

DISCUSS

- Why is it so difficult to listen without interrupting when others are talking? Is it even more difficult to listen for the Lord's voice? What is your experience?
- What are some techniques that have helped you be quick or eager to listen, to both others as well as God?
- Do you see mature believers as people who talk more than they listen or who listen more than they talk? Explain.
- Can you think of other 'less is more' passage of scripture on the subject of talking?
- What are some ways we can become less angry people?
- When James talks about the moral filth and evil that is so prevalent, how much has the world has changed?
- What are some reasons why remembering to practice what we 'hear' is hard or forgotten during the week?

APPLY

- If you can, share what aspect of the text impacted you the most and what area you need to put into practice more.
- Choose to memorize one verse of the text this week – what verse? Challenge others to do the same.
- Who is someone in need (physically, relationally, spiritually, financially) that you could do something for or help care for in some way this week? Just do it!

GROUP PRAYER FOCUS

- As a group, ask the Lord to lead you into a greater life of obedience to God's Word.
- Pray together for any individuals who might be in need.
- Thank Jesus for his saving work on the cross and invite the Holy Spirit to freshly fill your hearts and a greater desire for obedience and holiness.

Making FAITH + WORK

Book of James

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Week 3: True Religion

Key Text: James 1:19-27

OPEN

When taking the 'tube' in London, an announcement is made on the loud speaker every time the doors open, saying, 'Mind the gap!' It's to help passengers beware of the gap between the train and the station platform, so they don't trip up. In our text this week, that is what James is saying about minding the gap that there can be between us listening to God's Word and us actually doing what it says. James says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." Doing what the Word says, according to James, is true religion. James' concern is not to explain all the details of doctrine but to help believers live a truly sanctified life by not just being a 'hearer' of the Word but being a 'doer' of God's Word.

REFLECT

- In this section of James' letter, he sandwiches verses 22-25 around five important areas to practice the wisdom and discipline of God's Word in our actions.
- What actions are addressed in vv. 19-21, and vv. 26-27?
- Why do you think James mentions these five?
- In verses 26-27, James references two kinds of religion, one God's accepts and one that God doesn't – what does James say is the difference between the two?
- Do you think James is using the term "religion" in a positive way? Why or why not?