

James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith Week 2

*Last week we learned some valuable background information about the book of James. It is time to put our knowledge to work. Read through the entire book of James, keeping in mind the author, purpose, style and historical context of the letter. Then go back and take a closer look at **James 1:1-12**. Read it in the ESV and NIV before you begin to answer the questions.*

Look at **James 1:1-4**.

1. James will cover many topics of importance in his letter to the twelve tribes. Which one does he choose to start with first?

Why do you think James chooses to start with this topic?

2. What term of endearment does James use when addressing his readers? (1:2)

3. At the end of this workbook is a copy of the book of James for you to make notes on. With a yellow highlighter, mark every occurrence of the term “brother” in the book of James. How many times does it occur?

What does the frequent use of this endearment tell you about James and about those to whom he writes?

4. What do you think James means when he says to “count it all joy” when we meet trials?

5. What if James had written verse 2 as follows: “*Feel joyful* when you meet trials of various kinds...”? How is his meaning different than the meaning expressed above?

6. Apply: What makes it hard for us to find joy in the midst of difficulty? Is James telling us that we are sinful for finding trials to be difficult? Explain your answer.

7. According to **1:3**, what is the purpose of trials?

8. What word does the NIV use for *steadfastness*? (**1:3**)

From time to time during the study, we will look up the meaning of words from the text in the dictionary. A good online dictionary can be found at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>.

9. Look up *persevere* and *steadfast* in the dictionary and write definitions for them below that best fit the way they are used in James 1:

persevere:

steadfast:

10. What do you think it means to be made perfect through suffering? What does it not mean?

11. Look up “perfect” in the dictionary and note which definition best fits the context of **1:4**:

perfect: Based on the word definitions you have looked up, rewrite **1:2-4** in your own words:

12. Apply: How would developing steadfastness and perseverance change the way you live your life? How would it affect your relationships with those around you?

13. Look up the following verses and note what each teaches about trials or suffering:

**John
16:33**

**Romans
5:3-5**

**2 Corinthians
1:3-4**

**2 Corinthians
4:16-18**

**Hebrews
12:11**

What can you conclude from these verses?

14. Now read **1 Peter 1:6-7**. How do trials prove our faith is genuine?

15. Apply: How is having faith in what we “have not seen” a critical tool for persevering in times of trial? Describe a time of trial in which you have found this tool to have been needed.

Now look at **James 1:5-7**.

16. In **1:5-6**, what does James assure us we can ask for?

17. Look up the word *wisdom* in the dictionary and write a meaning for it below that fits with the context of **James 1:5**:

wisdom:

18. How certain is James that our request for wisdom will be granted?

19. Apply: When you are in a time of trial, is wisdom the first thing you ask for? Why or why not? What other requests do you tend to make first?

20. What warning does James give in **1:6**?

21. What word picture does James use to illustrate what a doubter is like? How is this an accurate illustration?

22. James says that the one who doubts is *double-minded*. What do you think he means by this? Fill in the chart below with what you think fills each of the double-minded man's minds:

Mind 1:

Mind 2:

23. Read **Proverbs 3:5-6**. How do its words offer a wise way to avoid double-mindedness?

24. Apply: Is there an area of your life in which you are double-minded, wavering between your own agenda and God's agenda? How can you apply **Proverbs 3:5-6** to that situation?

Now look at **James 1:9-12**.

25. In **1:9-11**, James points out two specific kinds of trials we can face: the trial of possessing little and the trial of possessing much. In what ways can each of these circumstances be trials? Write your thoughts below:

The trial of lowliness

The trial of wealth

What "exaltation" can the lowly brother boast in? (**1:9**)

What "humiliation" can the rich brother boast in? (**1:9**)

26. In **1:12**, how does James describe the one enduring trials?

27. Whose teachings do you think James is remembering when he says this? Look up **Matthew 5:11-12** to help with your answer.

28. Look up the word “blessed” in the dictionary and write a meaning or synonym for it below that fits with the context of **James 1:12**:

blessed:

29. What is our promised reward for remaining steadfast?

30. Apply: For the believer who is steadfast, the crown of life awaits. What “lesser crowns” do we seek to wear now, rather than waiting for the better crown to come? Specifically, how do women seek glory in this life? How is crown-chasing out of place in the life of the believer?

Wrap-up

What aspect of God’s character has this week’s passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is _____ shows me that I am _____.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

Close in prayer. Ask God to cultivate in you a desire for a crown of life – a treasure in heaven, rather than the earthly treasure of comfort, safety, wealth, or wellness. Ask Him for steadfastness and wisdom. Thank Him that “He who has promised is faithful.”

