

Aim of lesson

To consider James' teaching about the use and misuse of riches, and about things of real value.

Bible background

James 1:9-10; 2:1-9, 14-17; 4:1-3; 5:1-6.

Outline of lesson

To encourage the class' interest in the lesson you may like to try the following. Hold a five pound note and have one of the class hold their index finger and thumb as though holding the other top corner, but with their finger and thumb apart, not touching the note. Tell them to put their fingers together as they see you drop the note. Most people's reflexes are not fast enough to catch the note. This can be used to illustrate the elusive value of riches.

Ask the class to look at the worksheet. By reading the references at the start of the sheet in the workbook, the class should be able to find the two illustrations for each quotation. They should join each pair with a line. They are as follows:

- 1 and C, James 1:9-10; a poor man is rich, a rich man's wealth will fade away
- 5 and D, James 2:1-9; showing preference to a rich man
- 3 and A, James 2:14-17; giving real help, not empty words
- 4 and B, James 4:1-3; greed brings quarrelling
- 2 and E, James 5:1-6; keeping back what you owe to others

Get the class to use the boxes in the third column to explain in their own words what James is teaching. This could be done individually and the results read out and discussed or the passages could be read and discussed together and a summary then written in each box.

What does God value?

Collect on a large sheet or on the back of the worksheet the things from the passages you have considered which are of great worth in God's sight. Some of them may be the opposite of the things which are condemned.

Make sure the class consider the great value of the 'high position' in James 1:9. This is what is ultimately of great worth: the position we can all have of being a beloved son or daughter of God.

Digging deeper

God willing

Christians often use the expression 'God willing' in their conversation. This section gets the students to think about what this means.

Relevance to our lives

Ask the class about pocket money. How does James' teaching affect the way they should think about it and spend it?

Prayer

What prayer does the class think James would pray if he were alive today concerning the attitude and behaviour of the class?

Other suggestions for activities

The class could make a poster to illustrate James' teaching about riches. This could use advertisements cut from magazines or newspapers. If you made a poster last week the two could form a reminder of the study of the letter of James.