

WEEK 5 REFLECTION

Tanzania – Baraka’s story

James 1:5, 17-18, 22, 26-27

5 If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.

17 Every generous act of giving, with 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 In fulfilment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

22 But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.

26 If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Pr. Matt's study & writing helps:

1. The reading is a handful of verses taken from the first chapter of James in the New Testament. As you prepare, take the time to read the whole section (James 1:1-27). Pay particular attention to verse 27 as you contemplate the meaning of this passage. What do you think is the purpose of religion in today's world? What do you think about this view of religion – that what pleases God is really when folks take care of each other?

What do you think about this? Have you ever seen someone who pretends to be a good Christian but doesn't live it out in everyday life by caring for others? How is it that we all make this mistake sometimes?

2. In your Study Bible, look at the study notes at the bottom of the page, and also the introductory notes explaining about the book of James to see if you can learn anything else interesting about this passage.

3. Read Baraka's story ("*Story5 Tanzania.pdf*", available on the church's website). Consider WHY God asks us to care for those in need. Do we do it to prove we are good people? Do we do it to earn a place in heaven? Is there something deeper going on here?

4. For your reflection, write 2-3 paragraphs about what you think this passage means for the modern church of 2012. Be careful not to make your paragraphs too much about what we "should" do, but focus on WHY we would help those in need (see Question #3 above).

OTHER IDEAS FOR YOUR PARAGRAPHS:

1. You could name the places in our modern world where you see need.
2. You could tell about a time you helped someone and how that felt
3. You could tell about a time you saw someone in need and how that felt
4. You could tell about a time when you or someone you know was in need
5. You could talk about what you want to do when you grow up and how that might meet the needs of others
6. You could talk with your family about one thing you could do to respond to this passage. (*Hint: It isn't always about money! Is there anything else you could do live in a way that reflects the values in this passage?*)

You can contact me by e-mail, Facebook, or phone for help with this!

5. E-mail me (pr_matt@hotmail.com) or send me a Facebook message with a draft of your paragraphs one week before your assigned Wednesday. That way, I can help you edit it and get it ready to read in church.

Don't forget – you are not on your own here – I believe that you have something important to share & I am here to help you find the right words!