

DISCUSS

- Go around the circle and share about your first job outside the home that you ever got paid for. How much did you get paid? How did you feel?
- Do you think James' words are for all "rich" people ever, to rich people in that time and place, or just to rich people who are guilty of exploitation? Explain.
- To give context to James' words, read together the words of Jesus in both Luke 6:24-25 and 12:27-34. What stands out to you about the focus of Jesus' words regarding material needs, wealth, and a focus on heaven?
- The way we use our wealth – whether selfishly or generously – comes down to how much of an eternal perspective we have. Agree? Disagree? Discuss.
- God cares about the exploitation of the poor. As we participate in a world economy, how can we advance the fair treatment of those with less?

APPLY

- It's easy to direct our thoughts to someone 'richer' than us. But what is one way we can guard against accumulating wealth solely for ourselves?
- Brainstorm about some ways to practically give or support someone with less in our community this month?

GROUP PRAYER FOCUS

- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you love God and others more than serving yourself to a new level of generosity.
- Ask God to direct you (or your Connect Group) to someone in need this week to make a difference.
- In Jesus' name, take authority to break the mastery of money over our hearts.

Making FAITH + WORK

Book of James

10

Week 10: What to do with Wealth

Key Text: James 5:1-6

OPEN

Most of us don't think of ourselves as rich, but by virtue of the fact that we live in North America by world standards almost all of us are wealthy. In our text this week, James reminds us that God cares how we use our wealth, that God hears the cry of those who are poor, and that God's desire is for us to use our wealth to enrich our lives spiritually by following Jesus' command to give to the poor and to treat others fairly to build up for ourself treasure in heaven (Luke 6:33). Some could take James' strong – even harsh – words about those 'who are rich' to be about class warfare or solely the 1%. But wealth and greed has a pull on us all. It's not about the numbers but more about the heart: 'So, what will you do with your wealth?'

REFLECT

- This passage is about God (through James) giving comfort to suffering believers who have been short-changed by a society that favours the rich.
- In v. 1, what is the 'misery' James is referring to?
- What are the metaphors James uses about wealth and what is the message they convey that we need to hear?
- In vv. 4 and 6, James makes a connection between injustice and becoming wealthy. Why do you think? Is this fair? Still applicable today, or not?