'. None of us were born Christian. But living as a born-again Christian changes us and changes the way we speak just like living in the South changed the way I speak—most of the time. As regional transplants or as Christians saved by grace, we still let slip with what James calls "as one who does not bridle his tongue." The question is, are we sensitive to the bridle in a way that not only curbs the evil speech, but speaks as one who is a representative of Jesus to the glory of God?

Question: What ways can you think of that show people who you are or to whom you belong? **Facilitator:** such things as military uniforms, sports-team colors, regional accents, etc.

Question: What do you think is the connection between what is in a person's heart and what comes out when he speaks? How does the inside determine what people see and hear?

Question: If a "religious" person's heart is changed by faith in Jesus Christ, how do you suppose the outward expression of his religion also will change?

Question: Like an animal in harness, a bridled tongue is a useful tongue. It is a powerful force for good. Let's brainstorm for ways the tongue can be used for good. **Facilitator:** instead of malicious gossip—praise; instead of berating a person—encouragement; instead of criticism—helpful advice.

Question: Coming to faith in Christ doesn't define the Christian life any more than enlisting in the Army defines a military career. What does salvation in its entirety mean to the Christian? **Facilitator:** freedom from the penalty, power and presence of sin.

Question: Read verse 27. Who do you suppose are the orphans and widows of our day? Are they children in single-parent households? Neglected children? Are they the homeless? The unemployed? Anyone in distress? Without naming them, describe someone you know who could use a "visit" in their distress from you as a representative of Jesus?