

THE BOOK OF JAMES

JAMES: A FULLY ALIVE FAITH

SESSION 1 - James 1:1-18

DISCUSSION (Use your Bible and the video content for discussion)

1. According to verse 1 and the video content, who was the author of this letter? Based on the teaching, what reasons are given by scholars to support this claim?
2. According to verse 1, who is the intended audience of this letter? The Greek word *diaspora* means “to be scattered abroad.” Review this section in the video teaching to discuss the meaning behind this phrase to the Jewish Christians.
3. In James 1:2-4, we know that persecution is hitting Christ followers everywhere. James is a Church father and spiritual father during this time, and he is breathing life into their current circumstances before he addresses his major concerns. According to this passage, how should we react when times get tough?
4. I don’t know about you, but the last thing I want to hear when going through a major crisis is to be joyful and consider it a great opportunity when it seems like everything is falling to pieces. However, perspective is all about where the eyes are focused. Using the deep sea fishing trip story in the video as an example, reflect on a time where you had to stop and change your perspective on a situation, and when doing so, it brought you peace, understanding and opportunity.
5. Based on James 1:5, the Greek word *sophia*, takes the meaning of wisdom to a much deeper level. Simply put, wisdom in this passage means “What is the mind of God on this specific matter?” How can that perspective bring a new expectancy when asking for God’s wisdom in the future?
6. In James 1:6-8, a challenge is made to the reader that the promises hinge on expectancy. Discuss why this level of faith can be so difficult at times.
7. According to James 1: 9-11, God doesn’t have a problem with people having things. His issue is when things have control over people. This leads to pride and greed. Give some examples of how believers can maintain spiritual health when faced with the tension between being Kingdom minded vs. being of this world.
8. Earlier in the chapter, we learned that God uses trials to help us grow. But in James 1:12-15, James focuses the attention to temptation. Discuss the difference between the two. Why is it important not to blame our temptation on God?

WEEKLY TAKEAWAY / CLOSING CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

What is one concrete thing that you can immediately put into practice to approach personal trials differently?

Why is it that God's perspective and our perspective (on the same situation) can be so different?

What *sophia* wisdom are you in need of currently? When is the best time for you to regularly speak to God about these situations?

LIVE IT OUT!

The Book of James emphasizes the "fully alive" or active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.

Conversation: Some of us complain a lot. What if we followed James and started considering our troubles "pure joy?" Who could you contact this week - by email, phone, text, or in person - and instead of complaining, tell them about the way God is helping you grow?

Journaling: Take time to write about your current struggles. Be honest and don't hold back. Complain all you want. But then go back to your journal the next day and make notes in the margin about how God is making you "mature and complete."

Reading: Read through the Book of James this week. Spend some extra time meditating on the 1st Chapter of James. Take time to reflect on this week's teaching.

Prayer: Consider others you know who are going through difficulties. List them in your journal and ask God to help them through their challenges.

Influence: Have you seen spiritual growth in someone else who has gone through trials recently? Be intentional about letting them know how you have witnessed God in them.