



# season of creation creation time creationtide

*with*



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**Week 1:**

## Imaginative prayer:

### taking ourselves into the Epistle of James 2:1-10, [11-13], 14-17

Using this as a type of imaginative contemplation, imagining ourselves into the passage. In this case the challenge from James.

An alternative way to “hear” and respond to the reading, moving it from beyond our heads and into our bodies and feelings. Using the questions to enable deeper reflection and consider our response to the challenges James poses. This can be used as a tool for personal prayer or in a group (online or in person).



Writer: Miriam McHardy  
Writer and Mum

Take a moment to settle yourself, sitting in a comfortable position.  
If listening, try to do so with your eyes closed or lowered if preferred.  
If online, turn off your camera, if you prefer.

Now read through, or listen to, the passage being read slowly, paying attention to any words or phrases that stand out for you.

What is stirring your imagination?

What are you feeling in response to the words?

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favouritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in **dirty** clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? Is it not **the rich** who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.[ For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. **For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy;** mercy triumphs over judgment.]

**What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.**

At the end of the passage remain still for a moment, inviting God to be present in your attention today.

Now read, or listen, to it again, allowing your imagination to place yourself in the passage as if James is speaking directly to you.

Consider:

Where are you?

What can you see?

What can you smell?

What else can you hear?

Who are you in the story? Are you James, speaking?

Perhaps you are listening, or the speaking is going on in the background.

What are you doing as you hear this?

Who is with you? Are you in a group of strangers or with friends?

In your imagination allow yourself to be fully present in the scene as James speaks.

James' doesn't hold back in his critique of words over action

**"Can faith save you?"**

**"...judgement will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy"**

Notice how you are responding to James' challenges here.

Do you feel any emotions?

- Guilt or discomfort?
- Curiosity or encouragement?

Notice in your memory if any examples are arising of times when you have treated people differently because of status or appearance? For what they have or who they are?

What about the rest of Creation? Have there been times when you have said the right things about care of Creation but failed to follow through in your actions?

Invite God to be with you in your feelings, both positive and negative.

Notice the times when you put faith into action.

Acknowledge the times you have noticed but failed to.

Sit with this, thanking God for the positive memories and asking forgiveness for the moments missed.

Move your prayer now into the present moment.

Reflect back on James' reminder **“you shall love your neighbour as yourself”**.

Ask God to help you notice who your neighbours are today.

- Is it only those who live close by?
- Who are my neighbours globally and how do we connect with them today in this time of COVID?
- How do we love and act for those most affected by the climate emergency?
- How might God help us recognise all of creation as our neighbour, not only human beings?
- How might love of neighbour lead me to encourage my neighbour here in the UK to take action for the environment?
  
- Take a moment. PAUSE
- Notice how you are feeling.
- Are you drained or filled with energy?
- Do you feel challenged or encouraged?
- Ask God to be with you in your day. To notice where you can take action, giving you the gifts and skills you will need for this work.

Bring your prayer time to an end. Take a moment to thank God for all that has been revealed to you today and all that will be given.