



DISCUSSION GUIDE

THIS WEEK: JAMES – “Faith Under Pressure”

GETTING STARTED

What is one thing you are thankful for this week and what is one thing we can pray for you this week?

Remind each other of our simple expectations for meeting together.

Why would you agree or disagree with the statement, "Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you respond to what happens to you"?

What are typical ways we respond when we are under pressure, experiencing trials?

QUICK REACTIONS

How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?

What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?

Did you disagree with something said, or what do you think should have been added or expanded on?

QUESTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

In James the church is experiencing persecution and have now become scattered throughout the Mediterranean. They are struggling and discouraged. In James 1, he begins by helping them gain perspective in the midst of trials, problems and discouragement. Dave points out three ways our trials and problems can become opportunities.

1. They can reframe our faith.
2. They can help us contemplate the eternal.
3. They can help reframe our misconceptions of God.

Of these three, which one may God be pressing on for you in the midst of your trials and problems? Why?

In what way have trials, problems, discouragement become the means by which God reframed your perspective on faith? How?

Who do you know is struggling with faith? In what way can we encourage and support each other in this area?

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE [James 1:1-18]

(Yes, these questions can seem silly, however good discussion and interpretation of the Bible begins with having a proper understanding of the basic facts; who, what, when, and where in the text.)

What can we make of the fact that James writes this letter and who he writes it to? (1:1)

What attitude did James tell people to exhibit when they are facing trials? (1:2)

What is produced when our faith is tested? (1:3-4)

What is God's response when we ask for wisdom? (1:5)

What effect does doubt have on a person when he or she prays? (1:6-8)

What will eventually happen to the wealth of a rich person? (1:10-11)

What reward awaits the person who perseveres under trial? (1:12)

From where does temptation come? (1:13-15)

How does sin start and end? (1:13-15)

From where do all good and perfect gifts come? (1:16-17)

How did James describe God's relationship with the people He created? (1:17-18)

QUESTIONS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT

Why, in your opinion, does God allow people to go through trials and difficulties?

How does a person's relationship with God change as he or she goes through trials and problems?

When do you find it hardest to pray?

With what doubts have you struggled concerning God and prayer?

How can doubting affect a person's prayer life?

In what way have material possessions disappointed you once you possessed them?

How would you explain to a ten-year-old why a person does something wrong or evil?

Why do we often blame God for tempting us when we sin?

What can a person do to stop an evil desire from becoming an actual evil act?

APPLY THE PASSAGE

What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?

What may God be asking you to change, do differently, repent of, pray about as a result of engaging with this passage?

How can we pray for each other?