

Discussion Questions  
James 1:1-12 NASB

1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings. 2 Consider it all joy, my brethren,  
when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete,  
lacking in nothing. 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all  
generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without  
any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7  
For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a  
double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. 9 But the brother of humble circumstances is to  
glory in his high position; 10 and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like  
flowering grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers  
the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich  
man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. 12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial;  
for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to  
those who love Him.

vv. 1-4

1. Pastor Mark teaches us that joy and happiness are not the same. How do you know when your own personal happiness is depleted? I mean how do you act when you are unhappy? Or how does your thinking change when you are unhappy? Talk about that?
2. In what ways do you test your body? For Pastor Mark it usually has to do with how much food he can eat at dinnertime. But seriously talk about a hike, or a triathlon or a long run prepping for a marathon or a rehab you had to do from an injury. Was their pain in this, but also joy. Talk about how this could be like what James is trying to teach the early church and us.

vv. 5-8

3. Pastor Mark quoted Proverbs 8:32-36 as he described that God will give us wisdom so that we can be joyful even in a great testing of our faith. Look carefully, what does the writer of Proverbs 8 equate finding wisdom with? (Hint v. 35) Talk about why Pastor Mark said that this "life" is important?
4. During difficulties Pastor Mark said our hearts risk getting hardened (less trust of God). Talk about what people do who are fighting against doubt and fighting to trust God. What actions do we see? How do they think differently about God and their situations?
5. Tell your own story of persevering through a hard time and fighting to trust God.

vv. 9-12

6. Pastor Mark says that it is important that our lives reflect our worship. Talk about why that gives glory when others see us in a trial but we're not falling apart spiritually, emotionally or physically?
7. Pastor Mark summarizes his sermon with these steps, a. Ask God for wisdom, b. Check the foundation of your heart where is your trust really?, and c. and wait patiently for your trustworthy God. Which of these three is hardest for you to do? Why?