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PRAYING FOR OUR MINISTRY

Collegiate Weeks East and West are going on August 1-8 at Glorieta and Ridgecrest. Please be in prayer for the college students and leaders who will be going back to their campuses and starting a new year. Give special consideration to the freshmen who will be learning how to navigate new environments this fall.

AUGUST 2009 TEACHING PLANS

LETTER WRITING MAY BE AN ANCIENT ART THESE DAYS, but to Paul and James, it was the only way to connect with long-distance friends. Together, these two books assert the importance of knowing what you believe and living what you know. Too often we're caught up in the busyness of life and forget that, as Christians, we're called to live out our faith in practical ways on a daily basis. So, have you been slacking off? Make it a priority this summer to meet God wherever your life has taken you — to your parent's house, to an internship in another state, or even on mission across the globe.

THE SKINNY Galatians, written by the apostle Paul specifically to Jewish Christians, refutes the claim that anything other than faith is necessary for salvation. In his letter Paul asserted his authority as an apostle, declared the true gospel, and encouraged his readers about the Holy Spirit's work in helping Christians apply the gospel to their daily lives. James, likely Jesus' half-brother, continued Paul's thesis by writing to scattered Jewish Christians living in various nations beyond Judea. He urged his readers to seek a genuine faith that illustrates Christ's example on a daily basis.

WHAT'S INSIDE ...

The goal of the *Collegiate* online features is to bring you a structured teaching plan with additional helps and relevant questions to equip you to lead a strong discussion-based lesson. Here's a breakdown of what's inside: *Getting Started* helps introduce the topic and get your students engaged in the lesson. *Need to Knows* highlights the main characters, historical context, and key verses of each lesson. *Explore the Bible* leads your students through the Scripture passages of the lesson, helping them understand the text, its historical and cultural context, and what it means to them today. *Apply to Life* gives you ideas for furthering the application of the Scripture, so students can take active steps to process what they're learning and how it impacts their lives. Be sure you also utilize the commentary provided (threadsmedia.com/collegiate) to help with your preparation and personal study of the lessons.

As always, we're here for you. Please send us your questions, thoughts, and suggestions. Let us know what we could do better and how these teaching plans could be even more relevant to your students and your ministry.

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→ THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 46 OF THE SUMMER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "GOD AND MONEY" BY JILL PHILLIPS, FROM THE ALBUM *GOD AND MONEY*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

We are to be impartial in how we treat others. Today we're going to identify a person or group toward whom we'll display more love.

FOCAL PASSAGES

JAMES 2:1-13

KEY VERSE

JAMES 2:8



THE KICKBALL CURSE

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "God and Money" by Jill Phillips playing in the background as students arrive.

Divide your students into groups of six. Write the following facts on index cards, leaving off the name. Make sure every student gets a card. Explain that, temporarily, this is the student's identity. Ask students to share their descriptions with their group.

Identity #1: You married your first cousin, and spent the final days of your life telling jokes to a parrot. (Einstein)

Identity #2: You dropped out of school at age 15. (George Washington left school to become a land surveyor.)

Identity #3: Your friends described you as "dirty" and "unkempt" and frequently engrossed in your own daydreams. (Beethoven)

Identity #4: You published a book that sold millions of copies. (Hitler, *Mein Kampf*)

Identity #5: Before you died, you were worth seven billion dollars in personal wealth. (Saddam Hussein)

Identity #6: You never leave the house without makeup and gain the attention of many wherever you go. (The Joker)

Ask them to raise their hands if the following facts seem to apply to their new identity:

- Intelligent
- Wealthy
- Not too bright
- Doesn't have a lot of friends
- Slightly embarrassed to be seen in public
- Crazy
- Popular
- Shrewd businessman

Reveal the true identities and lead the following discussion:

- When you first received your identity, what was your initial reaction?
- Were you skeptical that the information on the card didn't provide the whole story?
- How can one impression skew the truth about a person?
- What was your reaction when you learned the truth about your identity?
- Describe a time when your first impression about someone was totally wrong.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 46 in the Summer 2009 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for further study ideas.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the lesson on page 46 of *Collegiate* magazine.

1). 20/20 VISION (JAMES 2:1-4)

READ JAMES 2:1-4.

¹My brothers, hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ without showing favoritism. ²For suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring, dressed in fine clothes, and a poor man dressed in dirty clothes also comes in. ³If you look with favor on the man wearing the fine clothes so that you say, "Sit here in a good place," and yet you say to the poor man, "Stand over there," or, "Sit here on the floor by my footstool," ⁴haven't you discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Ask a volunteer to read "20/20 Vision" on page 46 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- How do religious people show favoritism today?
- Why is it tempting to favor the rich, famous, and intelligent?
- Give examples of how Jesus saw the poor, lonely, and sick differently.
- Is it possible to be "nice" but still show favoritism?
- Describe a time when you were an outsider and someone was genuinely kind to you.
- What are ways you can ignore the external?

Ask for volunteers to read Matthew 9:10-13 and John 4:7-9.

2). BEWARE THE RICH (JAMES 2:5-7)

READ JAMES 2:5-7.

⁵Listen, my dear brothers: Didn't God choose the poor in this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the

kingdom that He has promised to those who love Him? ⁶Yet you dishonored that poor man. Don't the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? ⁷Don't they blaspheme the noble name that you bear?

Have someone read "Beware the Rich" on page 46 of *Collegiate* magazine.

As Americans, we're in the top 1–5 percent of the world's richest people — and yes, that even includes college students. "Rich" doesn't mean Bill Gates; it's us. Do you think of yourself as rich?

- Does this passage mean that rich people can't have faith?
- Why does James warn us to be cautious around rich people?
- Why is it our nature to relax around the rich and be uneasy around the poor?
- Why are poor people in a better position to be rich in faith?
- How can you avoid the materialism trap right now?
- From Matthew 5:3, what does "poor in spirit" mean?
- What reasons would lead you to believe that those who are poor may have stronger faiths than those who are rich in this world?
- Describe the strongest friendship you've ever had. What made it great?

Most likely externals like money, popularity, or looks didn't play a part in your strongest friendship. Those things might spark "weak" connections at first, but they will not foster a deep friendship.

3). NO FAVORITES (JAMES 2:8-13)

READ JAMES 2:8-13.

⁸If you really carry out the royal law prescribed in Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. ⁹But if you show favoritism, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the entire law, yet fails in one point, is guilty of breaking it all. ¹¹For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." So if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you are a lawbreaker. ¹²Speak and act as those who will be judged by the law of freedom. ¹³For judgment is without mercy to the one who hasn't shown mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Ask someone to read "No Favorites" on pages 46-47 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- How does James compare favoritism to adultery and murder?
- Do you think this is an extreme comparison?
- How does favoritism infect a body of believers?
- Describe a time you were part of a group (family, club, organization, classroom) that genuinely treated everyone with love.

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 22:36-40.

- How did Jesus sum up the Law?
- Why would James repeat these verses, found in Leviticus as well, in this section on partiality? [Remember Jesus' audience had heard this passage a ton, but Jesus puts it in a new context.]
- How does our ability to act mercifully to others indicate that we receive God's mercy toward us?
- From verse 13, how does mercy triumph over judgment?

→ THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 48 OF THE SUMMER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "ALL THAT I CAN DO" BY BETHANY DILLON, FROM THE ALBUM *IMAGINATION*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

To help young adults recognize that believers give evidence of faith in Christ by their good works and itemize good works that give evidence of their faith in Christ.

FOCAL PASSAGES

JAMES 2:14-26

KEY VERSE

JAMES 2:26

FOLLOW UP

If you chose Option 2 in "Apply to Life" for the last session, see who made an effort to show kindness to someone around them who's hurting. Discuss what impact that might have had on the hurting person and on the student.



SIGNS OF LIFE

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "All That I Can Do" by Bethany Dillon playing in the background as students arrive.

Divide into groups of three. For the following items, write three "trademark" staples that make the item/place unique.

Example:

American Idol: Singing competition, hilarious auditions, Simon Cowell

Mac computer:

McDonald's:

Google:

Starbucks:

Wal-Mart:

Facebook:

Your best friend:

Your favorite professor:

Your Bible study teacher (That's you!):

Share each group's list with the class. According to the groups, the list proves that the item is legit.

For example, you can't have McDonald's without the fries. Wal-Mart wouldn't be the same if they suddenly doubled their prices.

James outlines the trademark signs of a believer. Certain characteristics — or signs of life — will appear in every Christian. These traits don't save us, but they are evidence of our salvation.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 48 in the Summer 2009 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for related verses and further study ideas.

Have someone read the introduction to the lesson on page 48 of *Collegiate* magazine.

1). AND ... ACTION! (JAMES 2:14-17)

Explain that James had just been talking about the sin of favoritism and now he is moving into the need to discuss that faith without works is dead.

READ JAMES 2:14-17.

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith, but does not have works? Can his faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you don't give them what the body needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way faith, if it doesn't have works, is dead by itself.

Ask someone to read "And ... Action" on page 48 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- Describe a time someone passionately said one thing but did the total opposite.
- How is faith without works dead?
- Have you ever known someone to be "intellectually spiritual" but they never actually helped other people?
- How does society condition us to know a lot about God, but not to put our knowledge into practice, loving each other?
- College is a time of transition, and it's easy to get disconnected from the church. How might college students find a body of believers to serve?
- Have you ever known anyone to throw a spiritual answer at a physical problem?

- Why are people more likely to listen to the gospel when believers care about their social, physical, and emotional needs?

2). FAITH VS. WORKS (JAMES 2:18-20)

READ JAMES 2:18-20.

¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith from my works. ¹⁹You believe that God is one; you do well. The demons also believe—and they shudder. ²⁰Foolish man! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is useless?

Have someone read "Faith vs. Works" on pages 48-49 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Ask for a volunteer to read Ephesians 2:8-10.

- How do these verses sum up our faith in Jesus?
- How is belief in God more than memorizing a set of facts or praying a prayer?
- On the other hand, how are "good works" empty without the power of Christ?
- What famous people do good things for peoples' physical needs, but nothing for their spiritual needs?
- What might be the long-term effects — positive and negative — of their good deeds without faith?

Just as it is ridiculous to give a spiritual answer for a physical problem, it's equally as worthless to care for someone's academic, social, emotional, and physical needs, without also caring about his or her relationship with Christ.

3). HALL OF FAITH (JAMES 2:21-26)

READ JAMES 2:21-26.

²¹Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²²You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was perfected. ²³So the Scripture was fulfilled that says, Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness, and he was called God's friend. ²⁴You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵And in the same way, wasn't Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by a different route? ²⁶For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Have a volunteer read "Hall of Faith" on page 49 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Explain that James is using Abraham as an example of completion of his faith through his works. Paul uses Abraham as well to describe his faith as a result of God's grace. James is showing how his faith was made complete because he acted on his faith and trusted God.

- What kinds of things can we do that prove our faith in Christ?
- How does intentionality play into our daily lives to live out our faith?

→ THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 50 OF THE SUMMER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "SHINE LIKE THE SON" BY MATT MAHER, FROM THE ALBUM *EMPTY & BEAUTIFUL*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

To help young adults understand believers are to control their tongues and conduct and repent when they haven't done so.

FOCAL PASSAGES

JAMES 3:3-18

KEY VERSE

JAMES 3:2



WAR OF THE WORDS

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Shine Like the Son" by Matt Maher playing in the background as students arrive.

Option 1: Show the scene from *A Christmas Story* where Flick gets his tongue stuck to the flag pole.

Option 2: Show the scene from *You've Got Mail* where Meg Ryan's character finally says the exact thing she wants to say (to Tom Hanks), but later feels horrible about it.

Option 3: Foot in Mouth

Give your class the list below of some of the stupidest things ever said. Ask each person to add his or her own embarrassing phrase to the list and share with the group.

"Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life."

—Brooke Shields, said to demonstrate why she should become spokesperson for a federal anti-smoking campaign

"The streets are safe in Philadelphia, it's only the people who make them unsafe."

—Frank Rizzo, ex-police chief and mayor of Philadelphia

"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."

—Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication."

—Western Union internal memo, 1876

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out."

—Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962

"Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau."

—Irving Fisher, professor of Economics, Yale University, 1929

"Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value."

—Marechal Ferdinand Foch, professor of Strategy, Ecole Superieure de Guerre

Source: interstel.net/~jdpaul/stupidity.technology.html

We've all said things that would make the "stupidest things ever said" category. Words get us in trouble all the time. James addresses the power our words have in shaping our lives.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 50 in the Summer 2009 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for more quotes, related verses, and further study ideas.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the lesson on page 50 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Facilitator's Note: The following section does not appear in *Collegiate* magazine and is bonus material for this session. Consider using this first section as your own personal Bible study on the responsibilities you have as a leader.

1). TEACHERS BEWARE (JAMES 3:1-2)

READ JAMES 3:1-2.

¹Not many should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment; ²for we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a mature man who is also able to control his whole body.

- Why does James say that teachers will be held to a higher standard?
- Think back to the Galatians study. Why would Paul wholeheartedly agree with James' warning to teachers?
- In what ways are we led by teachers today? (media, books, professors, parents, pastors, Web sites)
- Who is the most captivating teacher you know? How do his/her words affect your life?
- Why would James begin this section reminding us that no one is perfect regarding his/her tongue?

2). AN UNLIKELY LEADER (JAMES 3:3-6)

READ JAMES 3:3-6.

³Now when we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we also guide the whole animal. ⁴And consider ships: though very large and driven by fierce winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So too, though the tongue is a small part of the body, it boasts great things. Consider how large a

forest a small fire ignites. ⁶And the tongue is a fire. The tongue, a world of unrighteousness, is placed among the parts of our bodies; it pollutes the whole body, sets the course of life on fire, and is set on fire by hell.

Ask a volunteer to read "An Unlikely Leader" on page 50 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- Why doesn't James teach that our hearts or minds lead us around? Why does he choose the tongue as the great leader of our lives?
- How do your words determine the whole course of your life?
- What ways might the tongue cause destruction? (lies, gossip, slander, negativity, self-doubt, anger, cursing, sarcasm, manipulation, pride, boasting, flattery)
- Describe someone you know who is ruthless with words.
- Describe someone you know who is empowering/encouraging with his/her words.
- What differences do you see in how you feel around the two people mentioned above?
- How do the words you say about yourself affect you? How is it tempting to criticize and tear yourself down with words?

3). SPEAK CONSISTENTLY (JAMES 3:7-12)

READ JAMES 3:7-12.

⁷For every creature—animal or bird, reptile or fish—is tamed and has been tamed by man, ⁸but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who are made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things should not be this way. ¹¹Does a spring pour out sweet and bitter water from the same opening? ¹²Can a fig tree

Have someone read "Speak Consistently" on page 50 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- Why does James compare the tongue to poison?
- Verses 9-12 discuss the hypocrisy that can come from the same mouth. Describe a famous person who has been found saying contradicting things.
- Why does James describe the tongue as a "restless" evil?
- Remember James is not writing this letter to lost people outside the church. It's written to believers. Why is it wrong to expect lost people to be encouraging or edifying with their words?
- How do believers today need to hear the same message about the tongue?
- Some word struggles are easy to identify like cursing or swearing. Other issues are more sneaky: negativity, criticism, gossip. How can believers help each other overcome these sneakier word traps?

→ THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 52 OF THE SUMMER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "FIGHTING FOR YOUR HEART" BY AFTER EDMUND, FROM THE ALBUM *HELLO*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

To help young adults recognize how petty conflicts and disunity form barriers between their relationships with God and one another, and to re-emphasize the important of depending solely on God.

FOCAL PASSAGES

JAMES 4:1-17

KEY VERSE

JAMES 4:4



THE SELFLESSNESS FACTOR

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Fighting for Your Heart" by After Edmund playing in the background as students arrive.

Google Fight!

Ask students to vote on who will win the fight for the most hits on Google:

Mac vs. PC (PC **1.2 billion**, Mac 396 million)

Apple vs. Orange (**apple 411 million**, orange 348 million)

Dime vs. Penny (dime 26 million, **penny 54 million**)

Coke vs. Pepsi (Coke 31 million, **Pepsi 33 million**)

Skittles vs. M&Ms (**Skittles 3.4 million**, M&M, 1.4 million)

Dog vs. Cat (dog 167 million, **cat 889 million**)

Airplane vs. Boat (airplane 47 million, **boat 179 million**)

Today we study James's teaching on disagreements in the body of Christ. Before diving into Scripture, break up into pairs and tell the most awkward situation you've ever had with your roommate.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 52 in the Summer 2009 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for further study ideas.

Have someone read the introduction to the lesson on page 52 of *Collegiate* magazine.

1). THE TRUTH ABOUT ARGUING (JAMES 4:1-5)

READ JAMES 4:1-5.

¹What is the source of the wars and the fights among you? Don't they come from the cravings that are at war within you? ²You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and don't receive because you ask wrongly, so that you may spend it on your desires for pleasure. ⁴Adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the world's friend becomes God's enemy. ⁵Or do you think it's without reason the Scripture says that the Spirit He has caused to live in us yearns jealously?

Ask a volunteer to read "The Truth about Arguing" on page 52 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Explain that James was speaking about the conflicts in the church. Like today, personal conflicts were causing all kinds of disruptions in the body of Christ.

- Name the things mentioned in verses 1-3 that cause disruption between believers.
- What does it mean to be a friend to the world?
- How can believers be "in the world" without befriending it?

In verse 2b, James could be talking literally about the people murdering each other or he could be referring to Jesus' words about how anger and contempt toward others is the same as murder.

The word "adulteresses" in verse 4 is a common phrase used by God in the Old Testament. It means those who are unfaithful to God and give themselves over to wickedness.

Verse 5 is difficult to interpret, but it probably means the Holy Spirit within us longs and desires for us to be all His without competition.

- Why does the Spirit in us envy intensely?

2). FIGHT STRATEGY (JAMES 4:6-10)

READ JAMES 4:6-10.

⁶But He gives greater grace. Therefore He says: God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ⁷Therefore, submit to God. But resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, double-minded people! ⁹Be miserable and mourn and weep. Your laughter must change to mourning and your joy to sorrow. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

Have someone read "Fight Strategy" on page 52 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- Why does the world cringe at the word "submit"?
- What does it mean to submit your life to God?
- What must believers do to get the enemy to flee from our lives? (v. 7b)
- How is submitting to God connected to resisting the devil?
- According to verse 8, what are believers supposed to do if God feels far away?

- What does it say about God's character that He draws near to us when we draw near to Him?
- What attributes does Jesus possess that would help us in our battles against temptation and sin?
- Looking back at verse 6, what does God give us and how does this help?

3). WHO'S THE BOSS? (JAMES 4:11-12)

READ JAMES 4:11-12.

¹¹Don't criticize one another, brothers. He who criticizes a brother or judges his brother criticizes the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹²There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

Have a volunteer read "Who's the Boss?" on pages 52-53 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- What does it mean to judge someone?
- How might you encourage someone to turn away from sin without judging them?
- Describe a time when someone judged you inappropriately.
- How do believers slander each other in today's world?

→ THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 54 OF THE SUMMER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "KNIT MY HEART" BY CHARLIE HALL, FROM THE ALBUM *THE BRIGHT SADNESS*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

To help young adults find confidence about the future and about their prayers.

FOCAL PASSAGES

JAMES 5:1-20

KEY VERSE

JAMES 5:7-8,16B



MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Knit My Heart" by Charlie Hall playing in the background as students arrive.

In America: Divide into groups of three. Ask the following questions and have each team write down their guess. The group with the most right answers wins.

True or False: The average American household has more TVs than people?

Answer: True. Starting three years ago in 2006, TVs outnumbered people in the average American house.

What's the number of Americans who shop at Wal-Mart every week?

Answer: 100 million shop each week

Fill in the blank: The average American woman has _____ pairs of shoes in her closet.

Answer: 19

How many cars does the average family own?

Answer: 2.28

Percentage of the population living below the poverty line?

Answer: 12 percent

Number of cell phones in the U.S.?

Answer: 255 million

Percentage of American population that can read?

Answer: 99 percent

After the game, lead a discussion:

- Which statistic surprised you the most?
- Why do you think America continues to be the wealthiest nation in the world?
- How do you think countries like Africa, China, Mexico, or Russia would compare to our country financially?
- Despite our wealth, do you think Americans are satisfied? Why or why not?
- How do you define "rich"?

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 54 in the Summer 2009 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for more stats, related verses, and further study ideas.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the lesson on page 54 of *Collegiate* magazine.

1). REDEFINING RICH (JAMES 5:1-6)

READ JAMES 5:1-6.

¹Come now, you rich people! Weep and wail over the miseries that are coming on you. ²Your wealth is ruined: your clothes are moth-eaten; ³your silver and gold are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You stored up treasure in the last days! ⁴Look! The pay that you withheld from the workers who reaped your fields cries out, and the outcry of the harvesters has reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts. ⁵You have lived luxuriously on the land and have indulged yourselves. You have fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned—you have murdered—the righteous man; he does not resist you.

Have a volunteer read “Redefining Rich” on page 54 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Explain that these verses describe what the rich (including believers) were doing to their workers. These workers loved money so much, they cheated laborers who had put in an honest day’s work.

- What does it mean to live “luxuriously” and self indulgent?
- Why does James issue this stern warning to rich people?
- How does money corrupt people today?
- How will your current attitudes about money affect your future?
- How can money consume you even when you don’t have any?

2). GIVE ME PATIENCE, NOW! (JAMES 5:7-11)

READ JAMES 5:7-11.

⁷Therefore, brothers, be patient until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and is patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the Lord’s coming is near. ⁹Brothers, do not complain about one another, so that you will not be judged. Look, the judge stands at the door! ¹⁰Brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord’s name as an example of suffering and patience. ¹¹See, we count as blessed those who have endured. You have heard of Job’s endurance and have seen the outcome from the Lord: the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

Ask someone to read “Give Me Patience, Now!” on page 54 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Explain that no one understands patience (or lack thereof) better than a college student. You must be patient academically, financially, relationally, and spiritually. College is a time of investing. Like the farmer who plants his crop, you are planting the seeds of your future. The choices you make now will affect your future job, church, spouse, family, and health. In Christ, you don’t have to figure everything out. God holds your future in His hands and He will direct you. Patience is the proof of faith. When you trust God, you can relax and let Him work your future for your good.

- Why would James position a section on patience right next to the section on wealth?
- How do college students need patience spiritually, academically, relationally, and financially?
- What’s James saying about the result of being patient in verse 7?

- How do you “strengthen your heart” in times of suffering?
- James asks us not to complain. Read *Philippians 2:14-15*. What are the reasons in *Philippians* and in *James* for not giving in to complaining?

Explain that the judgment spoken of in verse 9 is not the same judgment that the wicked will face. We will be judged on the basis of our relationship with Jesus; they will be judged on their lack of relationship with Jesus.

- How is verse 11 an encouragement to press on and endure? What does this verse say about our future?
- What does God want to give us in return for our endurance?

3). THE POWER OF PRAYER (JAMES 5:13-20)

READ JAMES 5:13-20.

¹³Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises. ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they should pray over him after anointing him with olive oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The intense prayer of the righteous is very powerful. ¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours; yet he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the land. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the sky gave rain and the land produced its fruit.

¹⁹My brothers, if any among you strays from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰he should know that whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his life from death and cover a multitude of sins.

