



[study guide]

JAMES: Week 1

6.9.13

[set up]

What are some words you would use to describe maturity? What are some words you would use to describe immaturity?

In your day-to-day life, when are you most tempted to act immaturely?

Briefly share about a time you could have acted childishly, but you acted instead in a mature way.

What factors do you think make the difference between immature and your mature behavior?

[digging deeper]

As you reflect on last the message from James 1:1-4, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?

Re-read James 1:2. Note: It is possible to have joy in the presence of troubles. How, then, would you define joy?

Divide up the following 25 verses among the members of your LifeGroup, answering the “who, what, why, when, and how” of joy in the midst of trouble. Spend some time building “a theology of joy” from the verses:

Nehemiah 8:10b, Psalm 16:11, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 51:8, Psalm 100, Psalm 126:5-6, Proverbs 17:22, Isaiah 61:7, Jeremiah 16:15, Habakkuk 3:17-19, Matthew 5:11-12, Matthew 13:44, Luke 2:10, Luke 10:20, Luke 15:7, John 16:22, John 16:24, Romans 5:1-5, Romans 12:15, Romans 15:13, Galatians 5:22, Philippians 4:4, I Thessalonians 5:16, I Peter 1:6-9, and I Peter 4:13.



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The word for “various” is *poikilos*. It means “many-colored.” A great variety is in view. Problems come in many shapes and sizes, colors and hues. Spend some time listing 10-12 problems that people are currently facing in your LifeGroup. How does knowing that problems can and will be diverse help us handle them better?

Re-read James 1:3. Testing is the means by which someone can be proven to be real/genuine/authentic. Read I Peter 1:7 to see where the same word is used. Discuss how heating gold or silver purifies the precious metal. How do trials in the lives of believers work in a similar way? (See also Psalm 12:6 and Proverbs 27:21 for uses of the word in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the OT.)

Look for the word “steadfastness” in the passage. It’s from a compound word that literally means to “stay under.” It’s grit: a staying power, a constancy, a determination under adversity. Imagine you are having a conversation with a friend who wants out from under the pressure of a trial. How would you explain to him/her that steadfastness is not a passive acceptance of circumstances, but is a courageous perseverance in the face of difficulty?

Re-read James 1:4. Note: The outcome of this passage is maturity – that we be “perfect, complete, lacking in nothing.” Why do you think so many so-called believers seem to settle for “having their ticket punched to go to heaven” without ever really pursuing maturity? Read Ephesians 4:11-13, Philippians 3:12-14, Colossians 1:28-29, and Hebrews 5:12-14 and discuss the importance of pressing on toward maturity.

After this LifeGroup lesson, how would you summarize God’s process for developing spiritual maturity in the lives of His Beloved Children?

[living it out]

What has God been saying to you from James 1:1-4 and what are you going to do about it?

Discuss the value of everyone in the group memorizing James 1:2-4. Who in your LifeGroup is willing to memorize these verses? How will you hold each other accountable?

Take a moment and pray for each other – ask God to bring each of you in your LifeGroup to a point of priority in your lives – that each of you will be perfect, complete, and lacking in nothing.