

Huddle Overview - James Study Week 2

Discipleship Definition:

Learning to love and follow Jesus—together—by His strength, in everyday life.

What are huddles at Foundations?

- Groups of 3-8 people (or 3-4 couples) that meet for one hour per week at a time and location of your choosing. Larger groups should plan for 75 minutes.
- Huddles last for 8 weeks. At the end of each 8-week session, you can stay with your group, add to your group or even change groups and topics.
- While gathering on Sunday is vital to spiritual growth, so is connecting with others to encourage one another, discussing what it means to follow Jesus and praying for one another. These practices are detailed in our **RHYTHMS** course (which is not necessary to take part in huddles, but highly recommended).

Our Mission at Foundations is to bring the extraordinary lifechanging message of Jesus Christ to a lost and broken world.

- Huddles are one way we prepare to do this very thing, and we can't do that unless our lives are being transformed by Him.
- Hence, the goal of every session is that you will grow more like Jesus in some small way.
- In order to do this, we will focus on God's Word, encourage one another and commit to praying for one another.
- Each week, there are *individual rhythms* we encourage that will help you "love and follow Jesus."
- Similarly, there are *corporate rhythms* that help us in our spiritual formation.
- Consistent practice of these rhythms is part of the holistic development of disciples, and this booklet is designed to touch on that development.

Rhythms Overview

The individual rhythms (for those who haven't taken the Rhythms course):

Prayer: Talking to God and listening to Him via His Word, His Spirit-Filled people and His creation. If you don't know how to pray, a good place to start is the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 5.

Abide in the Word: Reading the Bible and prayerfully asking God to show you who He is and what He wants for you. A good practice is to read with a pen in hand, and write your thoughts in a journal as He leads them.

Silence: Choosing to avoid speaking in order to listen to what He might want to say to us.

Solitude: Avoidance of interaction with others in order to be alone with Him. Silence enhances solitude. Have you intentionally gotten away to be alone (including technology/social media)?

Reflection (especially effective at the end of the day, maybe before sleep): Take some time in stillness to experience His presence. Tell God things you're thankful for. Make note of where you experienced Him today—or where you didn't. Note instances of loving your "neighbor" well—or failure to do so. Ask God for what He may want for you in the day tomorrow.

Other individual rhythms that will likely be practiced less frequently:

Fasting (food; if there's an area you are seeking specific guidance), giving joyfully (financially as an act of worship) and rest (setting aside time to enjoy your life and choosing to refrain from work).

The corporate rhythms (for those who haven't taken the Rhythms course):

Worship gathering: A time for our family to be together to participate corporately in the rhythms of worshipping together.

Participation in community: A time to engage in huddle, as well as other forms of being together as a church family (such as concerts, conferences/classes, events, etc.).

Lord's Supper: An opportunity for our family to reflect on the person and work of Jesus and to look forward in hope to His coming again.

Baptism: A one-time action of a declaration of faith in Christ. It is our hope that everyone be baptized, and that they also celebrate others who are being baptized.

Using your gifts to serve the Body: We have been given a gift to help the body of Christ come to maturity in faith, and we benefit by your presence.

Having a ministry of love for neighbors: We choose to exemplify the abundant life in order to fulfill our mission of bringing the extraordinary life of Jesus Christ to a lost and broken world.

Prayer, Day 2

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude and talk to God. Be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray as Paul suggested in Philippians 4:6-7. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking Him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.

Time in the Word, Day 2, Read James 1:16-18

Background and Insights on the Reading:

When tempted, remember that God is good – In the middle of teaching on temptation, James interjects statements on God's goodness. Why? Knowing God's goodness is also a protection against sin.

Truth is that everything good comes from God. He has our good at heart. When he gives us commands and rules, they are to help us, not harm us. People who reject God's commands in pursuit of pleasure will find themselves farther and farther from joy.

The most perfect of all gifts (Romans 6:23) is new birth (He brought us forth). It begins sovereignly with the exercise of His will. As the first fruits, Christians are the initial harvest that anticipates creation's redemption (a).

Questions for Reflection:

- Is there anything good for us that God doesn't want us to have?

- How does recognizing the goodness of God's character help you in your fight against temptation?

- How does recognizing the goodness of God's character help you persevere under trials?

Additional resources – see appendix.

Prayer, Day 3

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude and talk to God. Be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray about this week's study using a prayer from Psalm 25:4-7. Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from old. Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good.

Time in the Word, Day 3, Read James 1:19-21

Background and Insights on the Reading:

This truth (1:19-20) lists the three essential character qualities in trials, and summarizes the body of the epistle. *Quick to hear* counteracts sluggishness to obey God; *slow to speak* corrects sins of the tongue; and *slow to anger* evades outbursts in our trials (a).

It is often said that God created us with two ears, but just one mouth, and there is good reason. We humble ourselves by listening to others. Part of humility is not thinking too highly of ourselves or our opinions. That means we should take the time to think carefully about what we say. Before you speak, ask yourself several basic questions. Is it edifying? Is it true? Is it helpful? Is it kind? Am I saying it in love? Is it gentle?

Questions for Reflection:

- Why should we be quick to hear and slow to speak? How can this keep us from sin?
- How does the "anger of man" differ from God's anger?
- When people talk with you, do they feel that their viewpoints and ideas have value?
- List three practical ways you will guard yourself from being quick to speak this week.

Additional resources – see appendix.

Prayer, Day 4

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude and talk to God. Be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using the following suggestion for ideas on being a doer and not a hearer only: Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, so that I may keep Your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of Your commands, for there I find delight. Psalm 119:33-35.

Time in the Word, Day 4, Read James 1:22-27

Background and Insights on the Reading:

Be a doer and not a hearer only – this is a very important principle in the Bible. Following Jesus is not about head knowledge. It is not about how many doctrines you know, or how many verses you have memorized. You can participate in numerous Bible studies and attend countless sermons, but if you don't make the decision to apply what you've learned, it is worthless.

What comes out of the mouth is often an indicator of what's going on in a person's heart. If a person has a loose and evil tongue, the likelihood is that their heart is similar. Jesus said that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Luke 6:45).

Pure and faultless religion is looking after orphans and widows. Love is the mark of believers, and true love is love shown with no thought of return. Love shown to orphans and widows normally cannot be repaid. That is why God is so pleased with this expression of love (Matthew 25:34-40).

Providing for the unfortunate is linked to the command to keep oneself unstained by the world (a).

Questions for Reflection:

- How might a hearer react to a sermon?
- How might a doer react to a sermon?
- What are some practical ways you can become a better doer? Example: each time you study God's Word or listen to a sermon, write down one simple way you will obey what you have learned.

Additional resources for this day – see appendix.

Prayer, Day 6: A Time for Reflection

- Traditional time of Examen. This is a version of the five-step Daily Examen that St. Ignatius practiced.
- Become aware of God's presence. Breathe and slow down. Ask God to make you aware of His presence and to bring to mind moments of your day to focus on.
- Review the day with gratitude. Walk through your day and give thanks for areas where you saw God "show up" and for His blessings.
- Pay attention to your emotions. The things you feel when you review often highlight areas where God wants you to focus and what he wants to teach you. Often this results in confession when you see your emotions out of line with walking in the Spirit.
- Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask God to show you moments where you loved others well (or, conversely, He may bring to mind an area you didn't). Give thanks or ask forgiveness as warranted.
- Look toward tomorrow. Think through your day tomorrow and ask God what He may be calling you to do or be in the upcoming day.

Time in the Word, Day 6, Read James 2:5-7

Background and Insights on the Reading:

James points out how illogical it is to strive so hard to please rich people or people in lofty places, while neglecting the poor.

He asked the readers why they would dishonor the poor since 1) God Himself honors the poor, 2) the rich forced believers into court with false charges, and 3) the rich blasphemed the fair name of Jesus held so dear by Christians (a).

Note that James is not teaching a kind of reverse discrimination, i.e., to discriminate against the rich. We must *show love to all* of our neighbors, poor or rich.

Questions for Reflection:

- What does verse five teach you about God's character?

- How can you follow God's example of impartiality in your daily life?

Additional resources for this day – see appendix.

Huddle Meeting:

General Check-In (10 minutes)

Emotional Check-In (10 minutes)

- Using the SACHET wheel, describe how you're doing emotionally right now. You may want to write down some of these to pray for your huddle during the week.



Rhythms Check-In (10 minutes)

- Describe your experience with the individual rhythms this week.
- Describe your experience with the corporate rhythms this week.
- How can the huddle encourage you this week in these areas? Or.....How can you encourage the huddle this week in these areas?

Discussion for Growth (30 Minutes)

- Feel free to discuss any questions from the prior days' studies.
- What is something you feel God truly taught you this week?
- What is the most challenging thing you learned this week? How so?
- How can you *apply* one of the key learnings from this week?

Appendix

Time in the Word, Day 1, James 1:13-15

Related Scripture:

- Mark 7:21-22 – For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.
- 1 Peter 5:10 – And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.
- 1 Peter 1:7 – These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 – No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted (the Greek for temptation and tempted can also mean testing and tested) beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.
- Proverbs 4:23 – Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Time in the Word, Day 2, James 1:16-18

Related Scripture:

- John 3:17 – For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.
- 1 John 1:5 – This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.
- Matthew 7:11 – If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!
- Psalm 34:10 – The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.
- Psalm 84:11 – For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.
- Psalm 85:12 – The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.

Time in the Word, Day 3, James 1:19-21

Related Scripture:

- Proverbs 10:19 – Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues.
- Proverbs 12:15 – The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.
- Proverbs 14:29 – Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.
- Proverbs 16:32 – Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

- Proverbs 17:27 – The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered.
- Proverbs 18:2 – A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.
- Ephesians 4:26 – In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.
- Psalm 39:1 – I said, “I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth while in the presence of the wicked.”

Time in the Word, Day 4, James 1:22-27

A believer who does not act on truth is like a man who looks at his natural face in the mirror (v.23). James has just referred to our spiritual birth (v. 18). So natural face, which is literally “the face of one’s birth,” corresponds to the believer’s spiritual birth. The Christian looks into the mirror of God’s word (2 Cor. 3:18 NASB) at his new self, transformed by new birth (v.18). But the Christian who has gone away from the mirror (v. 24) has tragically forgotten what kind of person he is in Christ (v.24; 2 Peter 1:9). The law of liberty (or the perfect law that gives freedom, NIV), is the “law” or “principle” by which God frees believers from sin (Gal. 2:4, 5:1, 13; 1 Peter 2:16), namely, the gospel, creating in them new selves (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) (a).

Related Scripture:

- Luke 6:45 – A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.
- Colossians 3:9-10 – Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.
- Romans 2:13 – For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

Time in the Word, Day 5, James 2:1-4

Related Scripture:

- Galatians 3:28 – There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 – Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.
- 1 Samuel 16:7 – But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”
- John 7:24 – Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.

Time in the Word, Day 6, James 2:5-7

Related Scripture:

- Isaiah 1:17 – Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.
- Matthew 9:10-13 – While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

References

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