

PREPARING AT HOME

August 27-September 2, 2018

Focus reading: James 1:17–27 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=392706150>)

Other lectionary readings: Song of Solomon 2:8–13; Psalm 45:1–2, 6–9; Mark 7:1–8, 14–15, 21–23

Theme: Deep, Perceptive Listening

Throughout history, the letter of James has troubled some Christians who don't know what to make of its emphasis on works and its omission of references to Jesus (only mentioned twice briefly) and grace. However, rather than ignoring or discarding the letter, as some have done, we would do well to remember the purpose of this letter: to instruct first generation Christians regarding how to live the Christian life. Our reading begins with references to God's generosity. This reminder of God's actions toward us lays the foundation for the 59 imperatives that are contained in the letter's 108 verses! Our relationship with this generous God is what motivates our behavior. Our words and actions are offered in response to our faith in God, who gives "every perfect gift" (1:17). James calls us to do more than listen to God's word. We are called to action that is grounded in faith. The words that we say to others, the ways in which we handle our emotions, the ways in which we care for the vulnerable of society matter more to God than how many times we have heard the Scriptures being read. Having received God's gifts, we are led to be God's gift in the world. Having received God's love, we are called to loving actions. Having heard God's word and wisdom, we are called to do what God requires. Being people of faith, we are called to act with integrity.

GOD'S GIFTS TO US

Draw a mural of God's gifts to us, or use old magazines and newspapers to create a collage. James says that God is generous. God is the giver of every perfect gift. What gifts has God given you to enjoy? How can you say "thank you" to God?

THANKING GOD BY SHARING LOVE

One way that we can thank God for all of God's gifts to us is to share God's love with the world. Cut out a number of hearts from construction paper. On each heart, draw a way that you can share God's love.

LISTEN!

This reading suggests that listening can be one way of sharing God's love. Is there someone you can visit who needs someone to listen?

PRAYER

Generous God,
May we show our love for you
by the things we say and do.
Amen.

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