

## Study Notes based on Sunday morning 17 September 2018 - John Farren

### Learning from Disciples: James (James 1:19 – 27)

1. Having identified James as the brother of Jesus, John F encouraged us to think of Jesus' family life. How did you respond to the idea that Jesus grew up with brothers and sisters who wondered why he went 'all weird' on them at the age of thirty? Have you thought about this before? Is it helpful to speculate about what Jesus was like in those silent years between the ages of 12 and 30? (See Mark 3:20-21; 31-34)
2. How do you respond to John F's argument that the credibility of the message depends on the credibility of the messenger? When a Christian leader 'falls', or is exposed as a charlatan should all he ever taught be discredited? Or is there another way to test the authenticity of teaching? (see Acts 17:11)
3. Check out these credentials for James: Acts 12:17; 15:13; 1 Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 1:19; 2:9)
4. Consider the five pieces of pastoral advice John F locates in James 1:19ff.
  - (i) James 1:19-20 Listen more than you speak. Getting angry is usually counterproductive. Do you agree?
  - (ii) v21 Get rid of moral filth, (literally the wax which blocks your ears) and receive the word planted in you. To what extent does what we fill our minds with control our receptivity to the word of God?
  - (iii) v22-25 How do we deceive ourselves if we merely listen to the word? How do we avoid this trap? Explore the mirror illustration.
  - (iv) v26 Keep a rein on your tongue (read also James 3:1-12) why do you think James has chosen to speak about the tongue in greater detail than the other pieces of pastoral advice? How can we keep our tongues reined in?
  - (v) v27 How do you respond to the kind of religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless? John F suggested that the reference to widows and orphans might be specific to the time of writing and we might need to identify parallel needs for our time. what might they be?
5. Which bit of Sunday morning's teaching did you find most challenging?

John S Smith 18 September 2018