

Hello Connect Group facilitators,

Here are the study guide questions from Peppy's sermon February 2, 2014. First, you will see below the note to you, the facilitator, with three itemized instructions. This is intended for you only. Scroll down and the study guide begins. I've also included this as an attachment.

I hope the study guide will help you lead your group to a deeper understanding of the book of James and show how your faith in Christ can affect the way you think and act. Please print a copy for each member of your group.

Study hard, but have fun. If your group goes into a meaningful discussion and you see the time slipping away, don't stress. You are not obligated to cover every item (though I hope you do). If you have any questions, or if there's something you'd like to suggest, feel free to call or email me, or stop me at church.

Dick Peterson

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Facilitator: (Begin with prayer).

1. *Have everybody introduce themselves and name their favorite pizza and/or ice cream flavor.*
2. *Go over the Connect Group rules that Peppy sent you.*
3. *Give everyone a copy of the Connect Group Study Questions and read James 1:1. Then go to the questions.*

Connect Group Study Questions, Introduction to James, February 2, 2014

The general theme to James' letter is Faith in Action.

When you think about it, you all have faith in many things, and that's what determines how you act. If you didn't have faith in your car, you probably wouldn't be here tonight. Cars break down, still you had faith your car would get you here.

Question: What other ordinary things do you put your trust in and then behave accordingly?

Facilitator: We're not getting theological here. Encourage the group to brainstorm things like faith in safe food, that lights will come on when we flip a switch, that the plane we get on will fly, etc.

Facilitator, please read this after the brainstorm session: *None of the things you've named are certain, yet you trust your lives to many of them every day. James presents to you a faith more certain than anything else you believe in. He draws the logical conclusion that this faith will determine how you act and what you do. He also concludes that it is only logical to assume that if you don't behave according to the faith you say you have, you really don't have that faith at all. Or if you think you had it, that faith is dead. As Peppy likes to say, if there's fire in your fireplace, it is logical to assume there will be smoke coming out of your chimney. We'll discuss this more as we study the book.*

James tells you at the beginning of his letter who he is, and he assumes that the people reading his letter know him well enough to know which James he is. There are four James in the New Testament. Two thousand years later you put your trust in Bible scholars who say evidence tells you the writer is James, the half-brother of Jesus. It was not until after Jesus was executed on the cross that James believed Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God.

Question: What evidence did James observe to bring him to faith in the "Lord Jesus Christ"?

Facilitator: Find the answer in 1 Corinthians 15:1-7 and read the passage.

Question: Do you suppose this newfound faith changed the way James behaved and determined what he did?

Facilitator: From Peppy's sermon notes, **Facts About James**, review what James did as a result of his faith in Jesus. **Read:** James addressed his letter to the "twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad." They were Jewish believers in Jesus as their Messiah. They were scattered throughout the known world, but being Jews, they returned to Jerusalem, many of them annually. James' letter to them was copied and carried with them as they traveled back to their homes and then shared with other believers. Two thousand years later, we are about to read and study James' letter as hundreds of millions of people—maybe more—have done before us.

Question: When James writes "greetings," do you suppose he was aware that he was writing to hundreds of millions over two thousand years of history to this very moment and to this little connect group? Probably not.

Question: In what ways do you suppose what you do, how you behave, what you say or write will affect other people around you and in years to come?

Personal Study: Something to work on during the course of our study in James is what I call the three-minute testimony. It will become a way to tell anyone who'll listen who you were, what you believed and who you became in terms of how you behave because you believed. Think about it over the week, and we can discuss it more as the course progresses.