**Discipleship Groups Study 1 - Living the Word. James 1:16-25.**

***(You can listen again to the sermon on this passage which is available on the Church Wed Site*** [***www.mcquistonpc.org***](http://www.mcquistonpc.org) ***)***

The sermon series and Discipleship Group Bible studies this year will be centred around Acts 2:42-47 and the themes that arise there, and we will work under the title “Jesus centred: people focused.”

We begin with a study of James 1:16-25 in which James urges Christian believers not just to sit passively under the word of God but to be active and quick to do what God commands. It’s possible to hear the word, agree with it, but that is as far as it goes and the word never finds expression in our actions, it never changes or influences our behaviour. As such we never live out the word but that is what is called for by James, and it is what we see happening in the Jerusalem church described in Acts 2:42-47 where the early Christians were clearly Jesus centred and people focused.

**Questions**

1. Last year we remembered the loss of the Titanic on her maiden voyage. If the accounts of the sinking are accurately represented in documentaries and films why were people so reluctant to act on the advice of the crew in regard to their safety? Can you think of other instances where people agree with advice but fail to act on it?
2. What reasons might we have for hearing the Word of God but not acting on it?
3. With reference to James 1:17 & 18 why can we rely on the word of God?
4. It is most likely that when James talks about God giving us birth in verse 18, he is speaking about new birth rather than physical birth. Either way it shows that the word of God has power to create and power to change. If God plants his word in us (v21) what role do we have to play in the nurture of God’s word in our lives (verses 19-21)?
5. What is God’s desire for our lives (verse 20) and what do you think this will look like in the life of a mature Christian? (A look at Galatians 5:22-26 might help)
6. In verse 22 James is emphatic – we must do what the word says. Bearing in mind that this calls for us to individually put God’s word into practice by living it out **in our own lives**, do **you** think there aspects of our life as a church in which we should be more active in doing what it says?
7. How does James describe the person who does not do what the word says (verses 23 & 24)?
8. If the word of God shows us what we are like and gives us a window to our souls for example revealing our sins, showing up our motives and where attitudes must change; we should not be discouraged from looking at ourselves as we are because we know that the word also gives life, and through the word God exercises his power to change. Here’s the question - what is the reason for wanting and allowing the word to change us (verse 25), and what is the best of all possible motives according to Jesus in Matthew 5:16?

Notes:-

Question 4: The process of sanctification or becoming more Christ like is not simply a matter of our effort so we must be careful in how we think about it. Faith starts with the grace of God but we also continue to grow and change by the grace of God; this is sometimes called growing in grace. At the same time though it is far from an automatic process from which we are divorced and we are not changed against our will. We must work with the Holy Spirit in growing to maturity.

Question 6: If we must be obedient to the word in our individual lives, it stands to reason that as the community of God’s people we must work together to be obedient as a church and not be pulling apart.