

3. Read James 1:3. What is the result or the benefit of facing our trials and the testing of our faith? The testing of our faith is a concept throughout the Bible. Read Genesis 22:1, Deuteronomy 8:2, 16, and 1 Peter 1:7. How do these passages help you to understand the purpose of testing? Have you experienced a trial that brought benefits to you, such as maturity or deepening of your faith?

DAY 3: Read James 1:5-8

1. What phrase in verse 5 is linked to verse 4? (*Note that James is using a literary technique of linking together clauses and sentences by repeating a word or thought.*) If we need wisdom in our situation, what can we do? Why? What will God do for us?
2. The need for wisdom is linked to verses 2-4. What connection do you see between wisdom and the process described in verses 2-4? The NIV Study Bible footnote says: “Wisdom is not just acquired information but practical insight with spiritual implications.” (See Proverbs 1:2-4; 2:10-11; 4:5-9 and 9:10-12 for more about wisdom.)
3. James 1:6 says “But when he asks, he must _____ and not _____.”
What is the condition to receive what we ask? (see also Hebrews 11:6) In verses 6-8, what description is given about the one who doubts when praying? (See also Matthew 8:25-26.) When I am praying, why do I find it hard to believe God will give me what I am asking? Think about a time in your life when you had doubts about God. What helped you through that experience?
4. What does James 1:8 say about someone who is double-minded? Look at Joshua 24:14-15; 1 Kings 18:20-21; 2 Kings 17:41; Matthew 6:24 and Mark 9:21-24. What do these verses indicate about being double-minded? In what situations in life do I find myself most likely to be double-minded? What is the remedy for double-mindedness?

To Dig Deeper: Start writing down what James teaches about faith and believing as we go through the book of James in this study.

DAY 4: Read James 1:9-11

1. Describe the two types of people found in verses 9-10. What are their circumstances? How should each person look at themselves?
2. In what sense does a poor person who is a Christian have a “high position”? (see Matthew 23:12, Galatians 3:28, and James 2:5) In what sense does a rich person who is a Christian have a “low position”? Consider what verses 10-11 indicate about those who are rich. How is being wealthy a trial?
3. How do verses 9-11 relate to facing the kinds of trials presented in verses 2-3? How do trials act as an equalizer between rich and poor? If your wealth and possessions were gone, what would you have left?

DAY 5: Read James 1:12

(Note: Different translations place this verse in different paragraphs – some put verse 12 with verses 2-11, others put verses 12 with verses 13-15 or 13-16, the NIV has the verse standing alone. Remember verse numbers and divisions of texts into paragraphs were added years after the original texts were written.)

1. What connection do you see between verse 12 and verses 2-11? How does this verse add to your understanding of verses 2-4?
2. “Blessed” is the first word of this verse. What other scriptures come to mind that use this word? “Blessed” means more than happy – it refers to the “ultimate well-being and distinctive spiritual joy” of the Christian (taken from the footnote on Matthew 5:3 in the NIV Study Bible). In what ways does blessing come to those who persevere through trials? Have you experienced this kind of blessing?

To Dig Deeper: The crown of life

What is meant by the crown of life? Check your study Bible footnotes or a Bible commentary and look up cross-references. Start with 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 for the idea about rewards, then see 1 Corinthians 9:25, 2 Timothy 2:5 and 4:6-8; 1 Peter 5:4, and Revelation 2:10. Some questions to think about: Who receives the crown? What is the condition for receiving the crown? How is the crown the Christian receives different from the crowns of royalty or the crowns that athletes achieve?

DAY 6: Reread James 1:1-12

1. Throughout this study we will focus on what James teaches about how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. As you read James 1: 1-12, write down two or three things you learn about discipleship. For example, how does a disciple face trials, grow into maturity, pray, and deal with poverty or riches? How can you use this wisdom from James to be a disciple of Christ?
2. Identify a verse in James 1:1-12 that is particularly meaningful, write it down, and memorize it (perhaps James 1:12).
3. As you think about trials, remember the words of the song “It Is Well With My Soul”

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blessed assurance control;
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And has shed his own blood for my soul.*

or this verse from “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.”

*And though the world with devils filled should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*