

JIM

CLASS

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF JAMES

JIM CLASS, PART 1: NO PAIN, NO GAIN

Life isn't easy. We've all faced troubles, and if we're not careful, they can derail us and derail our faith. James knows this, so for his first *Jim Class*, James is going to challenge how we think about troubles and how the resistance of adversity stretches our faith muscles.

BIG IDEA: Your pain is not where God is absent but where He is most present.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

** Remember the goal is to use the questions to generate discussion, not to complete every one.*

1. Share a situation in your life which, at the time, felt impossible to get through and what you did in response.
2. When have you felt that God was not present for you, and how did you respond?
3. How do you normally react when everything in you wants to give up?
4. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read James 1:1.*

¹ This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the "twelve tribes"—Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings! James 1:1 (NLT)

5. Who is James? How do you think it would feel being Jesus' little brother? Chris said that James following Jesus is one of the best proofs that Jesus is who He says He was, because, "What would your brother have to do in order to prove to you that he is God?"
6. What situation are followers of Jesus in when James writes his letter?
7. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read James 1:2-4.*

² Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. James 1:2-4 (NLT)

8. Observe together how James tells the scattered believers to respond to trials. Does this perspective seem strange to you? What reasons does he give for this response? Compare James' response and the reasoning for it to these other references in Scripture. How do these other passages address trials and suffering? *Matthew 5:11-12, Romans 5:3-5, 1 Peter 1:6-7*
9. It seems that God uses trials in a pivotal role in producing endurance and maturity in us. Why do you think trials are so effective at this? How can someone go through trials and mature from them? How could they go through trials and not?
10. *Endurance* comes from the words *remain* and *under*. How can *endurance* and *perseverance* bring about character that is mature and complete? What does it mean to be mature and complete?

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11. Life is full of troubles, trials, temptation and suffering. How have the troubles that you have experienced brought you closer to (or pushed you further away) from God?
12. What are the external troubles and pressures that you are currently facing? How are they affecting your faith?
13. Consider this observation: *“Your pain is not where God is absent but where he is most present.”* How can you be a reminder of God’s presence for someone know who facing a great difficulty right now?

MOVING FORWARD

Philosopher Paul Tillich said, *“Suffering takes people beneath the busyness of life and reminds them they are not who they thought they were.”* What is something that you learned about yourself during your last difficult circumstance, and how did your difficulty provide a unique opportunity for that insight?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

James 1:2-4 (NLT)

