

# FAITH + WORKS

## JAMES 1:2-18



### OPENING

- Ask your group members if they've been facing any trials this week. Then find out if there is anything you, or anyone else in the group, could do to help them through.

### SERMON REVIEW

- Read James 1:1-18
- James makes it clear that the question is not *whether* we will face trials, but *when* we will face them.
- How should we deal with those trials? We should rejoice in them, let perseverance finish its work, ask God for wisdom, and have faith.
- Trials, when met with perseverance and faith, make us mature and complete. That is why we rejoice, because our focus is on the work of God instead of the difficulty of our circumstances.
- Happiness is an emotional result of our circumstances. Joy is a choice, or a perspective.
- In writing "let perseverance finish its work," James was making several points. Learning perseverance is not an inevitable result of hard times. We have to recognize the opportunity to mature, and faithfully follow the Lord through the trial. Also, we shouldn't just hang on until we make it out of the trial; James expects us to take advantage of the chance to persevere and grow.
- When we don't know how to persevere, we can ask God for wisdom and He will give it. Wisdom isn't information; it's information in action, as spiritual truth is applied to daily decisions. God offers us all the direction and guidance we need. So perhaps our prayer should be "Give me wisdom, Lord," rather than, "Get me out of this!"
- We cannot be double-minded when we ask for wisdom. To be double-minded is to ask for His help, then try to figure things out without Him. Or to ask for his advice, then question whether or not we should listen to it.
- It's our choice to allow the trials in our lives to define us or refine us.

### DISCUSSION

- How did this sermon impact you?
- What was your initial reaction to the command that we must rejoice in our trials? How do you think we are supposed to obey this command?

- Some argue that difficulties prove that either God doesn't exist, or that (if He does exist) He is neither good nor loving nor almighty. Based on this passage, how do you think James would respond to that?
- How do we "let perseverance finish its work"? What does that mean?
- Why should the doubtful, double-minded person not expect to receive anything from the Lord?
- What do verses 12-18 contribute to this discussion of suffering?
- With what are we rewarded for persevering through trials?
- Revelation 2:10 also states that, if we are faithful through suffering, Jesus "will give you life as your victor's crown." What is the "crown of life" exactly?

### CHALLENGES

- Continue reading, writing, and even memorizing the book of James.
- Complete the random act of kindness that was written on the paper you received this Sunday. If you already completed it, or if you didn't receive a paper, identify someone who might need your help enduring a trial and ask them how you could help.

### PLAN AHEAD

- The next sermon will be based on James 1:19-27. Be sure to check it out!