

Living Whole in a Fractured World: A Letter from James

"Whole People are Resilient"

September 18-19, 2021

This provides about one hour of focused reading and discussion. Use the portions you find most helpful.

Open with an overview of the book of James by watching the **8-minute Bible Project video on James** at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qn-hLHWwRYY>.

1. Trials are a **fact of life**.

- In recent months, how would you rank the level of difficulty in the trials you are facing? Is it, for example, smooth sailing or are you battling some rough seas?
- Read **James 1:1-4** and **Isaiah 38:17**. What is something you've learned through a trial?

2. Intense joy is the prescribed **response**.

- Because the dispersed believers were experiencing tremendous trials, James challenged them to take a new attitude about it: pure joy. In your own words, what reasons does James give for adopting this attitude?
- Read **1 Peter 1:3-9**. What does Peter's perspective add to your understanding?

3. Trials **test our faith**.

- Read **John 6:28-29** and **Romans 5:1-5**. Why do you think God uses suffering to mature our faith? How do we discern when to embrace difficulties, or when we should make practical changes in our situation?
- How does reading **James 1:2-4** and **Romans 5:3-5** challenge the popular goal of chasing "happiness?" If my goal is to pursue holiness, even if that includes suffering, how would that change my perspective on life and adjust my priorities?

4. Testing of faith builds **endurance**.

- Building character doesn't happen overnight. How does taking the "long view" of life (marathon vs. sprint) help me to face difficulty? Read **1 Thessalonians 5:22-24** and **1 Corinthians 9:19-27**.

5. Enduring over time makes us **whole**.

- Read **2 Corinthians 11:24-26**, **Philippians 4:4-7**, **James 1:12**, **Isaiah 32:1-4** and **Revelation 21:3-5**. Discuss what these passages say about suffering and hope.

Close with a theme-related song:

- "Lord of Eternity" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-ZAQwXZ7YQ&list=RDu-ZAQwXZ7YQ&start_radio=1
- "Praise You in This Storm" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YUGwUgBvTU>
- "Your Will Be Done" <http://www.cityalight.com/yourwillbedone/>
- "It is Well" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5o9mP22V0>

If you have a prayer need, ask a friend or two here to pray with you, and to support you in prayer this week.