



**BIBLE STUDY SESSIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS  
FOR USE DURING LENT 2018**

**40ACTS 2018**

**WEDNESDAY 14 FEBRUARY TO SATURDAY 31 MARCH 2018**

**40ACTS THEME 2018: FAITH IN DEED**

**40acts.org.uk**



Brought to you by: **stewardship<sup>®</sup>**



## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Page 3
INTRODUCTION WEEK Lent dates: Wednesday 14 February – Saturday 17 February 2018	Page 5
WEEK ONE: FAITH ALONE v FAITH IN DEED Lent dates: Monday 19 February – Saturday 24 February 2018	Page 6
WEEK TWO: KEEPING FAVOURITES v WELCOMING ALL Lent dates: Monday 26 February – Saturday 3 March 2018	Page 9
WEEK THREE: SPEAK FIRST v THINKING FIRST Lent dates: Monday 5 March – Saturday 10 March 2018	Page 11
WEEK FOUR: OUR AMBITION v THEIR PROVISION Lent dates: Monday 12 March – Saturday 17 March 2018	Page 14
WEEK FIVE: DANGEROUS HOARDING v FRUITFUL GIVING Lent dates: Monday 19 March – Saturday 24 March 2018	Page 17
WEEK SIX: KEEPING FACE v VULNERABLE FAITH Lent dates: Monday 26 March – Saturday 31 March 2018	Page 20
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Page 23

## CONTACT DETAILS

Stewardship  
1 Lamb's Passage, London EC1Y 8AB  
t: 020 8502 5600  
e: [enquiries@stewardship.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@stewardship.org.uk)  
w: [www.stewardship.org.uk](http://www.stewardship.org.uk)

Stewardship is the operating name of Stewardship Services (UKET) Limited, a registered charity no. 234714, and a company limited by guarantee no. 90305, registered in England.

© Copyright Stewardship 2017

### COPYRIGHT

This publication is the copyright of Stewardship. We want our resources to have the maximum impact, therefore you are welcome to reproduce or otherwise distribute this material in whole or part. We simply ask two things: (1) there must be no use for commercial gain, and (2) Stewardship is clearly acknowledged with the following wording "Reproduced with permission from Stewardship. [www.stewardship.org.uk](http://www.stewardship.org.uk)". If extracts are to be used in another context, permission should be sought in advance by emailing [enquiries@stewardship.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@stewardship.org.uk) or telephoning 020 8502 5600. Thank you.



Brought to you by: **stewardship**<sup>®</sup>



## WELCOME TO 40ACTS

### What is 40acts?

Lent marks a pivotal point in the history of the church, when Jesus prepared to give himself up as a sacrifice. Tradition has it that we mark the 40 days of Lent by giving something up, but what if it could be more than that? What if Lent were to become a preparation for a lifetime of big-heartedness?

40acts is a generosity challenge which encourages people to approach Lent differently.

During the 40 days of Lent, 40acts participants are invited to take part in 40 simple acts of generosity which will challenge them to 'do Lent generously' in 2018. The acts or challenges are wide-ranging and various but all are designed to explore what it means to be generous in a very practical way.

They can be done by individuals or done in groups but the key is that small acts of generosity, performed by thousands of people across the UK and beyond, have the power to make a big change to our communities, to our churches and, ultimately, to our world. It's about creating a movement of generosity.

### How to use this resource

- This course is divided into six separate sessions and provides adaptable meeting guides, activity ideas, prayers and songs.
- The Bible studies follow the same Scripture passages as the sermon series, which can be used as additional research/information for the small group leader.
- This Bible study series can stand alone, but has also been designed to be used alongside the sermon series; it doesn't matter which happens first, sermon or small group.
- Each session is designed to last approximately one hour.
- This resource has been designed to suit a wide range of ages and interests. Group leaders should feel free to adapt each study to suit the needs and interests of their particular group.

*All biblical quotes are taken from the NIV unless otherwise stated.*

### About this series

40acts 2018 takes its inspiration from the book of James and the inextricable connection between faith and deeds. While it's clear that we cannot earn our salvation or win God's approval by our own actions, James sets out a framework for the kind of practical, day-to-day living that springs from hearing God's word, obeying it and acting on it. As the saying goes, it's about 'walking the talk'.

James is a challenging book that places discipleship and deeds at the forefront of the faith which is why it resonates so clearly with 40acts: 40 days of generous living which requires every bit of the discipline, humility, obedience, patience and love of which James speaks.

Each week the notes explore a particular aspect of living out our faith, focusing on a section of James. The 40acts challenges for each week are designed to complement the theme of that week and become a practical outworking of it. How you choose to engage with the challenges is up to you (more of that in 'Complementary materials' below) but the connection between the two is important.

### Complementary materials

These Bible studies can be used alongside the 40acts sermon notes. In a small group setting, people can examine more closely what 'living out their faith in deed' means and have the opportunity to engage with the daily challenges as a group of individuals, sharing their experiences with each other.

The challenges are released daily during Lent and offer different levels of engagement to allow for individual circumstances, so people can choose what suits them best. There will be a complementary reflection, written by a different author each day, offering their take on that day's challenge, which can be a source of inspiration or insight, and there will be various ways for people to interact with 40acts via social media platforms if that's their preference. However you use these resources, we hope that they are a way for you and your church or group to experience more of what 'faith in deed' means.



Please use these materials in whole or in part, or just as a reference, or not at all. They are a gift from Stewardship, and feedback from churches and their

leaders indicates they work well together. Blessings throughout Lent!





## INTRODUCTION WEEK

Between the first few days of Lent (Wednesday 14 February to Saturday 17 February), why not hold a social occasion, maybe with pancakes to introduce the 40acts campaign and how your group may participate?

## This week's 40acts

Wednesday 14 February: Target

Thursday 15 February: Anon.

Friday 16 February: Deal

Saturday 17 February: After you





## WEEK ONE: FAITH IN DEED v FAITH ALONE

### → Introduction

James is a challenging book that places discipleship and deeds at the forefront of the faith. Chapter 2 challenges us to see there is a deep connection between faith and deeds: one cannot thrive without the other. As we step into this passage be ready to be challenged and encouraged to live out the faith we profess.

### → The aim

- To discover the link between faith and deeds.
- To explore the things that help/hinder our faith being expressed through deeds.
- To make a commitment to express the generosity of God to other people through our deeds.

### → Preparation

You'll need a sheet of paper for each group of two or three and some pens. Each group will be recording how they felt about being generous and what might have stopped them.

### Activity/icebreaker

10 minutes

In twos or threes share some personal experiences of moments in your life when you have stepped out in generosity. It could have been a kind word, lending money, giving away possessions or giving your time sacrificially. Nominate a scribe and write down how it made you feel stepping out in this way? What were your hesitations? How was your generosity received?

After a few minutes feed back to the whole group.

### Read

5 minutes

#### **James 2:14-26**

*What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.'*

*Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*

*You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.*

*In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As*

*the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

### Reflection

10 minutes

James does not pull any punches as he makes us reflect on our own behaviour. The illustration the author uses is one we can relate to today. In a broken world where people live below the poverty line and homelessness is on the increase we can often face this situation. But what do we do as followers of Jesus in response? James is certain that faith alone is dead; it is useless. A belief in God that does not transform how we live our daily lives is merely an accessory.

The two Old Testament characters spoken about in the passage proved their faith in God by their actions: Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son and Rahab gave safe passage to the Israelite spies. Their actions, based on their faith in God, are what made them famous among the Jews.

Our faith in God may be personal, but it can never be private. Our generous God has showered us with love, kindness, grace and many other blessings. Our response to such a generous God is to live a generous lifestyle; our faith in God should transform our actions and lead us towards good deeds.

This passage challenges us to put our money where our mouth is, to step out and do good works and generous deeds because of our faith in Jesus. Let us make a commitment today to respond to God's goodness by being generous to others.



## Focus – faith v. deeds argument

Naturally James makes the point that our actions are important, but only because they speak of a deeper work. James is not hinting at a works-based gospel where we strive and perform good deeds in order to be saved. Verse 17 or verse 24 when read in isolation leads us towards a works-based salvation. However in light of the whole passage we can see that James is trying to emphasise the importance of living transformed lives because we have been saved. James is writing to Christians, who are already saved, and he encourages them to live differently because of the salvation they already have.

Note that James has made a huge point in 2:10: *'For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.'* Salvation by works is not possible, because God's glorious standard is perfection and we have all fallen short (Romans 3:23). Thinking we can be saved by works is a snare and unbiblical – the rest of the New Testament argues that it is by grace that we are saved (1 Timothy 1:9; Romans 3:20–26; 5:6–8; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 3:4–5). However, on a human level it can seem to make sense – if a mistake is made then it has to be paid for by making up for it in other areas. Even then this theory is flawed on a human level because the person we have hurt or offended has to agree that we have done enough before we are back in good standing. How would we ever know, and what if the other person was unjust?

The truth is we could never make it up to God. Our sin rightfully deserves separation from God because He is so holy and so perfect. We are forever stained and no good works

will ever get that stain out; not even the sacrificial system of the Old Testament saved them from sin (Hebrews 10:4) – only Jesus could. A works-based gospel always has low estimation of sin in comparison to the holiness of God. This view decreases the power and necessity of Christ's death on the cross. If we could work our way back into God's good books, why then would He send His one and only son? It is because we could never make things right.

Jesus died in our place, so that through trust and faith in Him we would be set free. This is grace: an undeserved gift. But grace causes us to change. If we see what we have been saved from, how much it cost God and recognise it was our mistakes that put Jesus to death, then we will change. The actions stem from the faith, an outward mark of the inward work. Salvation by grace leads to good works.

## Questions 20 minutes

Vital questions:

- What in particular challenges you from this passage?
- James seems to have a heavy focus on deeds. How can we hold this in tension with being saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 5:6–8; 1 Timothy 1:9)?
- Is it the good deeds that secure our faith, or is faith in Christ enough?

Reflective questions:

- What are some of the things that hinder us from living a generous lifestyle and how can we overcome those barriers?
- Do you think there is ever a time not to step out and be generous, or are those thoughts and feelings just excuses?

- Clearly we cannot be generous to everyone we come across in our lives, so where is the balance? How do I know that I am doing enough?

Practical questions:

- Think about the spheres of your life – home, family, friends, work, church – and reflect: How can I better reflect the generosity of God in my daily life?
- How can we encourage one another to be more generous?
- What one thing do I need to do today to begin this generous lifestyle?

## Worship idea 10 minutes

Invite the group to listen to or sing these songs.

### 'In Christ Alone' – Stuart Townend

In Christ alone my hope is found,  
He is my light, my strength, my song;  
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace,  
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!

My Comforter, my All in All,  
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! – who took on flesh,  
Fullness of God in helpless babe.  
This gift of love and righteousness,  
Scorned by the ones He came to save:

Till on that cross as Jesus died,  
The wrath of God was satisfied –  
For every sin on Him was laid;  
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,  
Light of the world by darkness slain;  
Then bursting forth in glorious day  
Up from the grave He rose again!  
And as He stands in victory  
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,



For I am His and He is mine –  
Bought with the precious blood of  
Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,  
This is the power of Christ in me;  
From life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny.  
No power of hell, no scheme of man,  
Can ever pluck me from His hand:  
Till He returns or calls me home,  
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

**'For the Sake of the World' – Bethel  
Live ft. Brian Johnson**

I'm laying down my life  
I'm giving up control  
I'm never looking back  
I surrender all  
I'm living for Your glory on the earth

This passion in my heart  
This stirring in my soul  
To see the nations bow

For all the world to know  
I'm living for Your glory on the earth

For the sake of the world burn like a  
fire in me  
Light a flame in my soul for every eye  
to see  
For the sake of the world burn like a  
fire in me

For every knee to bow down  
For every heart to believe  
For every voice to cry out  
Burn like a fire in me

For every tongue to confess  
You alone are the King  
You are the hope of the earth  
Burn like a fire in me

**Pray**  
5 minutes

---

Lord God, we thank you for your  
unfailing kindness and generosity to

us. Thank you for your son, Jesus,  
who gave everything for us to  
welcome us into your family. Help us  
to grow in generosity. Help us to see  
the needs of others and give us  
wisdom to respond accordingly. God,  
please transform our hearts that we  
would long to show our faith to  
others by our good deeds.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

**This week's 40acts**

- Monday 19 February: Favourite
- Tuesday 20 February: Chocolate  
Tuesday
- Wednesday 21 February: Brand new
- Thursday 22 February: I can...
- Friday 23 February: Streets
- Saturday 24 February: Prompt





## WEEK TWO: KEEPING FAVOURITES v WELCOMING ALL

### → Introduction

We all have favourites and preferences, and in one sense it is normal. Favourite foods, music, hobbies, places to go or ways to relax. The list goes on. But what about when it comes to people? Often we can gravitate towards certain people, but is that how we should live our lives as Christians?

### → The aim

- To learn the importance of welcoming all people as God does.
- To see our own bias and favouritism.
- To be changed to welcome, love, accept and be generous to all.

### → Preparation

Create some 'would you rather...' scenarios either on individual cards or jot them down on your phone. Here are a few to get you going. Would you rather:

- Live in a place where it is always hot or always cold?
- Be poor with lots of friends or rich with no friends?
- Eat your favourite meal for every meal for the rest of your life or never eat it again?

### Activity/icebreaker

10 minutes

Would you rather? As a group take it in turns to answer the 'would you rather...' questions. Ask each person why they chose one and not the other. Allow for brief discussion before moving onto the next one, and keep today's topic in mind.

### Read

5 minutes

#### **James 2:1–13**

*My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, 'Here's a good seat for you,' but say to the poor man, 'You stand there' or 'Sit on the floor by my feet,' have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

*Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?*

*If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbour as yourself,' you are doing right. But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' also said, 'You shall not murder.' If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.*

*Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment*

*without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

### Reflection

10 minutes

James brings an apt challenge in chapter 2. Favouritism has always been an issue and is ever present in our world today. Celebrity culture, the idol of self and popularity, the need to be needed and the desire to be known and accepted pervade modern society. With the slogan 'It's not what you know, it's who you know!' etched into our minds we have been trained to favour those with wealth, power, status, skills and charisma. Sometimes excuses are made for favouring those people: 'I was just being kind', 'making friends' or 'well they deserve honour...don't you know who they are?' Would we say the same and act the same with the homeless person we pass by, or the work colleague that frustrates us, or members of the church we have written off?

Equally there is a selfish part of us that just wants to form cliques and remain with the safe few people that are known and trusted – the tea and coffee or bring-and-share lunch after church come to mind as we frantically get our food and seek out our friends we haven't seen since Sunday.

Perhaps James is inspired by the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:46–48 (NLT): 'If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even

*as your Father in heaven is perfect.* Father God is perfect and shows no partiality. We are to be like Him in character: welcoming, accepting and valuing all.

Today's passage ends by reminding us that we should show mercy to others as we have been shown incredible mercy and grace by God. Let us quit judging by appearance, status, skills and wealth and begin seeing the heart and showing mercy.

## Questions 20 minutes

Vital questions:

- Is favouritism a bad thing? James labels it as a sin, but did not others in the Bible have favourites? Discuss. Remember Jacob and Joseph (Genesis 37:2–3).
- How do you think we should split our time between welcoming everyone and safeguarding time with friends, family and self?
- Favouritism is always a choice to put someone first and therefore a choice to put others lower on our priority list. How can we practically change this mindset?

Reflective questions:

- Is it wise to welcome everyone and be generous to all even if we don't know what they are like?
- Share with the group a time when you have found yourself caught up in favouritism. Why did you favour that person? How was it perceived by others?
- Have you ever been like the poor man in the James passage – overlooked because someone more 'favourable' was present? How did it make you feel?
- What hinders us from welcoming and treating all people alike?

- How easy is it to be generous with our time, money, gifts, presence of mind, etc, with people we would not class as close friends? Remember, Jesus says even sinners love their friends; our call is for something higher.

Practical questions:

- Take a few moments to reflect on the favourites in your life. What would God say to you about people?
- Discuss in twos: what are the types of people you overlook? Why do you overlook them? Make a plan together to get rid of favouritism.

## Worship idea 10 minutes

Invite the group to listen to or sing these songs.

### 'Like an Avalanche' – Hillsong United

Beautiful God  
Laying Your majesty aside  
You reached out in love to show me life  
Lifted from darkness into light

King for a slave  
Trading Your righteousness for shame  
Despite all my pride and foolish ways  
Caught in Your infinite embrace

And I find myself here on my knees again  
Caught up in grace like an avalanche  
Nothing compares to this love love love  
Burning in my heart

Saviour and Friend  
Breathing Your life into my heart  
Your word is the lamp unto my path  
Forever I'm humbled by Your love

Take my life  
Take all that I am

With all that I am I will love You  
Take my heart  
Take all that I have  
Jesus how I adore You

And I find myself here on my knees again  
Caught up in grace like an avalanche  
Nothing compare to this love love love

### 'All Who Are Thirsty' – Brenton Brown

All who are thirsty  
All who are weak  
Come to the fountain  
Dip your heart in the streams of life  
Let the pain and the sorrow  
Be washed away  
In the waves of His mercy  
As deep cries out to deep (we sing)  
Come Lord Jesus come

## Pray 5 minutes

Heavenly Father, thank you that you show no partiality and welcome all. Thank you that because of Jesus anyone who comes to you for forgiveness will be saved. Thank you, Lord, for showing us how to live right and treat others. Loving Lord, help us not to pick favourites or to honour certain people more than others. Help us by your Holy Spirit to see people as you see them and to make the choices to value all people equally. Lord, transform our hearts that our actions may too be transformed. We ask it in your name, Amen!

### This week's 40acts

Monday 26 February: Fairtrade  
Tuesday 27 February: Fling the doors  
Wednesday 28 February: Inside  
Thursday 1 March: Home-grown  
Friday 2 March: Impact  
Saturday 3 March: Indifference differences



## WEEK THREE: SPEAK FIRST v THINKING FIRST

### → Introduction

Have you ever taken a moment to think about the things you say throughout the day? We use words for all different reasons: to communicate information, to encourage, to cheer up, to empathise and show understanding and to make others laugh. But sometimes we use words to discourage, tear down, mock, abuse, insult, offend, and sometimes our words are just purely meaningless. There is power in the words we say, both for good and for evil.

### → The aim

- To recognise just how powerful our words can be.
- To explore ways of using the tongue for good.
- To learn to be controlled in what we say.

### → Preparation

Prepare a few cards for a game of charades. Make three or four different lists of films, TV shows, famous people, books or actions. Once you are happy with your lists create a few cards either using a computer or writing each list on separate pieces of card.

### Activity/icebreaker

15 minutes

Charades always breaks the ice. It is interesting to see who keeps on guessing and blurting out answers and those who take a while to think. First split the group up into two or three teams and take it in turns to play charades. One member of the

group will be given a card or piece of paper with a few different things to act out while the rest of the team guess what is being acted. See how many you can get in 60 seconds – and remember the actor cannot speak or point so they'll have to be creative!

### Read

5 minutes

#### *James 3:1–12*

*Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.*

*When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.*

*All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

*With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made*

*in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*

### Reflection

10 minutes

The tongue is a powerful instrument. Our words can have great effects on others, either for good or for evil. In this chapter James reminds us just how much power we wield with our words: 'Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark' (verse 5). Most of us can recall a time when words cut deeply. Those words, often spoken once, reiterate within our minds and cause more damage. It is equally so with the incredible feeling of being encouraged, spoken to kindly, thanked for an action. Words are powerful and can have great influence. Yet consistently using our words for good is difficult.

'No human being can tame the tongue' (verse 7). Humankind has learnt how to tame and control all sorts of animals, but still no one has mastered the tongue. Such control and persistence is needed to keep our words pure, polite, helpful, encouraging and truthful. From a young age most are encouraged to think before speaking; however without the correct filter the thought process only pollutes the words further. It is necessary to really THINK: is it True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary and Kind? If what was about to come bursting forth from our lips does not tick the box on all five fronts, then we must either be

silent or seriously rephrase what we were about to say.

James knows that to THINK first before we speak requires self-control, which is why he gives us great incentive to watch what we say. Today's passage ends with a heavy challenge. One moment our tongues spew out evil: words used to belittle, to discourage, to spread rumours, to speak untruths, to make great prideful boasts; and the next minute we begin to praise God, to pray and ask for help, to offer wise advice, to share faith with a friend or colleague. James calls out this dichotomy: *'My brothers and sisters this should not be! (verse 10)*. Evil and good cannot flow from the same source. Hear the call today. Think first and decide in advance how you will use your tongue – for evil or for good.

## Questions 15 minutes

---

Vital questions:

- Has there ever been a time in your life when the words someone spoke had a profoundly positive impact on you? (If you feel brave enough) What did they say and how did it affect you?
- Have you ever experienced the negative effect of words? How do those words, comments or moments make you feel?

Reflective questions:

- What is more important to you: what is said, how it is said, or who said it?
- Why do you think James places such a high importance on what we say?
- Verse 2 says that anyone who is never at fault in their speech is perfect. Do you agree or disagree?

- James says the tongue corrupts the whole body and is set on fire by hell (verse 6). What does he mean? (Check out Proverbs 18:21, Proverbs 21:23, and Matthew 12:34–37 for more on our words.)
- Do you think before you speak? (If you answered too quickly, perhaps you don't...)
- How would your life be different if you filtered all that you said using the THINK process (True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind)?
- One of the best ways to be generous and wise with our words is to share our faith. What stops us from speaking about Jesus to our friends and colleagues?

Practical questions:

- Can you identify situations, circumstances or people that cause you to be more careless with your words?
- What could you put in place today to help you think first before speaking?

## Worship idea 10 minutes

---

Invite the group to listen to or sing these songs.

### 'From the Inside Out' – Hillsong United

A thousand times I've failed  
Still Your mercy remains  
And should I stumble again  
I'm caught in Your grace  
Everlasting  
Your light will shine when all else fades  
Never ending  
Your glory goes beyond all fame  
  
Your will above all else  
My purpose remains  
The art of losing myself  
In bringing You praise  
Everlasting

Your light will shine when all else fades  
Never ending  
Your glory goes beyond all fame

In my heart and my soul  
Lord I give You control  
Consume me from the inside out  
Lord  
Let justice and praise  
Become my embrace  
To love you from the inside out

Your will above all else  
My purpose remains  
The art of losing myself  
In bringing You praise  
Everlasting  
Your light will shine when all else fades  
Never ending  
Your glory goes beyond all fame

In my heart and my soul  
I give You control  
Consume me from the inside out  
Lord  
Let justice and praise  
Become my embrace  
To love You from the inside out

Everlasting  
Your light will shine when all else fades  
Never ending  
Your glory goes beyond all fame  
And the cry of my heart  
Is to bring You praise  
From the inside out  
Lord my soul cries out

In my heart and my soul  
Lord I give you control  
Consume me from the inside out,  
Lord, let justice and praise  
Become my embrace  
To love You from the inside out

Everlasting  
Your light will shine when all else fades  
Never ending  
Your glory goes beyond all fame



And the cry of my heart  
Is to bring You praise  
From the inside out  
Lord my soul cries out [x2]

### **'Great Are You Lord' – All Sons and Daughters**

You give life, You are love  
You bring light to the darkness  
You give hope, You restore  
Every heart that is broken  
Great are You, Lord

It's Your breath in our lungs  
So we pour out our praise  
We pour out our praise  
It's Your breath in our lungs  
So we pour out our praise to You  
only

You give life, You are love  
You bring light to the darkness

You give hope, You restore  
Every heart that is broken  
Great are You, Lord

It's Your breath in our lungs  
So we pour out our praise  
We pour out our praise  
It's Your breath in our lungs  
So we pour out our praise to You  
only

And all the earth will shout Your  
praise  
Our hearts will cry, these bones will  
sing  
Great are You, Lord

### **Pray** 5 minutes

---

Father God, thank you so much for  
the gift of being able to  
communicate. Lord, we recognise

that there is real power within what  
we say. Forgive us Father for when  
we have used our words destructively  
and negatively. Help us to grow in  
self-control and learn how to tame  
the tongue. Inspire us, Lord Jesus, to  
use our words creatively and  
generously to encourage and bless  
others. Holy God, help cleanse us  
and make our mouths pure that we  
might give you the praise and honour  
you deserve. Amen.

### **This week's 40acts**

**Monday 5 March:** Sticks and stones  
**Tuesday 6 March:** Persist  
**Wednesday 7 March:** Whinge tin  
**Thursday 8 March:** Out of the blue  
**Friday 9 March:** Magnify  
**Saturday 10 March:** Valued





## WEEK FOUR: OUR AMBITION v THEIR PROVISION

### → Introduction

Ambition is great when used well. Ambition can pull people together; ambition can focus the mind to achieve things that were once before thought impossible. Ambition with the right focus is powerful. Equally, ambition can be damaging and detrimental. The one who chases a promotion at the expense of their family causes great pain. The one who always has to be better belittles those around them. The one who strives for perfection can place unrealistic expectations on others. The one who is consumed with their goals can become bitter and frustrated at anything that may hinder. James has a lot to say about our ambition and motives.

### → The aim

- To learn to recognise selfish ambition and how to deal with it.
- To understand that godly wisdom requires true humility.
- To shift focus off of ourselves and onto others.

### → Preparation

For this session all you will need is plenty of pens, small slips of paper and a hat or bowl.

### Activity/icebreaker

15 minutes

Today's icebreaker is Empires. Unfortunately for this game you will need a game leader who will not play but oversees the game. Each player is given a slip of paper and a pen. Players then secretly write down a famous actor, musician, or celebrity

(or, if you prefer, Bible character?) on the slip of paper. The slips of paper are put into a hat or bowl and mixed. The game leader takes out each slip one by one and reads out the names on the slips. At this point anyone can jump in and guess who wrote that name; if they guess correctly then that person joins the guesser and they work as a team. The idea is to be smart and quick. The person with the biggest team, or empire, at the end wins.

### Read

5 minutes

#### **James 3:13–4:10**

*Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such 'wisdom' does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.*

*But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.*

*What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with*

*wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

*You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God?*

*Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:*

*'God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble.'*

*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

### Reflection

10 minutes

The world we live in focuses on 'self' and 'now'. How often we get upset because something didn't go 'my way'. In the world of work and business we are encouraged to reach for the top, doing whatever it takes to progress. In sport we celebrate the individual talent over the team performance. In relationships we look for what works for me and makes me happy. This skewed focus could not be further from the biblical way of living. James highlights some themes that we know too well but often do not practise and overlook.

Firstly James points out that true wisdom comes with humility. Wisdom



and knowledge are very different – Miles Kington cracked it when he said that knowledge is to know that a tomato is fruit, but wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad. Wisdom is not necessarily knowing all the facts, or the Bible references, or the theory of how to succeed or have a happy life. There is a difference between knowing and applying, and wisdom is applied knowledge. Wisdom has no need to brag or show off; and a truly wise person sees themselves as a life-long learner with a long way to go.

The passage escalates: *‘For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice’ (verse 16)*. Everyone falls into the trap of envy and selfish ambition – it is human nature – but we cannot make that excuse any longer, for anyone who is in Christ is a new creation and no longer governed by their human nature but by the Spirit (Romans 8:9–11). James is able to call us to a higher standard because it is obtainable! His advice is to pray, evaluate the motives behind actions and check our perspective: if we are full of selfish ambition we make ourselves enemies with God. A focus on self puts us out of kilter with the Creator of the universe and causes rifts within our communities and relationships.

So what then is God asking us to do? God is asking us to check our motives, bringing them into alignment with His desires so that our actions may truly reflect the loving, caring, kind, gracious, generous God that we worship. God is calling us to live a generous life, giving freely as we have received. A generous life is focused on putting others ahead of ourselves and rooting for them instead of chasing our own desires.

## Questions

15 minutes

Vital questions:

- In pairs, come up with your best definition of wisdom and share with the group. What do you like/dislike about other definitions shared?
- Do you agree or disagree with the statement ‘James tells us that ambition is always bad’? Why?
- What are the things that cause us to be envious, and how can we guard against it? (As a start, James 4:3 speaks about motives.)
- Read James 3:17–18. How important are each of the qualities listed by James? What does he mean by submissive?

Reflective questions:

- How can we have a healthy balance of succeeding in our own personal goals without becoming selfish?
- Chapter 4:1–2 suggests that most quarrels stem from our own selfishness; do you think this is true? Would we fight less frequently if we were other-focused?
- Can you be a Christian and be enemies with God? (Read James 4:4–6.)

Practical questions:

- Take a moment to write down any areas of life where you may have selfish ambition – it could be a work goal, use of free time, or wanting your children or church to do certain things. Discuss with someone you trust and ask ‘How can I keep these ambitions in check?’
- Who in our community should we have a greater focus on? What can we do as a group to bless these groups?

## Worship idea

10 minutes

Invite the group to listen to or sing these songs.

### ‘Living For Your Glory’ – Tim Hughes

What good is it to gain the whole world

But lose your soul?

What good is it to make a sweet sound

But remain proud?

In view of God's mercy, I offer my all

And take my life, let it be everything, all of me

Here I am, use me for Your glory

In everything I say and do, let my life honour You

Here I am living for Your glory

The road I'm on that leads nowhere without You

And the life I live that finds meaning and surrender

In view of God's mercy, I offer my all

And take my life, let it be everything, all of me

Here I am, use me for Your glory

In everything I say and do, let my life honour You

Here I am living for Your glory

Seeking first the kingdom

Seeking first the kingdom of my Lord [x2]

And take my life, let it be everything, all of me

Here I am, use me for Your glory

In everything I say and do, let my life honour You

Here I am living for Your glory [x2]

Seeking first the kingdom

Seeking first the kingdom of my Lord [x2]



## 'Solution' – Hillsong United

It is not a human right  
To stare not fight while broken  
nations dream  
Open up our eyes, so blind  
That we might find the mercy for the  
need

Singing  
Hey now  
Fill our hearts with Your compassion  
Hey now  
As we hold to our confession

It is not too far a cry  
Too much to try and help the least of  
these  
Politics will not decide if we should  
rise  
And be Your hands and feet

Singing  
Hey now  
Fill our hearts with your compassion  
Hey now  
As we hold to our confession

Whoa-oh-oh  
God, be the solution  
Whoa-oh-oh  
We will be Your hands and be Your  
feet

Higher than our circumstance

Your promise stands  
Your love for all to see  
Higher than our protest lines and  
dollar signs  
Your love is all we need

Hey now  
Fill our hearts with your compassion  
Hey now  
As we hold to our confession

Whoa-oh-oh  
God, be the solution  
Whoa-oh-oh  
We will be your hands and be your  
feet [x2]

Only You can mend the broken heart  
And cause the blind to see  
Erase complete the sinner's past  
And set the captives free  
Only You can take the widow's cry  
And cause the heart to see  
Be the Father to the fatherless  
Our Saviour and our King

We will be Your hands  
We will be Your feet  
We will run this race for the least of  
these  
In the darkest place we will be Your  
light  
We will be Your light  
We will say [x2]

Whoa-oh-oh  
God, be the solution  
Whoa-oh-oh  
We will be Your hands and be Your  
feet [x3]  
We will run  
We will run  
We will run with the solution [x4]

## Pray

5 minutes

Father, we thank you for Jesus. We thank you that in Jesus we are forgiven and brought into a relationship with you. We thank you that in Jesus we see the best way to live. Help us, God, not to be selfish or absorbed in our own goals. Lord, please help us to see the needs of others and to respond appropriately. Help us to bless others first. God, please keep our motives in check; may they remain pure. Allow us to grow in humility as we journey on with You. Amen.

Monday 12 March: Attention  
Tuesday 13 March: Statement  
Wednesday 14 March: One Way  
Thursday 15 March: Package  
Friday 16 March: Lonely  
Saturday 17 March: Planet





## WEEK FIVE: DANGEROUS HOARDING v FRUITFUL GIVING

### → Introduction

It can be really tempting to keep things 'just in case'. The kitchen gadget, 'useful boxes', old phone chargers. Perhaps there are old clothes, letters, home goods (aka junk) that are held on to just in case. Maybe finances seem tight and so to give anything away seems too out there at this time, or you're storing up for a mortgage deposit, a rainy day fund, university or to buy new things for a child. We can all hold on to things with good intentions, but sometimes our mind-set is skewed and our focus is misplaced. The Bible teaches that there is real freedom in giving things away even when it hurts.

### → The aim

- To acknowledge the importance of stewarding what we have been given.
- To see the abundance of wealth that we really do have compared to others.
- To increase our generosity by making changes to how we use our resources.

### → Preparation

For this activity you will need internet access on a computer or encourage participants to use their phones or tablets.

### Activity

15 minutes

Often we compare our wealth against those wealthier than us and get fooled into thinking we do not have much. Today is a reality check,

an opportunity to compare against the rest of the world. Go to [globalrichlist.net](http://globalrichlist.net). Finance is a sensitive subject so do this activity privately unless you feel comfortable sharing. It's startling to see how well off we are and what our finances could do to make a positive change.

### Read

5 minutes

#### **James 5:1–6**

*Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.*

#### **James 1:9–11**

*Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. But the rich should take pride in their humiliation – since they will pass away like a wild flower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.*

### Reflection

10 minutes

This is a tough piece of Scripture. James brings harsh words to those hugely wealthy few in society: their bank statements judge them; their self-indulged lifestyle is a sign that they have missed the point and they have allowed others to be oppressed while keeping resources on hand for luxury, comfort and a rainy day. Thank goodness these cutting words do not apply to us...or do they?

In comparison to the rest of the world many of us are counted as wealthy. Often we see ourselves as poor or doing just fine, but in actual fact we are rich. If we have a roof over our head, money in the bank account, three meals a day and access to clean water at any time, we are richer than millions, if not billions, of people across the world. What we do with what we have matters.

Being generous and caring for others is an outward response and sign of the inward work that God has done in our hearts. We should not give because of guilt or because we think God will bless us for giving, but we should give because we have already received so much from our wonderful God.

The imagery in chapter 5 is rich and speaks of untapped resources: 'moth-eaten' and 'corroded' paint the picture of wasted money, material possessions and time; those things have been stored away too long and used incorrectly. They are now useless. The cries of the workers who have been poorly paid reach the ear of our God, and they should cause a response in us too. Part of the Christian lifestyle is to fight for

the oppressed and campaign on their behalf for change. As well as being generous with money we can be fruitful with our time, using it wisely to help others.

Time, money and resources are all currency, and we can choose how we spend them. It is not wrong to be wealthy, but what we do with that wealth matters to God.

James chapter 1 points out that at the end of our life wealth is meaningless; we are unable to take it with us and life is too fragile and unpredictable to store treasures and let them erode. Instead let us be wise and fruitful in our giving, not holding too tightly to the things we have been graciously gifted by God.

## Questions

15 minutes

Vital questions:

- When you think about your finances, would you say you are rich, poor, or about average?
- How does it make you feel that you are better off than over 90% of the rest of the world?
- Is it wrong to be rich or to have investments, savings, or property; surely this is storing up treasures on earth?

Reflective questions:

- Do you think there are any modern parallels to verse 4? If so, what should we do about it?
- James Emery White says, 'Every spending decision is a spiritual decision'. Do you agree? Why/why not?
- What do you think it means to be good stewards (of our time, money, resources)?
- As a group, what resources are corroding or being eaten by moths

right now? What are we going to do about that?

- What do you think James means in chapter 1:9–10? (Check out Luke 6:20–21 for more.)
- It is easy to give when feeling guilty. It is easy to give if we think God will give back to us. But how can we have the right motives when we give?

Practical questions:

- What resources do you have hidden away that could be used generously to bless others?
- What two decisions will you make today to become a more fruitful giver? It could be sacrificing those coffees or takeaways to enable you to give to charity, opening up your home to have people over, or being willing to stop and talk to someone that is downtrodden.

## Worship idea

10 minutes

Invite the group to listen to or sing these songs.

### 'God of Justice' – Tim Hughes

God of justice, Saviour to all  
Came to rescue the weak and the poor  
Chose to serve and not be served

Jesus, You have called us  
Freely we've received  
Now freely we will give

We must go, live to feed the hungry  
Stand beside the broken, we must go  
Stepping forward, keep us from just singing

Move us into action, we must go

To act justly every day  
Loving mercy in every way  
Walking humbly before You God

You have shown us what You require  
Freely we've received

Now freely we will give

We must go, live to feed the hungry  
Stand beside the broken, we must go  
Stepping forward, keep us from just singing

Move us into action, we must go

Fill us up and send us out  
Fill us up and send us out  
Fill us up, send us out Lord [x4]

Acting justly, loving mercy  
We must go, we must go  
To the broken and the hurting  
We must go, we must go

We must go, live to feed the hungry  
Stand beside the broken, we must go  
Keep us from just singing  
Move us into action, we must go

### 'When I Survey' – Isaac Watts

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

## Pray

5 minutes

Lord God, thank you for all that you have given us. Everything we have is a gift from you. Sorry, Father, for when we have been selfish with our



time, money and possessions.  
Forgive us, God, for when we have stored up treasures on this earth and have failed to be generous. Change our hearts, Lord, that we might be more like you – loving, generous and kind. Father, you gave your one and only Son so that we could be free;

help us too, Lord, to give all that we have for the benefit of others, knowing and trusting that as we give You will provide for our every need. Amen.

#### This week's 40acts

Monday 19 March: Waste not

Tuesday 20 March: Collective

Wednesday 21 March: Plan

Thursday 22 March: Reality check

Friday 23 March: Release

Saturday 24 March: Extravagant





## WEEK SIX: KEEPING FACE v VULNERABLE FAITH

### → Introduction

It can be difficult to put ourselves out there. Whether it's going for a job interview, trying to make new friends, opening up a conversation to share about faith, offering to pray for someone, speaking up in an uncomfortable situation or being kind to someone in need, it can be tough. It takes courage and trust in God to step and try something different. James finishes his letter with an important reminder: prayer is powerful and fundamental for us to grow.

### → The aim

- To recognise that prayer is a powerful tool at our disposal.
- To learn the importance of vulnerability.
- To grow in stepping out to be generous and bless others.

### → Preparation

The icebreaker is kind of a variation of speed dating, about getting to know someone better, so you might have to prepare your meeting space to allow people to move about quickly and easily. You may decide this is best just standing, or it could be done around small tables or sitting opposite each other in a long line. Be creative with the space but enable the group to speak in pairs. You will also need paper and pens for our prayer activity later.

### Activity/icebreaker

15 minutes

Get To Know You. Divide up into pairs within the space that you have.

You have 90 seconds to talk within your pair and get to know each other better. After 90 seconds, stop the conversation no matter where you are at and move on to another person to make a new pair. You now have 90 seconds to get to know this person better. Repeat one last time and then gather together.

Discuss your experience: did you get to know someone better? Did you pick questions carefully to make the most of your time? Would you rather speak or listen first? How did it feel being cut off when the time was up?

### Read

5 minutes

#### **James 5:13–20**

*Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

*Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.*

*My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns*

*a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.*

### Reflection

10 minutes

As this letter comes to a close we are reminded of the fundamentals. Hear the tone of the writer in verses 13 and 14: to James it is a no-brainer. Are you in trouble? Pray. Are you happy? Praise. Is anyone sick? Pray for healing. These simple things we know we should do but often struggle to do. This passage is encouraging us to rediscover the power of prayer and praise. Prayer brings perspective and positions God in His rightful place; when we pray we admit our own weakness and begin to rely on God. Interestingly, praise also sets God in His proper place as we see that all blessings come from Him. Praise is our response to a gracious and loving God, while prayer is a response in recognition of our frailty and inability to achieve without God.

There have been many theories about what prayers God listens to and which ones are effective. James overlooks all of them and places only one condition – righteousness (verse 16). The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Have you ever felt like your prayers just echo around an empty room? Do you ever feel that your prayers go unheard, unanswered? Sometimes the voice in our head pipes up – ‘It’s because you aren’t good enough’ or ‘You don’t read the Bible enough’ or ‘You do THAT sin...that’s why God isn’t listening’.

Throw those thoughts away from now on; they are lies! God has promised that anyone who has faith



in Jesus Christ IS righteous (Romans 3:22). Therefore, if we have faith in Jesus, the Bible tells us that our prayers are powerful and effective. We might not see the answer right away, but God is listening and working behind the scenes. James reiterates this point in verse 17: 'Elijah was a human being even as we are.' There are no heroes, no elite Christians, no super spiritual people, no certain people that God will work through. He will answer anyone's prayers. Some of us have looked up to Christian celebrities or pastors, worship leaders, mentors, friends for too long and felt we could never be like them. The Jews did this with Elijah and James says Elijah was a normal person; he had no power other than the power of prayer. It is God who did the miracle; Elijah just asked for it. There is no ranking system. Just take a risk and offer to pray for that person on the train or in the coffee shop; maybe you'll be the one with a powerful story to share if you put your faith out there.

Finally, the letter encourages us to open up and allow ourselves to be vulnerable. It can be hard to share what's going on beneath the surface, and even more difficult to share about our flaws, but James instructs us to confess to one another (verse 16). This is not to keep tabs on our friends' sins, but rather to break out of the individualist mind-set and work together. When we share our faults and fears with others we can be accountable and grow together. It is with this in mind that the passage ends with bringing back those who have lost their way. If we have made a strong bond and journeyed together we can challenge from a place of love to bring them back. It can be risky and requires vulnerability, but it's worth it to see someone come back to God!

So why not put yourself out there? Decide to be open and vulnerable, take a risk in praying for others and world situations, and step out and speak to that person you know who's going down the wrong path.

### Questions 15 minutes

- Take a moment to share some experiences of answered prayers. Do those times encourage you to pray more?
- What stops us from praying and worshipping more than we currently do? What changes can we make in order to pray and worship more regularly?
- What about prayers that aren't answered – whose fault is that, God's or mine?
- Do you have any Christian role models? What is it about them that makes you look up to them? How do you think they got to where they are today?
- Why do you think James encourages us to confess to one another?
- Why do we find it hard to be vulnerable and share our faults/weaknesses?
- Should we be open and vulnerable around everyone? Explain your answer.

Practical questions:

- What tips can you share that help you step out and put yourself out there?
- What's the best way to talk to a friend who is going away from God?
- How can we make prayer more of a natural reflex and enjoyable habit rather than a last minute resort/tick-box exercise?

### Worship idea 10 minutes

Invite the group to listen to or sing these songs.

#### 'Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)' – Hillsong United

You call me out upon the waters  
The great unknown where feet may fail

And there I find You in the mystery  
In oceans deep my faith will stand

And I will call upon Your name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise, my soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine

Your grace abounds in deepest waters  
Your sovereign hand will be my guide  
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me  
You've never failed and You won't start now

So I will call upon Your name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise, my soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders  
Let me walk upon the waters  
Wherever You would call me  
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander  
And my faith will be made stronger  
In the presence of my Saviour [x6]

I will call upon Your name  
Keep my eyes above the waves  
My soul will rest in Your embrace  
I am Yours and You are mine

#### 'How Great is Our God' – Chris Tomlin

The splendour of the King, clothed in majesty  
Let all the earth rejoice



All the earth rejoice

He wraps himself in Light, and  
darkness tries to hide  
And trembles at His voice  
Trembles at His voice

How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God, and all will see  
How great, how great is our God

Age to age He stands  
And time is in His hands  
Beginning and the end  
Beginning and the end

The Godhead Three in One  
Father Spirit Son  
The Lion and the Lamb  
The Lion and the Lamb

How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God, and all will see  
How great, how great is our God  
Name above all names  
Worthy of our praise  
My heart will sing  
How great is our God [x2]

How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God, and all will see  
How great, how great is our God  
How great is our God  
How great is our God  
How great, how great is our God [x2]

### Prayer activity

#### 5 minutes

---

As part of stepping out, encourage everyone to write down on a piece of paper an area they would like to step out in – it could be speaking about their faith, being generous, buying a coffee for a homeless person, offering prayer to a friend, stepping out in a gift/new role at church, etc. Now take it in turns to pray for someone else. Why not try praying out loud if you haven't before? Start as you mean to go on.

Next, give some space for the group to pray through the themes from this series (you may need to remind them) as well as an opportunity to pray for people and situations.

Finally, close in prayer:

Thank you, Lord, for our time together this evening. Thank you for the reminder that prayer is important, powerful and effective. Father God, help us to grow in trust and confidence to be vulnerable and step out in faith wherever you may lead us. Help us not to give up on anyone, and grow our love for all so that we might bless and encourage others. Lord God, we trust you to fill us with your Spirit to enable us to live differently. In Jesus' name, Amen.

#### This week's 40acts

Monday 26 March: Witness

Tuesday 27 March: Servant

Wednesday 28 March: Debrief

Thursday 29 March: Unseen

Friday 30 March: Mercy

Saturday 31 March: Delivery



## Acknowledgements

### Author

Sam is a volunteer youth worker, has a degree in Contextual Ministry and is passionate about making the Bible accessible to all. Sam is married to Naomi and lives in Essex.

### Editor

Debbie Wright

### About Stewardship

We help people give. Since 1906 Stewardship has provided advice, guidance, inspiration and practical tools to make it easy for people to give easily and tax effectively.

Stewardship giving accounts are currently used by over 25,000 people in the UK with more than £58 million distributed to charitable causes from Stewardship accounts every year. Over 19,000 registered churches, secular and Christian charities and full-time Christian workers are currently supported with Stewardship.

Stewardship is a charity that helps people to give. If you would like to find out more about how we can help you to give then visit

[www.stewardship.org.uk/give](http://www.stewardship.org.uk/give) or find us at

[www.facebook.com/stewardship](https://www.facebook.com/stewardship) or

[www.twitter.com/stewardshipnews](https://www.twitter.com/stewardshipnews).

