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# COMMUNITY GROUPS

## RIVERS CROSSING CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide

October 15, 2023

Foundations of Faith Week #2 / Pastor Paul Taylor

Trials and Temptations

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

### 1. Icebreaker Questions | If you could...

- If you could eliminate one thing from your daily routine, what would it be?
- If you could write a book guaranteed to be a best seller, what would you write?
- If you could choose a famous person to have dinner with, who would it be?

### **PLAN A FALL SOCIAL EVENT/GATHERING**

⇒ Take time to plan a social event during the Fall Quarter. This could take place during your regularly scheduled meeting time or in addition to your typical meetings.

Here are some suggestions: Enjoy a full meal together (whether at someone's home, a restaurant, or even a park), host a game night, hike together, gather around a fire pit, attend a local sporting event, or serve your community through organizations like Joshua's Place, Matthew 25, and City Gospel Mission.

Whatever you choose to do, the goal should be this – create an environment that's different from your typical group format and that helps you get to know one another better. Once you've planned your social event, make sure your group members have all the necessary details and put it on their calendars. Be sure to invite and share these event details with any person who was absent.

### 2. To what degree have trials and/or temptations impacted your life? How has your perspective on and/or experience with these been affected by your Christian faith?

## DIVING DEEPER

### 3. Read James 1:1-12 together and discuss the corresponding questions.

**James 1:1-12 (NIV)** – <sup>1</sup>James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. <sup>2</sup>Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup>Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup>Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. <sup>9</sup>Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. <sup>10</sup>But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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.

- a) James urges Christians to consider it “pure joy” when they face trials. Is joy a word you'd commonly use to describe your attitude and/or emotions when experiencing trials? If not, what word(s) would you use?

b) What reasoning does James give *in this text* as to why we should consider trials to be a source of joy?

c) When we're walking through a trial, what does it look like to "cooperate with God's growth process" as Pastor Paul shared? Do you have an example of how this has played out in your life? If you're willing, share about that.

"One sees great things from the valley; only small things from the peak."  
- G. K. Chesterton

4. Pastor Paul shared that the best things in life often come out of some of the darkest seasons of our life. Can you relate to this statement? If you're willing, share why.

a) Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11. Have any of your experiences with trials put you in a position to minister/care for others walking through similar trials? Explain.

**2 Corinthians 1:3-11 (NLT)** – <sup>3</sup>All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. <sup>4</sup>He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. <sup>5</sup>For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. <sup>6</sup>Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. <sup>7</sup>We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us. <sup>8</sup>We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. <sup>9</sup>In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup>And he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and he will continue to rescue us. <sup>11</sup>And you are helping us by praying for us. Then many people will give thanks because God has graciously answered so many prayers for our safety.

5. After addressing trials, James tackles our experience with temptations. Read James 1:13-18 together and discuss the corresponding questions.

**James 1:13-18 (NIV)** – <sup>13</sup>When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup>but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. <sup>15</sup>Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. <sup>16</sup>Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup>Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. <sup>18</sup>He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

a) Do you tend to blame God for the temptations you experience? Why or why not? What would James say about who's to blame?

b) Using this text, Pastor Paul shared the process by which temptation leads to sin: Temptation → Fantasizing → Moving Toward Sin → Act of Sin → Confession/Repentance or Death (Romans 6:23)

Was tracing this process helpful to you? If so, how?

Why does it matter that temptation isn't the same thing as sin?

## TAKING IT HOME

6. What's your biggest takeaway from this week's sermon and our group discussion? How can you put that into action this week?
7. **Group Prayer** | When it comes to walking through trials and overcoming temptations, community is one of most powerful means of grace that God has given us. If you're currently walking through a trial and/or battling temptation, how can your group members best support you? How can they pray for you right now?

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## RIVERS CROSSING - THINGS TO KNOW

1. 2024 Discipleship School | Discipleship School is a one-year program that helps Christians from all backgrounds become fully engaged followers of Christ. The school helps students learn to hear God's voice clearly, experience a full and free life, develop intimacy with God, develop Christlike living, and understand their spiritual gifting. For more information, or to apply for the Discipleship School, click on the link: <https://riverscrossing.com/discipleship-school/>
2. Serve at Rivers Crossing | One of the marks of a fully engaged follower is their willingness to invest into God's kingdom with their time, talents, and resources. We have opportunities to serve all throughout the week! Find the team that's the right fit for you and partner with us to create an environment for people to become fully engaged followers of Jesus. Learn more at <https://riverscrossing.com/serve-here/>