



LEADER'S GUIDE – FEBRUARY 3



HIGHLIGHT: *Primary Passage from Sunday*

James 1:1-12: James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

⁹ Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. ¹⁰ But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. ¹¹ For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.



EXPLAIN: *To Be Reviewed before the group gathering*

The book of James simultaneously reveals to us the glory of God as well as what He is calling us to do as followers of Jesus. James (the half brother of Jesus) gives practical advice for believers who are facing real life struggles, while encouraging us to lean into the character of God. James pulls no punches in his instruction; he writes with the heart of a pastor and the strength of someone who saw his brother killed, buried, and resurrected as he gives us a blueprint for life.



APPLY: For Group Discussion

1.) What is the opposite of fragile? What is something that grows stronger under stress? If they struggle to come up with one, give this hint: *How effective would a gym be if it did not have weights?* There are things in life that require stressors and challenges in order to learn, adapt, and grow. Certain things that stress produces strength. Though weights cause a temporary pain, it is what allows our muscles to grow. To remove the weights would prevent you from growing stronger. (Another example is your immune system)

2.) Read vv. 2-4. James tells us that trials are inevitable. How does he tell us we should approach these trials? We should “Consider it pure joy.” (As a leader, you may want to help them understand that joy is not about being “giddy” about difficult trials (e.g. losing a child, losing a job, etc), but it is about trust and gratitude based off of having a different perspective.) **How are we able to have this perspective on trials?** Our trials have a purpose. Like weights in a gym grow us stronger, trials in life grow us more into the image of Christ (holiness).

3.) Share a personal trial that in the moment you didn’t understand, but in hindsight you are grateful for?

4.) Read vv. 5-9. In the midst of trials, James tells us to ask for wisdom. How do we practically do this? Unlike knowledge, wisdom cannot be learned; it must be given. So, we must ask for it through prayer. Also, Proverbs 13:20 says that we should pursue wisdom in community. Practically, that looks like surrounding yourself with wise, Godly counsel. **As we ask for wisdom, we must not doubt. What type of doubt do you think James meant here?** In trials, questioning why something is happening is normal. The doubt that James is most likely referring to is doubt about God, not the specifics of a situation. Though we may doubt “Why this way” and “Why Now,” we must not doubt that God is in control and he is good. When we doubt our situation, Mark 9:24 is a great verse to show us how we can ask for God to help our unbelief.

5.) Read James 1:12 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. How does this encourage us in the midst of trials? Our hope and reward are not on this side of heaven. **Think about Jesus’ life and how does he perfectly illustrate this truth? (Philippians 2:5-12)** He endured the greatest of trials and received the greatest eternal reward.



RESPOND: Bringing the discussion to a point of action

For the final question, we would recommend either 1.) breaking out into smaller groups to discuss or 2.) asking the group to write the question down and think about it this week.

Think of a current trial you are in or a past trial that you are unsure of its purpose.

- How does your perspective of this trial compare to vv.2-4?
- How can you ask God for wisdom? What wise counsel can you discuss this trial with?

