



AWAKEN TO MATURITY

April 18 | Discussion Guide

(~90 minutes needed)

Begin with Scripture, silence + prayer (5-10 minutes)

Read Psalm 141 to begin your time together. *This week's topic is "Awaken to Maturity" so the purpose of this reading is to help us take the same perspective of the Psalmist who sees difficult circumstances as occasions for God to shape us and fashion us into the kinds of people He has created us to be.*

When finished reading, spend three minutes together in prayerful silence. Know that God is in your midst. Where two or three are gathered, so too, is God there. This time and space is sacred. It's valuable. It's not a waste.

Finally, after a few moments of quiet centering, have a specified person in the group pray for your time together.

Recap from last week as a large group (5 minutes)

Spend some time talking about what resonated with you from your devotions this past week.

- What stood out to you?
- How did these devotions deepen your faith in God?
- How were you challenged to grow?

To get the most out of this series, we are encouraging each person to do the daily devotions found in the James book, to engage with the sermon each week, and to come prepared for group time with thoughts, reflections, and prayerful considerations.

The goal is to meet God in His Word, to allow the Scriptures to soak into the core of who we are, and then to metabolize the words of God into acts of love in whatever scenario we find ourselves.

Split into smaller co-ed groups for Scripture and a debrief of the sermon (30-40 minutes). *There are several questions here, pick a few out for your group to discuss.*

- What resonated with you from this week's sermon? What challenged you?
- When you think about your commitments, where you spend your time, where you spend your money...what would those things say about what you prioritize? Is maturity into Christlikeness one of them? Why or why not?
- **Read James 1:2-18.** What is James saying in these verses? What's his main point? What does he want you to walk away with knowing and believing? How do **Romans 5:3-5** and **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** relate?
- **Re-read James 1:2-4.** How have you seen growth in your life as a result of hardship? In what ways has this occurred on a spiritual level? Are there any areas of "trial" that you are going through right now that God may be using to grow you into the image of Jesus? If not, have there been areas of trial in recent months?
- How do you view trials and hardships in your life? Do you find that you view trials as occasions for joy and that their purpose is maturation? Or do you view them more as interruptions to your happiness? Or something altogether different? Explain.
- **Read James 1:5-8.** When you go through trials, do you think to ask God for wisdom as you go through those difficulties? To help you see them as opportunities for growth? Explain.
- Could a lack of asking God be because you don't view God to be good? Could a lack of an answer be because you ask double-mindedly? When have you seen this to be the case for you?
- **Read James 1:13-15.** Do you find temptation easier to succumb to whenever you are pressed and pressured by outside circumstances? When have you experienced this in your life?
- How does the Gospel, the Good News, weigh in on this discussion of maturing into Christlikeness?

Transition back to one large group for recap (5-10 minutes)

- What were some things that came of your individual group discussions? Have each smaller group share something that stood out from their discussions.

Transition to smaller same-gender groups for accountability (10-20 minutes) *Ask some of the questions below to hold one another accountable. Don't feel like you have to use this list like a checklist. If needed, feel free to stop, dive deeper, and pray over one another.*

- Since this week's topic is maturity into Christlikeness, in what ways have you acted immaturely this week (such as in your sexual life or towards your spouse, kids, or friends?)
- What has prayer time been like for you this week?
- What has your time in Scripture been like this week?
- In what other ways have you wrestled with temptation this week?

Spend some time in prayer for one another.

Finish with intercessory prayer in your split groups (10 minutes)

Like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared.