

STUDY GUIDE

JAMES: Week 2

6.16.13

[set up]

What is one of the biggest or scariest natural storms you have ever been in?

What has been one of the most difficult personal “storms” you have been in, maybe are in now, or are anticipating in the near future?

How do some people weather the storms of life with strength and stability while others get spun out, run down or even decimated?

[digging deeper]

As you reflect on last weekend’s message from James 1:5-12, what is one principle or insight that you deeply processed or that called you to action?

Re-read James 1:1-5

How is asking God for wisdom in general and praying for wisdom during trials different?

What additional insights can we get about wisdom from these additional verses?
(Prov. 2:1-11, Job 28: 12-23; 1 Cor. 2:4-9)

When we are given wisdom from the Lord in our trials, we tend to see our trials more like God would see them rather than just how we see them. Think of a recent or current trial. How do you think God sees it differently than you did/do? If we could see our trials more like how God sees them, how can it lead us to act differently?

How does doubting God sabotage our stability during difficult times?

Does it seem too severe that God would say we should not expect an answer to a prayer for wisdom if we don’t ask with a single-minded and unwavering faith?

Re-read James 1:9-11

Define and describe what is meant by “exaltation” and “humiliation” here in this context.

Typically boasting and bragging are seen in a negative light. How is this kind of boasting different and how can it be good? (see Jer. 9:23, 24 and Gal. 6:14 for additional insight)

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How can poverty or abundance lead us to not trust in God? How does boasting in who we are in Christ help offset the temptation to let poverty or prosperity taint how we see our lives and our trials?

Often we compare our trials to what others are going through. When is this a good thing that gives us perspective, and when is it dangerous because it feeds a victim mindset or marginalizes the pain of others?

Re-read James 1:12

What is the “crown of life” (also referred to in Rev. 2:10)?

Who do so many people make the case that if we follow Jesus, then our life will have less difficulty and sorrow? Where does this thinking originate? How does God use difficulty, trials and the “storms” of life to strengthen us and reveal Himself?

How does a verse like 2 Co 4:8-9 give us hope and help us persevere?

How does loving God directly affect our stability in the storms of life?

[living it out]

Did anyone in your group memorize James 1:2-4 from last week? Which verse(s) can you commit to memory from James 1:5-12 to help you internalize and apply what God is trying to teach you?

In light of what you have learned today (and/or the last two weeks), what are your trials revealing about you?

How stable are you feeling in the storms of life and what kind of application from James 1:5-12 is stirring in you?

When the storms hit (and they will):

- Will you asking God for wisdom?
- What is your game plan for resisting the natural urge to be doubtful and “double-minded” during difficult times?
- How will you discipline yourself to boast in what Christ has done and who you are and what you have in Christ during difficult seasons?
- Are you committed to persevere, endure and remain steadfast under trials?

Here is a recommended guide for prayer that you can commit to pray every day this week (and as often as needed):

“Lord, my human wisdom falls short of letting me see this life the way you do. I lack wisdom and I’m completely dependent on you. God, in faith, I ask for you to fill me with your wisdom to walk through this life, especially during the stormy times. Help me to see what you see. Help me think the way you think. Help me see solutions that only you can reveal. And when there are no solutions in sight, help me to be strong and stable in you during difficult seasons. I ask this in Jesus name, Amen.”