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## GROUP DISCUSSION

For those of you who have a brother ask yourself this question. What would he have to do for you to believe that he was God?

In all the Gospels there are brief mentions of Jesus' family, in Matthew and Mark we see mention of Jesus's mother and brothers trying to reach him while he is preaching. In the next chapter of Matthew people who do not believe in Jesus refer to his family calling out James specifically by name. Luke retells some of these stories in his gospel account and John gives us more insight at one point sharing that *"For even his brothers didn't believe in him."*

**Read:** James 1:1

James opens his book by identifying himself as a "slave" to his brother Jesus and God. What an amazing turnaround from what we see in John's account. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, we see accounts that James is leading in the fledgling church that is following his half-brother as the divine son of God. In the book of Acts, we see him helping lead the church and guiding them toward the inclusion of non-Jews in the growing church.

**Question:** What are some hallmark characteristics of people you have known that you would consider "wise"?

One of the hallmarks of the book of James is its practical wisdom in applying the teachings of Jesus. He covers a broad group of topics

but is always encouraging believers toward faithful living.

**Read:** James 1:2-8.

Suffering is a key part of everyone's life. Christians are no exception to that truth.

**Discussion:** Discuss what stands out to everyone in this passage and how we can suffer in a better way.

**Read:** James 2:14-26

**Question:** What stands out about "real faith"?

In his book James does not really teach anything new, he pulls from the teachings of Jesus and the book of Proverbs but helps believers understand how to live out faith.

**Read:** Matthew 7:15-19.

**Read:** James 3:1-10

In this section, James tackles the power of our words. Our words impact and shape the world and the people around us for good and evil.

**Question:** Why is can it be so easy to be careless with our words?

**Read:** James 4:1-10

**Questions:** Where does James say that our frustrations come from?

What are some practical tools to identify the root of our own frustration?

**Read:** James 5:13-18

The power of a community that openly loves, accepts, corrects, and encourages each other is unparalleled. James through his book paints a picture of relationships that is so unlike the world we often feel like we are a part of, yet we all are looking for a place of acceptance like that. In verse 16 he points out that our confession leads to our healing. The things that we hide from each other are so often the things that we need to let go. We live in a society that values the acceptance piece but does not have deep enough roots to value the other teaching in James.

Ultimately, how we suffer, treat those who can not pay us back in any way, pray for, correct each other, show endurance, use our words, and trust God for true wisdom will define our lives. The book of James can encourage us in all these areas and more.

**Discussion:** What is one practical thing you can do this week based on studying James with your community?