

## HOPE HAS A NAME: WEEK 2

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE **EVERYDAY TRIALS**

Everyday Trials are not something we enjoy, but they can be an opportunity for spiritual growth. This week we want to allow the challenges of everyday trials to help us experience God. When we invite God to transform us in our trials, we grow in patience, strength, joy and hope.

When something bad is happening to you, something good can be happening in you. In this weekend's sermon, we were encouraged to "treat hoping as an acquired skill" to be practiced daily. There is no better practice ground for growing in hope than our everyday trials.

# DAY 1

Meditate slowly upon **James 1:2-3** and then make a list of your everyday trials.

*<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.*

#### **Make a list of your everyday trials.**

A trial is anything you didn't want to happen. John says, "many trials are small and petty" but these can be used to shape us into the likeness of Jesus. These are not the massive sufferings, but they are the slow internet, the disruptive child, the imperfect spouse, the belittling boss or the irritating co-worker. List three everyday trials you are facing and invite God to use them to transform you into the likeness of Jesus.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

# DAY 2

Prayerfully look back over yesterday's list of trials (feel free to add to it) and write out how you can "consider them pure joy." Make this the focus of your prayer today.

Father, God, I will consider \_\_\_\_\_ a joy today because \_\_\_\_\_.

*We think pure joy is having great circumstances regardless of our character. James says pure joy is having great character regardless of our circumstances. Circumstances come and go, character is forever. Pain is temporary, joy is eternal. God is in the character formation business. (Our everyday trials) are an opportunity to experience God's presence, an opportunity for self-awareness, an opportunity for change.*

# DAY 3

Take on one of the everyday trials from your list and answer these questions:

1. What are you feeling when faced with this trial?
2. Where might God be in this trial (not that he brought it, but that he can use it)?
3. In light of God's love for you, how might you welcome these small trials as friends?

Meditate upon this truth in **Romans 8:18-21, 26-30**:

*<sup>18</sup> I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup> For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God... <sup>26</sup> In the same way, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.*

*<sup>27</sup> And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. <sup>28</sup> And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. <sup>30</sup> And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

# DAY 4

As you face your everyday trials, which quality of the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-26**) can you be intentional to practice today? Put this word in a place you will see throughout the day.

*<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.*

# DAY 5

Look back over this week and celebrate how you faced your everyday trails differently with God's help. Say or write out a prayer of thanksgiving to God. Enjoy meditating upon **James 1:2-3** in the Phillips translation.

*When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance.*

*But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become people of mature character with the right sort of independence. And if, in the process, any of you does not know how to meet any particular problem he has only to ask God—who gives generously to all people without making them feel foolish or guilty—and they may be quite sure that the necessary wisdom will be given them.*