

#TargetPractice: What does James say a Christian should give?

Hand out a candy to each kid. Tell them that if they keep it without eating it until the end of the lesson, they will receive another one.

What do you think about when you hear somebody talking about giving to someone else? Usually money or things, right? Sometimes that is what is needed. Maybe someone doesn't have enough food to eat for one reason or another. Or maybe they can pay a bill. Or they need some clothing like a coat in winter. Those are all things we can give to help someone out and show God's love.

But is that all we can give? What is said in our announcements each week. "Be generous with our time, stuff, money, and influence."

I think the idea of giving **stuff** and **money** is an easy thought, but not always easy to carry out. Many times as people gain more stuff and money, they may be tempted to keep more for themselves. Maybe because they feel they worked hard for it and don't want to share. Or maybe it makes them feel important to have lots of things.

But James tells us we need to **share** what we have with others who need it instead of keeping every bit of it for ourselves. That doesn't mean we can't have things or save money, but it does mean we need to be willing to help those in need.

Our giving also includes being willing to share our **time** helping others as well as showing love and kindness to others. Treating others with respect and doing the right thing.

This brings us to a word you might have heard before...**integrity**. Do you know what that is? (being trustworthy, doing the right thing even when no one is watching)

Let's look at it this way. What is this? (apple) How do I know it is an apple? Well, I picked it up from a store shelf that was labeled 'apples'. Several of them were in a bag and the bag was labeled 'apples'. It looks like an apple. It feels like an apple. It smells like an apple. If I take a bite of it, it tastes like an apple.

Everything about it says, "apple". The inside matches everything on the outside.

Now, let's think about ourselves. Does your inside (beliefs) match your outside (actions)?

For example, let's imagine that you hear of someone walking out of a grocery store with a candy bar they didn't pay for. What do you think of that? It's wrong. We shouldn't steal things from others. That is your belief (inside).

Now what if you are walking behind someone and they drop a 5 dollar bill? You are faced with a decision. What should you do? It would be easy to just put it in your pocket. It might be fun to go

get something at the store. Or you could run ahead, get the person's attention, and give them the money back. That is your action. (outside) Which decision matches your inside belief?

James tells us we should give integrity to others...our actions need to match our beliefs.

The last thing I want to talk about has to do with the treat I gave you at the beginning of the lesson. Who still has theirs? What word could we use to describe waiting for something even though you really want it? (**patience**)

James also tells us we should give others our patience, even when they may be irritating us. Think about the patience God has for us. Have you ever made a decision/mistake that God wouldn't approve of? Does He still love you? Does He forgive you when you ask? What if you make the same mistake again?

God created us and is perfect. I can imagine how frustrated He can get with the constant mistakes of humans, especially when they know better. It has to be frustrating when people continue to turn away from Him and speak against Him. But He shows patience.

So how should we react to someone who continues to do something that annoys us? Showing patience instead of becoming angry or complaining about them shows God's love. (Now this doesn't mean we should be patient with someone that is hurting us or doing wrong things. Those things need to be addressed, even if you need to get an adult to step in.)

James also talks about giving our **prayers** to others....but we will be talking about that more in an upcoming series...

Pray

Give extra and treat for those who had patience. Also give an apple to remind them of integrity.