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discussion questions

Add Verbs questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with a group.

In the Bible, “Christian” is a noun, and nouns need verbs. To be authentically Christian you must ADD VERBS to your faith. Let’s search for verbs to add to our faith, starting in the book of James.

- 1** “DO!” might be the least obvious verb, but it is potentially the most important. Read James 1:22-25. What role is God’s Word meant to play in our lives? What do you do to ensure that you are not just a person who hears God’s Word, but one who does what it says?
- 2** CHRISTIANITY IS *doable*. While Paul is known for emphasizing the truth that salvation is not the product of merit, James emphasizes the truth that salvation produces ministry. Read James 2:14-17. James is not saying we add deeds to our faith; he is saying our actions give evidence whether or not our faith is authentic. How does authentic faith stir us up to *do* good works? Share some examples.
- 3** Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and Titus 3:4-8. What you really believe is proved by how you actually behave. We are not saved by doing, but we are saved for doing. Why is this an important truth to understand in our relationship with God?
- 4** “DO” MATH... *Knows ≠ Does*. Read Luke 10:36-27. Growing disciples is more than gaining insights. Simply gathering people together to listen about being better does not guarantee anyone is becoming better. It is easy to be deceived into equating information with transformation. With that in mind, how do we know that someone really understands something?
- 5** “DO” MATH... *Do > Don’t*. Read James 1:26-27. Holiness is more than the absence of badness; it is the presence of active goodness. In what ways is following Jesus more about what you pursue than simply being about what you should avoid?
- 6** “DO” MATH... *Doing = Blessing*. Read Titus 3:14. Jesus said “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). James said, “They will be blessed in what they do” (James 1:25). In the upside-down economy of the kingdom of God we are enriched by investing in others. How have you seen this truth lived out in your life or someone else’s?
- 7** Rick closed the message by asking us this question: *So how do you do?* He also reminded us that Renew Weekend especially blesses those who did not cause the problem and cannot fix the problem but are the most vulnerable because of the problem. In addition to giving financially, what can you personally and/or our Community Group DO on a regular basis to partner with one of these ministries to help bring more of heaven into our world?



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1 Rick began this message by talking about how people in our world often post pictures taken with a celebrity. Why do people often do that? As followers of Jesus what should shape our understanding of who is important?

2 **LOVE is an active verb.** Authentic love is manifested by concrete actions, and for James, it begins with how we decide who is important. **Read James 2:1-4.** In the ancient world you could tell who was “important” based on their clothes. What are some examples of things that are on most people’s “unpublished list” of what makes some people more important today? What should we focus on instead of focusing on differences?

3 **Love welcomes anybody.** God didn’t make anyone to be laughed at, looked down on, or left out. God does not love selectively. That is why anybody is welcome at The Hills Church (see James 2:1). How should that impact the way we treat and interact with everyone we encounter at The Hills Church?

4 **Love values everybody.** **Read James 2:5-11.** You cannot herald grace and practice partiality. The favoritism James is specifically addressing is social prejudice, and he points out that the poor are not the ones most opposing the church. Why is this such a big deal to God? How does James illustrate this point and how should it impact our view on partiality?

5 **Love de-mercies nobody.** **Read James 2:12-13.** Love will denounce sin, but love will never deny mercy to a sinner. A Christian minus love does not realize what a sinner he is. Why is it so important for us to grasp this truth in our own lives? How should it influence the way we extend mercy to others?

6 **LOVE says “different” makes no difference.** Rick closed by sharing this song lyric, “*Everyone needs compassion. The kindness of a Savior. Everyone needs forgiveness. A love that’s never-failing.*” And by reminding us that everyone needs to see what that looks like in verb form. We are meant to be a community that models to the world a new definition of “important.” Share some examples of positive ways you’ve seen this displayed in our church. What are some ways we can still grow in this area (what “adding” do we need to do)? Spend some time praying about these things.



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1 James chapter 4 provides an explanation for why we have so many “*disturbances of the peace*” and a suggestion for how we can give “*peace a chance*.” James says fighting is present because a very important verb is absent. **Read James 4:1-2.** What does James say is the root cause of fights and quarrels between people? In what ways have you noticed this to be true?

2 We justify our fights by putting the blame “*out there*,” but James says the war without always originates from the “*war within*.” What does James mean when he says our “*desires battle within us*”? Share some examples of this battle.

3 WE MUST *commit to submit*. We fight because we want most what we want most. “*Have it your way*” works with burgers, not with life. Jesus modeled a different way (the three temptations were all about getting what he wanted) but he resisted this temptation all his life by humbling himself and submitting to God. James calls us to do the same. **Read James 4:7a and 10a (compare with 1 Peter 5:5-6).** What does it mean to “*submit yourselves to God*” and why is it our responsibility for adding this verb?

4 SUBMIT... by standing against the real enemy. **Read James 4:7b.** A lot of fights would stop if we would focus instead on the true enemy (see Ephesians 6:11-12). James

is helping us see that spiritual warfare is ultimately a stand against Satan to start a war within us. How does Satan aim to start a war within us? What are some practical ways we can resist the devil?

5 SUBMIT... by staying close to God. **Read James 4:8a.** Deeper intimacy with God is not something you are going to drift into. God never refuses a sincere invitation, so what are you doing to welcome deeper fellowship with Him? Share 2-3 practical things you do on a regular basis to “*come near to God*.”

6 SUBMIT... by starting to clean our hearts. **Read James 4:8b-9.** James closes with some really strong verbs: wash, purify, grieve, change. What does this tell us about the nature of true repentance, both its actions and attitudes? How does your repentance usually compare to this description?

7 WE TRUST the gift of lift. “*Submitting*” is a hard verb to add because “*admitting*” is a hard thing to do. But there is good news: God gives grace to the humble. **Read James 4:10.** What do you think James means when he writes that God “*will lift you up*”? In what ways has God lifted you up when you have come to him in total surrender?



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- 1** This whole series has been tied to the idea of adding verbs. Rick asked, “What is faith supposed to do when there’s nothing you can do”? **Read James 5:7-11.** At first glance, how is “wait” different than the other verbs we’ve talked about in this series? Would you describe waiting as an enjoyable verb?
- 2** We suffer from “wait loss.” Our culture in particular bows down to the god of “Now.” When you look at your day to day life, how has the pace of this world influenced your willingness to wait for things? In particular, how has developing technology affected your level of patience?
- 3** God specializes in “wait gain.” Our Father in heaven will allow temporary pain for eternal gain. He often slow cooks instead of microwaves. **Read James 1:3-4;** compare with **Romans 5:3-4.** What do these passages teach us about the process of spiritual growth?
- 4** Wait actively. Despite our perception, wait is not a passive verb. Actively waiting means doing what you can while trusting God to do what you can’t. **Re-read James 5:7** - compare with **Psalm 37:7a.** When you’re dependent on things outside your control, what are things you can do as you wait on the Lord?
- 5** Wait purposefully. **Listen to James 5:10** paraphrased by the Message: “*Take the old prophets as your mentors. They put up with anything, went through everything, and never once quit, all the time honoring God.*” The prophets never quit on God because they knew God’s love would never quit on them. **Read Psalm 33:20-22.** How can waiting purposefully shift our perspective from twiddling our thumbs to lifting hands in worship and prayer?
- 6** Wait expectantly. **Read Romans 8:24-25.** Rick said, We must grow in our capacity to interpret life through the lens of hope. **Re-read James 5:7a.** Our hope is built on the idea that Jesus’ return will be worth the wait. So what does it mean to wait expectantly for Jesus to return? How could living an expectant life change us at work or at home? How would it impact the way we talk to people about Jesus?



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- 1** The greatest misuse of prayer is not ever praying. One might think that Christians do not need to be told to add “pray” to their list of faith verbs, but the reality is that most Christians affirm, defend and advocate prayer more than they actually pray. Why is that often the case? Why is prayer essential for healthy faith?
- 2** **“PRAY” is the all-time verb!** Prayer is not our last resort; it is our first response. We should lay every moment of our lives before the Lord (**Philippians 4:6**). Read **James 5:13-18**. According to James, when should we pray? Which of these situations are easier/harder for you to pray?
- 3** **PRAYER...verbalizes the worth of community.** James just assumes that his readers are part of a local church- that they have a spiritual family they can count on. Private time in your prayer closet is important, but we all need friends who will talk to Jesus about us and for us- especially when we are struggling with sin. Why is there more value in praying with other believers than simply praying by yourself?
- 4** **PRAYER...verbalizes the truth of sovereignty.** The purpose of prayer is not to get God to surrender His will to yours. Prayer is the deliberate act of surrendering our will to His. Read **Matthew 6:10**. How does this truth impact the way you should pray and live?
- 5** Sometimes we have no doubts about what God longs to do, like when it comes to freeing people from sin and darkness. But sometimes we are not sure what God wants, like when it comes to praying for the sick. So, we live with this tension: God still heals, but not everyone. How should this influence the way we pray and live (consider the example of Jesus in **John 12:27-28**)?
- 6** **PRAYER...verbalizes the myth of impossibility.** **Ephesians 3:20** reminds us that **“God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine.”** God is not bound by earthly realities and limitations. The way things are does not mean that is the way things have to stay. How should this change the way we pray? Share an example of how you have seen this truth be a reality in your life or at our church.
- 7** **PRAYING is saying “God does verbs!”** Think through the verbs this series has focused on from the book of James (**Do, Love, Submit, Wait, and Pray**). Which one do you need to most ADD to your faith today? Spend some time talking about it and then ask God to ADD it today.