

C'Nex Group Discussion Guide

Use the following questions to guide your C'Nex discussion. The focus should be to clarify meaning and develop application of this week's biblical message from our Sunday Experience.

Week #1: Living Out of the Gray (James 1:1)

1. What is interesting to you about who the author of James is and how he refers to himself in James 1:1?
2. Who were the original "readers" of this letter and how was their situation similar to ours today?
3. Scan through the book of James and name three topics covered in the content of this book. Can you name one that isn't relevant to our culture?
4. In preparation for studying James in detail and to beef up our skill to read and understand the Bible, consider this. When you read a letter like this in the Bible, how do you know what parts apply to our time today? For example, James 1:19 seems to apply directly to today (we are to listen before we talk), but does James 5:14 (the elders of the church should anoint you with oil when you are sick)? Why?
5. What do you think it would take for someone today to deserve the title "Servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"? Do you want that title? Explain. Share with the group any commitments you made on Sunday.
6. Consider the metaphor that you are a human machine, a car on a race. Do you agree that three things are necessary to live a good and godly life (not to crash into others, a healthy inside, and a clear direction)? How do you see that God and his Word help us with these?
7. In what way are you "disappointed" with your life, maybe living in the gray of sadness? Do you think being conformed to Christ and living in the direction of his dream for you would help overcome this feeling? How do you think the study of James could help that?
8. Have you accepted the truth that God has a Big Dream for your life? Based on what you have felt burning in your soul at certain times, what do you think God wants you to join him in doing with your life (God's Big Dream will involve your passion and his purposes to serve others; and it will be so big you will fail if he doesn't do a miracle)? What fear is holding you back? (Day Two of the Daily Guides give some verses that support the truth that God has a Big Dream for all of us.) What should your next step be to follow God's will in this area?

Daily Time with God Guide

Use the following questions to guide your Daily Time with God. Set aside time each day to pray, read your Bible, and seek God's mind. Days 1-5 follow up on this week's Sunday message and Day 6 assists you in preparing for the upcoming biblical message. Instead, you could simply read systematically through a book of the Bible, like Matthew.

September 5-10, 2011

- ☐ **Day 1:** Read the entire book of James in one sitting. Don't worry about understanding all of it. Just read it. Get a feel for how the early readers would have heard this entire thing read to them at once. When finished spend some time confessing any sins that God brings to your mind. Then specifically ask him to help you grow in your love for his son over the next few weeks.
- ☐ **Day 2:** Knowing God's Big Dream for you helps your life make sense. Read these verses and see if they shape your belief that God has a plan for your life: Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-16; Ephesians 2:10. If you ask God to help you know and discover your big purpose in life, he will help you find it. Spend some time doing that today (and everyday until you know). Ask God to help you know what fears are holding you back.
- ☐ **Day 3:** Let's focus the rest of the week on getting to know Jesus better. Let's look at some things he did that provide a portrait that instinctively calls our hearts toward him in love. When you love him, it is easier to follow him. Today, read Matthew 19:13-15. Focus on the gentleness of Jesus. Pray and thank him for his gentleness toward you.
- ☐ **Day 4:** Today you should read the story of the woman caught in adultery as described in John 8:1-11. Before you do, ask God to help you put yourself in her place. Ask him to help you truly feel what she would have felt as she was about to be stoned and then as she looked into the grace-giving face of Jesus. Love him in prayer.
- ☐ **Day 5:** Read John 20:24-28, and noticed how Jesus bends to meet our lack of faith. Only a loving, gentle savior would be so kind. Spend a long time today dwelling on how loving Jesus has been to you.
- ☐ **Day 6:** Take time today to get ready for Sunday. Confess sin. Think about whom you could invite. Read Mark 15:16-39, and remember how much Jesus truly loves you. Read James 1:2-12 to get ready for Sunday's lesson. Move closer to Jesus through prayer.