

## “Be Yourself”

Sermon from Sunday 22 September

### Discussion Questions

First: As a group, read James 1.14-27

Second: Decide as a group which questions will be the most interesting/provocative/helpful for you. Take as many or as few as you like.

#### Comprehension

1. The beginning of James' letter weaves together several ideas that set up the content later in the book. In verses 14-21, James is showing two ways we can be, both of which employ a metaphor of conception, pregnancy, and birth. What are the two ways of being, and what are the verses/words/images that describe each one?
2. When James says “be a doer of the word”, what word is he talking about?
3. Why do the two ways of being (question 1) matter for being doers of the word? How does starting with be-ing affect the way we might think about our do-ing?
4. Unpack as a group the metaphor of a mirror that James uses to describe the difference between being a hearer only versus a doer. How does the metaphor illustrate the key difference between these two?
5. James is weaving together many ideas in these verses. Given the focus on who we are (two ways of being) and being a doer of the word, why do you think speech and anger (vv19, 26) are such significant behavioural markers of who we are?
6. Though the sermon didn't get to it, discuss how being a doer of the word might relate to the “true religion” in verses 26-27.

#### Application

7. Who do you see when you look in a mirror? Be honest: list the good, and the bad. Then, who do you see when you look into the mirror of Scripture/the gospel—that is, who does the word of God say that you are? What's the difference between these two reflections?
8. Where in your life (situations, relationships) are you most likely to forget “your natural face”—the reflection you see in the Gospel? Imagine a scenario you're likely to be in over the next few days. How would it go differently if you “persevered” in the “law of liberty”?
9. We often think of sin as something we do or don't do, but James expands the moment: the predatory temptation of desire (v14), the implied intercourse, and the conception and birth of sin which grows into death (15). Could this image help you resist places in your life where you perhaps give in to desire without thinking about it?