

# TOGETHER



TAKING STRIDES SERIES

## TOGETHER WE CARE

### FOR DISCUSSION

**"A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing." ~ Martin Luther**

What do you think about this quote? Has North American culture and its ease/benefits made it hard for us to understand or relate to this quote?

Has our view of Christianity been watered down? Explain.



## Encounter

 read God's Word so that He can speak to you.

### READ JAMES 1:27-2:13

<sup>27</sup> Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

<sup>1</sup> My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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," <sup>4</sup> have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

<sup>5</sup> 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? <sup>6</sup> 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? <sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

<sup>8</sup> If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself,"<sup>[a]</sup> you are doing right. <sup>9</sup> But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. <sup>11</sup> For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery,"<sup>[b]</sup> also said, "You shall not murder."<sup>[c]</sup> If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. <sup>12</sup> Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, <sup>13</sup> because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

# Explore God's Word

asking questions of what you saw.  
The notes which follow may help you to think through these questions

## 1)

James 1:27 - To "care" in this verse is more than bringing food or buying clothes; it is investing your life in caring for a person. What needs characterize the widows and orphans?

- How does caring for people in need illustrate undefiled religion?
- What does a religion without care of others reflect?

## 2)

Who are the widows and orphans in our area? Where are most of the widows and orphans in our world?

- What holds us back the most from investing in the care of others?
- Why do we often think that if a form of caring is difficult for us that we shouldn't do it?
- What challenging forms of caring most identify us with God?

# Explore (cont.)

3)

Looking at James 2:6-9, how does showing favoritism disrespect both man and God?

4)

In what two ways do verses 12-13 indicate that people will be judged?

- How can a person be victorious over this judgment?
- What does mercy in the life of a believer demonstrate about God?

5)

"Faith always expresses itself through love." Let's apply this personally.

- How does our view of Christ affect how we view others?
- How is favoritism usually engrained in external factors?
- How does experiencing God's grace change our values?
- How do these values change the way that we view all people?
- How does our investment in others reveal God's mercy in our own lives?
- If we are unwilling to show mercy to others, what does that lack of action reveal about our experience of God's mercy?
- How is the love of God to be demonstrated through our faith? How can we show this love in our neighborhood, community, country, and world?