TEACH IT **COFEEHOUSE** SESSION 10

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- his or her own Bible and pen
- optional: journal page for Session 10 (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
- a $10 or $20 bill

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 10

As students experience this session, they will—

- discover how treatment of the poor ranks with God.
- explore ways they are rich that have nothing to do with money.
- be challenged to adjust their priorities and pursuits according to a godly perspective.

PRAYER

After your group has gathered, begin by praying that your students will use this session to begin to develop a trust in God's Word and see they can depend on God's perspective.

OPEN

The Good and Bad of Money

After opening with prayer, get into the session by holding up a $10 or $20 bill. In your own words, say—

What I've got in my hand may look good to you, but it can be used for good or for bad. How could it be used for bad?
-It could be used to buy illegal vices (like drugs).
-It could be used to buy destructive things (like pornography).
-Its power could be used to exploit people.

How can it be used for good?
-It can provide a meal or two for someone who's homeless.
-It can buy a Bible or uplifting music.
-It can be put toward sponsoring a child through a relief program.
-It can be put toward your bills, then you can live debt-free as the Bible advises.

3. Digging In

Painting the Money Picture

Explain to your group—

1. **Money is one of the top five topics addressed in Scripture. In fact, it gets almost as much attention as love.**

2. **Read James 5:1-11 from your Bibles.**

3. **Use pencil to circle every reference to the readers of the letter and underline every mention of the Lord.**

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

After they've been working for about five minutes, ask—

What did you learn about the Lord in these verses?
-The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord God (5:4).
-The Lord Jesus is coming (5:7).
-The Lord Jesus' coming is near (5:8).
-The Lord God brought about great things in Job's life (5:11).
-The Lord God is full of compassion and mercy (5:11).

As the discussion unfolds, be sure to help your group determine whether James is referring to Jesus or God with the title *Lord*.

What group of people does James appear to be singling out in this passage?
He appears to be singling out the rich.

Can we draw any conclusions about who these rich people are in James 5:1-6? Are they the same people as in James 5:7-11?
As the students discuss, feel free to add your thoughts from your Prep It. Draw out the following possibilities:
-They could be rich people who are part of the Christian community (James' original audience).
-They could be rich people outside the Christian community who are exploiting James' readers (see James 2:6), In James 5:7-11 the author turns back to his original audience, the Christian community.

What word pictures does James use to describe the situation of the rich?
-Your wealth has rotted (5:2).
-Moths have eaten your clothes (5:2).
-The corrosion of your gold will eat your flesh like fire (5:3).

Why do you think James is being so harsh?
The rich were exploiting their workers (the poor).

In verses 7-11, James instructs his readers about how they should behave. Looking at what you circled in this passage, what behavior is James encouraging?
-Be patient (5:7).
-Be patient and stand firm (5:8).
-Don't grumble against each other (5:9).

Why are James' readers supposed to act this way?
The Lord's coming is near (5:8).

4. Taking It Inward

Harsh Words for the Rich

Now ask the group—

Putting it all together, what two main points is James making in this passage?
-If you're rich, watch how you're using your riches; don't exploit the poor.
-If you're poor or being oppressed by those richer than you, be patient and persevere; the Lord is coming soon.

How do these teachings relate to the rest of James' letter?
Encourage students to look over their Scripture sheets from previous sessions. James addresses the subject of wealth in James 1:9-11, 2:1-9, and 4:13. Help students see his pattern of defending the poor and admonishing the rich.

Which category do we fall into—the rich or the poor?
There's no right or wrong answer to this question. Just help your students relate their choice to what James wrote.

If we're not rich in money, there are ways we can still exploit people. All of us are rich in some way. We may be rich in personality, humor, athletic ability, or musical ability. Like money, all of these things can be used for bad or for good. For instance, how could you use humor to exploit people just as the rich exploited people in James 5?
A person could use humor to humiliate someone or to get a laugh at another person's expense.

A few other examples to discuss: How could you use intelligence, or leadership ability, or even friendliness to exploit people?
Intelligence: taking advantage of others who may not see all the options.
Leadership ability: seeing people as a commodity to be influenced.
Friendliness: projecting something more likeable than the real you.

5. Cross-Checking

What's Your Account Balance? (Does It Even Matter?)

Transition into the next exercise by saying—

Do you ever see homeless people and wonder if God cares? He does. In fact, God mentions the poor and the needy more than 200 times and in nearly every book of the Bible. In most of these verses God is asking his people (that means us) to look out for them. We won't be looking up all 200 verses, but I want to give you a chance to hear God's concern about helping people in need. So read these passages and note (mentally, in your Bibles, on napkins, or on the optional journal pages) everything you learn about how we're to treat the needy.

Exodus 23:9
Psalm 82:1-4
Micah 6:8
Matthew 5:7

After about 10 minutes, discuss these questions:

How would you sum up the main theme of these verses?
Live generously and give mercifully—expecting nothing in return.

Any clues as to why mercy is such a big thing with God?
God wants us to show mercy to those who can't pay us back since God showed mercy to us and we can't ever pay him back. As we extend mercy, we show our gratitude for what God has done for us.

Explore mercy a bit further with these questions:

Mercy is one of God's main themes. What are some of your favorite places in Scripture where mercy makes an appearance—either the act of mercy or the word *mercy*? Think parables, psalms, other New Testament teachings, and so forth.
-Moses' song (Exodus 15) after the crossing of the Red Sea.
-The end of Psalm 23.
-The parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:23-35) who was forgiven a great debt he owed but sought to extract a meager debt owed to him.
-People coming to Jesus asking for healing, often greeting him with words like, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Matthew 15:22).
-Jesus telling us that we will be shown mercy in the same way we show mercy (Matthew 5:7).
-Mary's song (Luke 1), sharing her gratitude for being chosen.

How can we make mercy a more prominent feature in our day-to-day interaction with people? What situations are sometimes presented in a coffeehouse (or restaurant) that could be opportunities to show mercy?
Some follow-up questions to help students start thinking:
-If a barista doesn't get your drink order correct, how do you react?
-If someone, knowingly or unknowingly, butts in front of you in line, how do you react?
-If you're told, "We're out of that roast but we can brew it for you in four minutes," how do you react?

6. Taking It Inward

Share the Wealth!

Explain that there are two ways we can apply James 5:1-11—as a warning and as a declaration of hope. First we'll look at the warning.

Ask—

Let's get back to what we learned about the Lord in James 5:1-11. What trait of the Lord do you see that goes along with the Bible verses you just read?
The Lord is full of compassion and mercy (5:11).

If you're using the optional journal page, share—

Your journal pages contain a list of potential areas in which you could be rich—areas that have nothing to do with money. Check any that apply to you. Add other areas if you think of them.

If you're not using the optional journal page, share—

I'm going to read a list of 12 potential areas in which you could be rich—areas that have nothing to do with money. Write on a napkin any that apply to you.

• **friendships**	• **intelligence**	• **personality**
• **common sense**	• **problem solving**	• **enthusiasm**
• **self-motivation**	• **decisiveness**	• **organization**
• **vision**	• **planning**	• **physical skill**

Ask your group to add any other areas not included on this list. Then have students share with each other which areas they chose. Then share—

Think about how you can use your riches to help the people around you who are needy in those areas. For example, if you chose intelligence, perhaps you could use your brainpower to tutor someone who struggles in school. Share an idea or two for each quality you chose.

Then say—

Look again at your Bibles and note the places where you marked instructions and references to the Lord in James 5:7-11. What connection do you see between these instructions and the info about the Lord?
-It's easier to be patient in suffering if you know the Lord's coming soon.
-Patience and not grumbling are offshoots of compassion and mercy.

Ask for a volunteer to read Hebrews 10:23-25 from his or her Bible. While the passage is being looked up, say something like—

One of the main themes of the New Testament is that life as a believer will be tough, but we can take heart—Jesus is coming back. We're going to listen to a Bible passage that reflects this theme. As it's read, lock in on any instructions you hear.

Have the volunteer read the passage. Then ask—

How are these verses similar to James 5:7-11?
They give instructions for how we're to treat each other; they point to the fact that Jesus is coming soon.

How much is Jesus' return on your mind from day to day? Does that event cross your mind or affect your behavior in the least?

As you ask the following three main questions, have your students rate themselves on a scale from one to 10. Accompanying each main question are a few bulleted questions for discussion. If time allows, use these questions to help students apply the three main points.

1. **How well does the way you act toward others reflect the fact that Jesus could return any minute?**
    - **How can your gentleness be evident to all?**
    - **How can you encourage others and spur them on toward love and good deeds?**
2. **How well does the way you're handling life reflect the fact that Jesus could return any minute?**
    - **Are you persevering when times get tough?**
    - **Are you overcoming temptation?**
    - **Do you view your temptations in light of Jesus' return?**
3. **How well does your relationship with God reflect the fact that Jesus could return any minute?**
    - **Do you pray as if he really exists?**

- **Do you try to get to know him as much as possible, so that you'll be familiar with him when you finally see him face to face?**

- **What are some ways you can celebrate God all day, every day?**

7. Wrapping It Up

Walk-Out Challenge

Give students a walk-out challenge: a mental exercise they can do as they walk out of your meeting place and to their vehicles. Ask students, as soon as they stand up to leave, to mentally dwell on the fact that Jesus is coming soon—maybe even tomorrow. Challenge them to think about nothing but Jesus' return during the few minutes between now and when they enter their vehicles. On the way home, they should think of their behavior in recent days—thoughts, attitudes, dates, free time, schoolwork—in light of the fact that Jesus could return sooner than they think.