

STUDY NOTES

JAMES: A FAITH THAT ENDURES

a series at New City Church

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message "Finding Wisdom in Trials" on 1/27/19 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: JAMES 1:1-11

FACING TRIALS IN A "NOW" CULTURE

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote this letter to the church which had been persecuted for believing in Jesus. It got so difficult that they were scattered throughout all the region. When James writes to the church, he tells them that they will face trials. He does not say "if", he says "when you face trials".

- *How does it make you feel to know that God says we will face trials?*

But how will we respond to trials when they come? If we act as if only the present moment—the now—matters, then we will feel crushed by fear, anger, or anxiety. Christians can, and will, struggle with those things, but everything in this culture reinforces that if you lose the things that make you happy HERE then you have lost everything.

Too often we try to use God to change our circumstances. Maybe God wants to use our circumstances to change us.

- *Why is it our natural reaction to try to use God to change our circumstances?*
- *Why does it make more sense that God wants to change us more than our circumstances?*

FINDING JOY IN TRIALS

James tells the church to count facing trials as joy. This doesn't mean that we fake being happy or ignore our feelings. However, we should consider it joy because suffering and trials can cause growth. Here are a list of things that trials can result in:

1. Humility
2. Compassion
3. Community
4. Freedom
5. Innovation
6. Wisdom

- *What is your reaction to hearing that James tells the church to count it joy when facing trials?*
- *How are we tempted to fake our joy in the middle of trials? What does someone need to do to find real joy rather than fake joy?*
- *Which result from trials do you most resonate with? Why?*

PERFECT WISDOM

The world's source for wisdom is self. The Christian's source for wisdom is God himself. Rather than living for the "now" world, we should live for the "new" world, where God is the source for our life. God promises that he will always be with us—even in trials. God promises to give us wisdom, but we have to ask him for it. True wisdom is knowing how to live for Jesus, and then doing it. Roger Ellsworth says it this:

Faith is not believing that God will do what we want done. Rather it is believing that God will do what he has promised to do.

- *Re-read the bolded point above. How have you treated faith as believing that God will do what you to be done?*
- *God promises to give wisdom to us when we ask. What can you do if you don't feel like he gives you wisdom?*
- *Pray with each other for wisdom from God in your life.*