

— PLAIN —
JAMES

A DOWN TO EARTH LOOK
AT FOLLOWING JESUS



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OVERVIEW

Randy Johnson | Growth Pastor

It has been said that James is a commentary on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). There are over 30 direct correlations.

How would James know about the sermon? Coincidence? _____

Author: James (The Biblical baby name James is the Greek version of the Hebrew name Jacob which means supplanter, one who follows, or he who grasps the heel).

1. Half-brother of Jesus
2. Didn't accept Jesus as Messiah (Christ, Savior) until after the resurrection
3. First Pastor of Jerusalem

How was James a half-brother of Jesus? _____

WEEK ONE

Why do you think it took James so long to get saved? _____

How would this all have affected the family dynamics? _____

Key people:

Abraham

Rahab, the prostitute

Job

Elijah

Abraham and Rahab are in the same section. Why would those individuals be referenced? _____

What is Job known for? _____

What are some things Elijah is known for? _____

WEEK ONE

Key Topics:

- Testing and trials
- Being doers of the Word
- Impartiality
- Faith without works is dead
- Controlling your tongue
- Avoiding worldliness

What admissions or omissions catch your attention? _____

Key verse James 2:20

“Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?”

How would you apply this verse today? _____

The Jesus element James 5:7-8

“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

What is “the coming of the Lord”? _____

JAMES ONE

Randy Johnson | Growth Pastor

The Book of James has also been referred to as the New Testament Book of Proverbs. It is interesting to see what a younger sibling takes the time to point out about his big brother's life and expectations.

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.”

What does James mean by his description of himself? _____

James 1:2-4 ***“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”***

James may have been thinking of Matthew 5:11-12: ***“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all***

WEEK TWO

kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

How do James and Jesus view hardships? Why? _____

What difficult experiences have increased your perseverance and maturity? _____

James 1:5-7 “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

What is the context for asking God for wisdom? _____

WEEK TWO

What are the conditions for receiving wisdom? _____

James 1:9-11 ***“Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.”***

James seems to be indicating that trials erase any superficial distinctions that may be thought to separate the rich brother from the poor one. “Brother” shows that James is referring to a believer. Jesus says in Matthew 5:5, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Is there an advantage in not being rich? _____

James 1:12-15 ***“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”***

WEEK TWO

The only other reference to the “crown of life” is Revelation 2:10: ***“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”***

How do we obtain the “crown of life”? _____

What is the practical difference between trials and temptations?

Matthew 5:28 says, ***“But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*** I have heard it said, ***“It is not the first thought that comes to mind that gets me in trouble, it is the second, third, and fourth.”***

How does this quote relate and what does it mean? _____

James 1:16-18 ***“Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we***

WEEK TWO

should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.”

What is the “good and perfect gift” for which you are thankful?

James 1:19-21 ***“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”***

Which best describes your temper:

Short fuse, big bomb?

Long fuse, little fizz?

Long fuse, H-bomb?

What does it mean to be “quick to listen”? _____

What relationship do you need to apply verses 19-20? _____

James 1:22-25 ***“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently***

WEEK TWO

at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing”

Matthew 7:24 says, *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”*

What is the point of the mirror illustration? _____

James 1:26-27 *“If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless. 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”*

Some groups evaluate a person’s spiritual maturity by what that person believes while others do so by what that person does.

What is the value and limits of each approach? _____

Compare this passage with Matthew 6:1-4, *“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. 2 “Thus, when you give*

to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

What can your growth community do to implement “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God”? _____

JAMES TWO

Randy Johnson | Growth Pastor

James chapter two is noted as the key passage for two major themes: The Sin of Partiality and Faith Without Works Is Dead. Do these two topics relate to each other? _____

James 2:1-7 *“My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. 2 For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, 3 and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” 4 have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?”*

WEEK THREE

The early Jewish Christians experienced persecution for having become followers of Jesus. How would this have affected them financially? _____

Is it easier to have faith when you are poor than when you are rich? _____

What other forms of partiality or discrimination have you experienced or observed? _____

James 2:8-13 *“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. 11 For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”*

WEEK THREE

What are some results of showing favoritism (verses 4, 6, 9, 13)?

What is the “law” (revisit James 1:25), and what is its purpose?

How do the following verses from the Sermon on the Mount compare with verse 13? _____

Matthew 5:7 – **“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”**

Matthew 6:15 – ***“But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”***

Matthew 7:1-2 - ***“Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.”***

James 2:14-17 ***“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”***

WEEK THREE

How does Matthew 7:21 (“*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*”) relate to this section? _____

The auto spell check in texting often changes love to live. Is there any irony to this? _____

Are you a doer or a thinker? Are you more likely to act without thinking or think without acting? _____

James 2:18-26 *“But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another*

WEEK THREE

way? 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”

Compare and contrast Abraham and Rahab (Joshua 2).

How do Abraham and Rahab prove James' point?

Is James' argument in contrast with Paul in Romans 3:28 (***“For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law”***)? _____

James does not say that works without faith can save. What does this imply about faith? _____

If someone were arrested for being a Christian, what questions would you ask to find if they are “guilty” _____

JAMES THREE

Randy Johnson | Growth Pastor

We have two ears and one tongue. Is God trying to tell us something? _____

Nevertheless, we will and should speak. “You can change your world by changing your words... Remember, death and life are in the power of the tongue.” Joel Osteen realizes that the eight muscles that make up the average four-inch tongue can be used for good or evil.

James chapter three is known as the “go to passage” concerning the tongue.

By the way, can you touch your nose with your tongue (10% of the general population can)?

James 3:1-5 ***“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. 2 For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. 3 If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we***

WEEK FOUR

guide their whole bodies as well. 4 Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.5 So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.”

What is one of your all-time best bloopers with something you said? _____

Why is a more strict judgment placed upon teachers?

How does this relate to taming the tongue? _____

What have you found to be helpful in controlling your tongue?

James 3:6-12 “How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile

WEEK FOUR

and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?12 Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.”

What is the point of comparing the tongue to a fire?

Matthew 7:16-18 (from the Sermon on the Mount) says, ***“You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.”***

Explain how this relates to James three and specifically to taming the tongue. _____

Without coming across as judging, does a certain fruit imply a certain type of tree? Do we owe it to friends to point out their “fruit”? _____

WEEK FOUR

Do you struggle more with saying the wrong things or not saying enough right things to God and others? _____

James 3:13-18 ***“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”***

What best describes you when working with a committee:

A busy bee?

A hibernating bear?

A wise old owl?

A prowling lion?

WEEK FOUR

Have you seen all these characters in meetings? _____

What are the characteristics of earthly and heavenly wisdom?

Their source?

Their symptoms?

Their results?

Verse 18 seems to relate to Matthew 5:9, "***Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.***"

Who is a peacemaker you know? _____

How can you become a better peacemaker? _____

WEEK FOUR

Does this whole chapter relate to the tongue? _____

Close each day in prayer saying, ***“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”*** (Psalm 139:23-24).

Revisit the day focusing on what you should and shouldn't have said and make plans to correct it.

JAMES FOUR

Randy Johnson | Growth Pastor

James takes the next natural step. Once you have dealt with your talk, it is time to evaluate your walk. The concern here is living a worldly lifestyle. We need to submit ourselves to God.

James 4:1-10 ***“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be***

WEEK FIVE

wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”

Verses 2-3 seem to refer to Matthew 7:7-8, “*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*”

What are we to ask for? How? _____

What part(s) of James’ list on following God (verses 7-10) is most difficult for you? What do they mean, and how can they be done?

1. Submit to God?

2. Resist the devil?

3. Draw near to God?

WEEK FIVE

4. Cleanse your hands?

5. Purify your hearts?

6. Be wretched, mourn, and wail (remorseful and broken)?

7. Laughter and joy turned to mourning and gloom (repentance)?

8. Humble yourself?

What should be our genuine response and action to sin in our life?

WEEK FIVE

Is verse 9 and Matthew 5:4 (“**Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**”) referring to death in a family or true remorse? _____

James 4:11-12 “**Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?**”

Why would a Christian slander another Christian? _____

Does this happen often? _____

This section relates to Matthew 7:1-2, “**Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.**” How is judging different from holding a brother accountable? _____

WEEK FIVE

How can a proper attitude toward God (verse 12) enable us to have a proper attitude toward others? _____

James 4:13-17 ***“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit’— 14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15 Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.’ 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. 17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”***

Are you a long-range planner, or do you take one day at a time? What is the positive and negative of each mindset?

Is the problem here more about planning or pride?

What does James imply about wealth and power?

WEEK FIVE

We normally view sin as “doing” something wrong. What are some examples of sin being a lack of action (verse 17)?

What is something you know you have needed to do at home, church, school, or work? Make a plan right now on how to accomplish it and ask someone to hold you accountable.

JAMES FIVE

Randy Johnson | Growth Pastor

I chuckle at the prayer that says, “Lord, I want patience and I want it now.” Chapter five of James addresses finances, patience, and the prayer of faith.

James 5:1-6 *“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. 4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.”*

James refers to his audience as “brothers” fifteen times in James. He doesn’t call this group “brothers”. Do you think he is referring to believers, unbelievers, or anyone who puts their trust in possessions rather than God? _____

WEEK SIX

Jesus dealt with the same topic in Matthew 6:19-22, ***“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”***

If someone looked at your credit card statement or checkbook, what or who would they say your priority is? _____

Is James condemning all wealthy people? Who were some Godly, wealthy people in the Bible? _____

James 5:7-12 ***“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. 10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have***

WEEK SIX

heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. 12 But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.”

James gives three examples of patient people: a farmer, the prophets, and Job. How is each an example of patience?

In what areas of your life are you impatient? _____

How can Christ’s return affect such practical matters as our use of wealth and emotional matters as our response to suffering?

Jesus replied to the suffering of believers by saying, ***“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you”*** (Matthew 5:11-12).

How has your faith cost you? _____

WEEK SIX

James 5:13-20 ***“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18 Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. 19 My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, 20 let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”***

Do you pray more when you are in trouble or when things are going well? Explain. _____

Who are two or three wounded people in your life that you would like to help? _____

What different kinds of prayer are mentioned in this section?

WEEK SIX

How can we bring “back a sinner from his wandering”?

In closing the Book of James, for now, what areas do you need to become more of a “doer” of the truth? _____

REACH, GATHER, GROW AND BACK TO REACH

Randy Johnson | Growth Pastor

Matthew 28:19-20 is referred to as the Great Commission. It is the last two verses of the book of Matthew. Jesus has already risen from the dead and He gets the disciples together for some last words. It is like a coach's last pep talk as the players enter the arena for a big game. He says, ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”***

It is these verses that are the basis for who we are at The River: The River Church exists to glorify God by reaching the world, gathering with the saints, and growing in the Word.

This mission seems quite clear from Jesus' words:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, (glorify God by reaching the world)

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (glorify God by gathering with the saints)

APPENDIX A

teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age (glorify God by growing in the Word).

This process is not a straight line with an ending point. It is more like a spiral as we reach, gather, grow we should then want to be reaching more of the world, gathering, and growing...

Please remember the focus of every step – Glorify God!

The River Church exists to glorify God by reaching the world, gathering with the saints, and growing in the Word.

REACH

Randy Johnson | Growth Pastor

Acts 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

Is anything implied by these geographical locations?

How would you phrase these locations in “your world” today?

How can people be reached today that didn’t exist 2,000 (or even 20) years ago? _____

APPENDIX B

Are we creative and intentional in reaching others?

Matthew 5:16 ***“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”***

Mark 16:15-16 ***“And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”***

GATHER

Randy Johnson | Growth Pastor

Hebrews 10:24-25 *“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”*

In what ways can we encourage someone else?

Do you have an example how you were encouraged?

Acts 2:42-47 *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions*

APPENDIX C

and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

List the different things they did when they came together.

Is The River consistent with this description of the early church?

What items do you like about our Gatherings?

What suggestions do you have to improve our Gatherings (feel free to email these to Pastor Caleb Combs: combs@theriverchurch.cc)?

GROW

Randy Johnson | Growth Pastor

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*

What thoughts come to mind when you read “breathed out by God”? _____

2 Timothy 2:15 *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”*

Proverbs 27:17 *“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”*

This is a man’s man verse (I think the Hebrew might even imply some grunting). What does it mean for men? _____

APPENDIX D

What does it mean for women? _____

When my son was in first grade, he asked me, “Dad, why don’t we go straight to Heaven when we get saved?” His question caught me, impressed me, challenged me, and has stuck with me. I answered that if people immediately went to Heaven, who would have told us about Jesus? _____

The emphasis of GROW is not for self, but to GO and make a difference in the world. This is why we need to Reach, Gather, Grow, and back to Reach.

Who should your growth community reach out to?

Who should you personally reach out to?

Romans 1:16 ***“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”***

— JAMES 1:5 —

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

