

Resumé of Character:* Spend five minutes creating a resumé in your journal. Instead of focusing on your experience and expertise as a professional, highlight your character. Do not be bashful or falsely humble. This resumé is for you alone, and only you will decide what to share with your group.

- Was it difficult to brag about your character?
- Which attribute of your character came to mind first?
- Does your resumé reflect a person of humility?
- In a year's time, what would you like to add to this resumé?

*Exercise taken from the *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE (Read the passages and review the sermon outline. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.)

- Read James 2:1-17.
- Read the main points from the sermon outline.
- What topic in the sermon and scripture stood out to you?
- In the first four verses of chapter two, how is favoritism being lived out in the church?
- How have you seen this type of socio-economic favoritism in the Church today?
- Based on this passage, would the original audience self-identify as rich, poor, or both?
- How is loving one's neighbor as oneself the opposite of favoritism?
- How has mercy triumphed over judgment in other stories in the scriptures?
- If faith without deeds is dead, then how would you characterize deeds done without faith?

CONNECT WITH GOD'S MISSION IN THE WORLD (select one question for discussion and pray together)

- How have you shown favoritism and partiality to those with less or more wealth?
- If our worship gatherings are a foretaste of the eternal Kingdom of God, who are we missing and who can we invite to better reflect the Kingdom?
- When you encounter poverty, do you see the poor as a problem or as brothers and sisters first?
- How does Jesus see the poor and how can you have his vision?
- What tangible ways can you love your neighbor as yourself this week?
- End your time in prayer writing down any prayer requests in your journal.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

October 3, 2021
Pastor Mike McClenahan

**HUMILITY
& WISDOM**

WEEK 3—JAMES 2:1-17 (NIV)

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. ² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. ³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong? ⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. ¹² Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment. ¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

(Message Outline Points on the next page.)

MESSAGE OUTLINE POINTS

Believing must be aligned to doing.

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ... Faith by itself is dead.

1. God does not discriminate. We don't discriminate.

But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

" 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." **Matthew 22:34–40 (NIV) (see Leviticus 19:18)**

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.... **Matthew 7:12 (NIV)**

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things... For God does not show favoritism. **Romans 2:1,11 (see Acts 10:34 and Proverbs 24:23)**

2. Jesus humbled himself. We humble ourselves.

Has not God chosen those who are poor... to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom?

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. **2 Corinthians 8:9 (NIV)**

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **Matthew 5:3 (NIV)**

As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud [person] is always looking down on thing and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down you cannot see something that is above you... Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next [person].

—C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

3. God is merciful. We show mercy.

Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. **Matthew 5:7 (NIV)**

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

October 3, 2021

James: Humility and Wisdom

Part 3: James 2:1-17

CONNECT WITH GOD (choose one of these practices that best suits your group or use a practice from a previous week)

Slowing: Read: "If you can't take time to do nothing, you are a slave to doing. Doing nothing is a radical, revolutionary act. It frees you from the universal slavery of our age: slavery to the clock. The clock measures doing but not being" -Peter Kreeft

Journal: During the next 3-5 minutes, write down all of the tasks that are occupying your mind and keeping you from simply being in the presence of the God who loves you. When you have written down the things you are hurrying from, simply sit and focus on Jesus.

Gratitude: Read: "In ordinary life we hardly realize that we receive a great deal more than we give, and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich." —Dietrich Bonhoeffer (*Letters and Papers from Prison*)

Journal: Make a list of the riches God has given you. Once you have filled a page, circle the one that stands out to you today and write a short sentence of gratitude to Jesus for giving you that gift.

Opening Prayer: Simply open your small group time in a focused prayer. Ask God to reveal his truth to you through scripture and the Holy Spirit. Give praise to God for what he has been doing in your life and the world, and recognize Jesus Christ as the great mediator between us and God.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Journaling:** Many spiritual practices this year will require a journal. If you are a small group leader be prepared with paper and pen for those who are without. Please remember that there is no right way to journal. Journals can be intermittent, upside down, written, drawn, or doodled. They are a way to capture what God is doing in you over time. Journaling with your small group will include a prompt; however, in your time alone with God, allow the Spirit to be your leader.

(Small Group Questions continued on the back)