JAMES 1:19-27
KEEP IT SIMPLE

TEACH IT **COFFEEHOUSE** SESSION 3

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- his or her own Bible and pen
- optional: journal page for Session 3 (Using the student journal page is optional in the coffeehouse setting because table space may be limited.)

You'll also need—

- a pack of pencils with erasers
- optional: a few spare Bibles for students who've forgotten theirs
- your church directory or local phone book
- 8 to 10 napkins you can write on

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 3

As students experience this session, they will—

- discover the detailed instructions James gives for living out the Christian faith.
- explore what these instructions teach us about God and about obedience.
- be challenged to use these detailed instructions as a gateway for discovering what God wants them to do.

PRAYER

After your students have gathered, open your session in prayer. Pray that they'll see the instructions given to us by James as a simple path to discovering God's will in their lives.

OPEN

God's Will Primer

After opening with prayer, get the discussion rolling with a few questions:

What are some ways people can know God's will?

Have you begun asking questions about knowing God's will for your life?

How do you discover God's will for your life?

Transition into the next exercise by saying something like—

By the time we finish this session, we may find that discovering God's will is easier than we think.

3. Digging In

Read Instructions before Engaging Life

Draw your students' attention to their Scripture sheets and share—

1. **James often indicates a change in subject with the phrase *my brothers*. So think about what we could conclude about James 1:19.**

2. **Read James 1:19-27 from your Bibles.**

3. **As you read, draw a cloud** **over every reference to God and underline every reference that relates to the readers of the letter.**

4. **If you are hesitant to mark in your Bibles, just write lightly so the markings can be erased. If you're still not comfortable with it, that's okay. Just eyeball and remember info about God and James' readers.**

After a few minutes, ask the group members to look back at the clouds they marked and discuss these questions:

What do you learn about God in this passage?
-He desires that we live a righteous life (1:20).
-God wants us to look after orphans and widows and keep ourselves from being polluted by the world (1:27).

Look back at the verses you marked about James' readers. What commands or instructions does James give his audience?
Have each student write down an instruction on a napkin as it's mentioned so that you end up with each instruction on a napkin. If you're using the optional journal page, have them list the instructions in the Instructions column of the chart. Your list of instructions should reflect the following list:

-Be quick to listen, slow to speak (1:19).
-Be slow to become angry (1:19).
-Get rid of all moral filth and evil (1:21).
-Humbly accept the Word planted in you (1:21).
-Do what the Word says (1:22).
-Keep a tight rein on your tongue (1:26).
-Look after orphans and widows in distress (1:27).
-Keep from being polluted by the world (1:27).

4. Taking It Inward

From the Inside Out

Share that these instructions can be classified in two categories: our inner life and our outer life. Ask students to group the instructions (by grouping the napkins) together as inner and outer. If you're using the journal page, have students circle the inner instructions and draw a box around the outer instructions. Possible observations from the passage are noted in the following chart, but you may come to different conclusions about which category some instructions fit into.

Inner	Outer
-Be slow to become angry (1:19). *-Get rid of all moral filth and evil (1:21).* *-Humbly accept the Word planted in you (1:21).* *-Keep yourself from being polluted by the world (1:27).*	*-Be quick to listen, slow to speak (1:19).* *-Do what the Word says (1:22).* *-Keep a tight rein on your tongue (1:26).* *-Look after orphans and widows in distress (1:27).*

What did James say will happen if we do these things?
We will be blessed in what we do (1:25).

5. Digging Deeper

Hear, Then Do

God has always put a premium on doing his commands, which is why James could promise we'll be blessed when we obey God's Word. Explain that the students are going to spend some time studying what Jesus had to say on this subject. Ask for three volunteers to read the following passages from their Bibles:

Luke 11:28
Matthew 7:24-25
John 14:21

Then ask—

What two-step process does Jesus apply to his words and commands?
We need to know his commands and obey them.

What hinders us from taking these steps? Why do these hindrances hold more weight than the promises Jesus gave us for knowing and doing his commands?
Answers might include: busyness, not taking knowing or doing seriously. The fact that most of us would rate low on these scales shows that these hindrances outweigh the blessing of knowing and doing. Maybe it's because we see the hindrances daily but the blessings are less tangible.

How have you been doing with these two steps of knowing and doing lately? How would you rate yourself on the following scales?

Ask volunteers to share where they rate on the scales and to give their rationale for the rating.

HEARING SCALE:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I haven't cracked a Bible in weeks <								> I have regular, invigorating time in God's Word	

DOING SCALE:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
In one ear, out the other <								> Making every effort to please God	

Explain that Jesus attaches some hefty promises to these two steps—a good indicator that they're crucial for Christians. Ask—

What adjustments do you need to make in your life in order to experience these promises?

6. Taking It Inward

So Act Already!

Granted, you and your group members are busy. The whole world is busy! But could it be that God is waiting for us to take James 1:22 more seriously? Spend the next few minutes strategizing ways you and your students can put

into practice the instructions they've uncovered in James 1. The following are some examples to help the group get out of the starting block:

> **We're going to close with a group work session to help each of us crank up the intensity for doing the Word. This Bible study is a great step to hear the Word better as we study a book of the Bible together. But what are some things we can do to put the Word into practice?**

Refer to the instructions you have written on napkins (or listed on the journal page). Ask students to each grab a napkin with an instruction. If you have more students than instructions, have students share an instruction. If you have more instructions than students, give some students more than one instruction.

Then ask—

> **How can we—as a group or as individuals—start obeying these instructions, or obey them more consistently? Take a minute to write down an idea or two for each instruction on the other side of the napkin (or the column labeled To-Do List on the journal page).**

Encourage students to be specific. Give them a minute to write some ideas for each instruction. Then ask them to share their ideas. After you've heard the ideas, help students develop a plan for one or more of the ideas. Here are a couple of examples:

- When you get to the widows and orphans in 1:27, make a list of specific people the group can help. Have a church directory or phone book handy. Divvy up the names with your students and have one or two students adopt a person for the next 30 days. Have them make a phone call, drop in for a visit, or volunteer to help with some chores.
- Take a 10-day fast from the things of the world. Your students will know the things of this world that have the potential to pollute them—what they read, watch, listen to, or talk about. Ideas might include: take a 10-day break from music (no listening, no downloading), walk past magazine racks without looking at covers (and definitely no flipping through or buying), substitute TV time with doing some creative writing.

7. Wrapping It Up

Start Simple

Use these questions to take your group back to the discussion at the beginning of the session:

> **Did today's Scripture make it easier to know God's will for your life? If so, in what ways?**
> *Steer the discussion to conclude that when we do what God reveals in his Word, we're doing his will. When we look after widows and orphans in their distress and keep from being polluted by the world, we're doing what God accepts as pure and faultless—his will.*
>
> **So if you want to discover God's will for your life, based on James, how would you get started?**
> *Let the group discuss this one for a few minutes. Then wrap up with thoughts like this:*
>
> **Obeying God in the simple things is a great starting point for obeying him in the bigger areas of life. For example, as you help out a widow in your neighborhood, God may see he can trust you with something else. He may move you on to another ministry that defines your life's calling, or he may simply bring more orphans and widows your way. By faithfully obeying God, you'll soon discover that you're doing his will for your life—and you'll be blessed in all you do.**

Before closing in prayer, ask whether anyone would like to take God up on his idea of pursuing pure and faultless religion—ministry to widows or orphans. If so, pray a prayer of dedication for those who wish to pursue this type of ministry.