

# James

A STUDY ON THE BOOK OF JAMES

## UPSTATE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

### WEEK 1 - JAMES 1:1-11

#### LEADER NOTES

This week, we begin our study on the book of James. James is written to early Christians, former Jews, who had been dispersed across the ancient world because of the persecution in Jerusalem. These Christians had experienced numerous trials and sufferings because of their faith in Christ. James tells us that trials not only grow our faith, but they show us who God is.

Please be sure to connect with individuals who have been suggested to your group from Getting to Know You. Remember that as Group Leaders, you are responsible for the discipleship of those in your group. Let's continue to go Deeper together.

Please continue to complete the Gospel Connection's and Conversations form. You can find the form [HERE](#).

You can find other sermons from our Teaching Pastor's [HERE](#).



# COMMUNITY

*OPEN THE GROUP BY CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER AND ALLOWING A MOMENT FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE A PLACE TO BELONG.*

**START THE GROUP BY TAKING PRAYER REQUESTS, FINDING OUT ABOUT EVERYONE'S WEEK, AND PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER.**

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

*SHARE A STORY OF SOMEONE YOU KNOW WHO WENT THROUGH A DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCE. SHOULD BELIEVERS RESPOND TO TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS DIFFERENTLY THAN UNBELIEVERS? WHY OR WHY NOT?*

# SCRIPTURE

**TAKE THIS TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE TOGETHER. REMEMBER, THE GOAL IS NOT JUST TO CONVEY INFORMATION, BUT TO HELP PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP LEARN TO READ THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES.**

## THE POINT

**TRIALS IN OUR LIFE REVEAL GOD'S KINDNESS TO US.**

### **James 1:1-11**

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:

Greetings.

2 Count it all joy, my brothers,[b] when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass[c] he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), James 1:1–11.

## STUDY NOTES

*This week we begin our study in the book of James. The book of James is a practical and concise letter written by James, the half-brother of Jesus. Once a skeptic, James was transformed when he encountered the risen Savior. As the leader of the first-century church found in Jerusalem, he writes to the dispersed Jewish believers, offering them heartfelt greetings and encouragement. You can almost feel the emotion of a pastor writing to those who were at one time members of his local church. They were dispersed, or “scattered among the nations,” because of the persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem.*

*James immediately sets the tone for his readers in their walk of faith, urging them to view trials as opportunities for growth. Our journey in this life isn’t promised to be smooth but paved with potholes and detours that test our faith. James reminds us that the trials we encounter can develop perseverance, character, and spiritual maturity if we approach them with the right attitude.*

### ***Trials Grow Our Faith***

*Trials are like the crucible in which our faith is tested and refined. They challenge the very core of our beliefs, pushing us to confront our doubts and fears. Yet, it’s within the depths of these trials that our faith finds fertile ground to grow. As we navigate hard seasons, difficult circumstances, and maybe even question what God is doing, we come to a place where our faith has the opportunity to grow. Each trial we face becomes another opportunity to deepen our dependence on God. Through trials, our faith transcends from mere belief to a living, breathing relationship with the Divine. We find ourselves grounded in trust and anchored in the assurance that, no matter the circumstances, God is with us, leading us ever closer to His heart.*

### ***Trials Show Us Who God is.***

*Trials serve as a lens through which we witness the goodness of God amidst adversity. In the middle of life’s storms, God’s goodness shines brightest as He*

*provides comfort, strength, and guidance. Even when circumstances seem bleak, His presence remains constant, offering hope and assurance. Through trials, we come to understand that His goodness isn't contingent on our circumstances, but rather it's an intrinsic part of His character, manifested in His unwavering love and faithfulness towards us. Even when we go through seasons brought on by our own sin and disobedience, God is there *with us and for us*. As we walk through trials, we discover God works all things together for our ultimate good, demonstrating His goodness in every season of life.*

### ***Trials Remind Us Who We Are***

*As we go through the difficulties of life, our limitations and desperate need for God's presence and guidance in our lives become evident. In the face of adversity, we often come face to face with our own inadequacies and weaknesses. Yet, it's in these moments of trials we are reminded that we do not have the strength or wisdom to get through the circumstance on our own. Trials strip away the illusions of self-sufficiency and reveal the truth of our reliance on Him. These inadequacies should compel us to turn to God and acknowledge our need for His comfort, provision, and direction. Trials serve as humbling reminders of who we are in relation to God and how deeply we need Him in every aspect of our lives.*

For more resources, click [HERE](#).

# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *Although it may sound overly simple to state God is good, why is this specific quality a necessary truth to embrace when going through a difficult circumstance?*
- *What does this passage reveal about God's goodness? How do trials show us who God is?*
- *How would you describe the difference between trials and temptations? What is the result of each of these?*
- *In verse 4 James says, "And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." Unpack what this means. What does it mean for steadfastness to have its full effect? What does it mean to make us perfect and complete, lacking in nothing?*
- *What promises or benefits did James say result from trials? How do trials provide a pathway to Christian maturity? How do trials make you aware of your need for God?*
- *Two major struggles in relation to trials are doubt and comparison. How would you describe the struggle of doubt? The struggle of comparison? How can each of these struggles rob us of the joy we're supposed to have?*
- *What trial or temptation are you currently facing that you need God's wisdom for? How will you seek Him in this?*

# COMMISSION

**AS YOU WRAP UP YOUR GROUP, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EVERYONE KNOWS WE GO INTO THE WORLD ON MISSION FOR JESUS. USE THIS TIME TO FOCUS EVERYONE TO LIVE ON MISSION AS YOU LEAVE.**

- ***HOW CAN YOU USE THIS PASSAGE TO ENCOURAGE SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS STRUGGLING WITH TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS, OR TO SHARE YOUR OWN WITH ANOTHER PERSON?***
- ***HOW DOES STRENGTHENING OUR FAITH THROUGH TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS LEAD US INTO FURTHER OBEDIENCE TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH OTHERS? WHO DO YOU NEED TO PURSUE IN THIS WAY THIS WEEK?***