



PRAYER: Begin with a few moments of sharing thanks and praises in prayer.

OPENER: Which of these TV families reflects your family relationships: Cleavers? Flintstones? Bradys? Huxtables? Waltons? Simpsons? Osbournes?

REFLECT: If you had to use three adjectives to describe yourself, what would they be? James teaches that our works are the outward evidence of our inner faith. Our works make our faith visible to others. Our faith in Christ has direct implications for how Believers live.

REVIEW and DISCUSS:

This week Pastor John concluded with the final three of six evidences listed of heavenly wisdom from James 3 for "Strengthening Our Marriages." Let's define each of the following as it relates to wisdom in our relationships.

Read: James 3:17-18

- 4. SUBMISSIVE** (not defensive, not closed, teachable and open)
What are the differences between a servant and helpmate? (servants are required and mandated to respond out of duty; helpmates respond out of love and respect)
- 5. FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUIT** (giving people what they need, not what they deserve)
James lists "full of mercy" as an evidence of heavenly wisdom. List some examples of what "mercy" looks like. Why shouldn't people always get what they deserve? (full of mercy and good fruit should be the tangible evidence of a person who has experienced life change)

- 6. IMPARTIAL AND SINCERE** (real, authentic, not hypocritical)
What positive affects do you feel when others show impartiality and genuine sincerity to you? Why do you think it's important to emulate that with others? (To truly have a positive impact our relationships, whether in our marriages, with our children, or with others, there must be sincere wisdom evidenced through authenticity without hypocrisy.)

What evidences or characteristics from James 3:17-18 do you think are difficult to develop?

In your own words, how would you explain the main goal of a Christian marriage?

How would you define the ideal marriage relationship?

PLAN for ACTION:

How Can We Listen Effectively?

1. Listen with your eyes
(Discuss Jesus' reaction in the story of the Rich Young Man in Mark 10:17-21) What do you think Jesus was looking for? What does it look like to others when we're listening with our eyes?
2. Listen with your heart
(Discuss Jesus' reaction in the conversation with the Samaritan Woman in John 4:7-15) What insight did Jesus have from outward her outward appearance or actions? (gathering water by herself at mid-day, etc.)
3. Listen with your time
(Discuss Jesus' reaction in the story of the Little Children and Jesus in Matthew 19:13-15) In what ways are we generous with our time? How can we be "stingy" with our time?

The scripture tells us that wisdom begins by knowing God.
Read: Proverbs 2:6, 3:13, 4:5, 9:10, 15:33, James 1:5, Job 28:28, Psalm 111:10, Colossians 2:3

How can this group pray for you this week?

To view the complete teaching from Sunday's "Strengthening Your Marriage" Series go to www.centralcommunity.org/media/index.html