



DISCIPLE GROUP CURRICULUM GUIDE

James - Week 1: Trials

June 8-11, 2023

LEADER NOTES: **Summer trimester:** 6/5-7/30, **Fall trimester:** 8/28-12/10 **New Leader Trainings:** 8/6, 12/10 in person and 8/7, 12/18 on Zoom.

Introduction to the book of James: Please watch the video and read through this information from our equipping team before your group this week. We hope it helps you guide your people through the sermon series and the curriculum questions.

Have your group watch the James Bible Project Video - <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/james/>

Author: James, the half-brother of Jesus (*Matthew 13:55*) and leader of the Jerusalem church (*Acts 15*).

Date: James writes his letter 12-15 years after Jesus's resurrection and 15-20 years before James is martyred.

Recipients: Jewish Christians

Purpose: James writes to correct and challenge the persecuted Christians to not live as the world lives, but to live out their faith by being doers of the Word, not just hearers.

Themes:

- God is merciful and compassionate, gracious, the Judge, the one and only God, and Healer.
- Wisdom comes from God. Wisdom is not just more knowledge but enables believers to withstand trials and live in peace and unity.
- Believers must obey God's Word in their daily lives.
- God allows tests and trials which produces endurance. Temptation comes from Satan and self.
- Our words have power to bring life or death.
- True faith always results in good works.

Notes:

- James was an unbeliever prior to the Resurrection (*John 7:3-10*) but was in the Upper Room awaiting Pentecost (*Acts 1:13*).
- The book of James has many parallels to Jesus's Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5.
- It could possibly be the earliest epistle in the New Testament.

- The book of James references some people from the Old Testament and uses nature to illustrate his points.
 - Old Testament: Abraham (2:21), Isaac (2:21), Rahab (2:25), Job (5:11), Elijah (5:17).
 - Nature: Wind-tossed waves of the sea (1:6), withering grass and fading flowers (1:10-11), fire (3:5), fountains of water (3:11), figs and olives (3:12), sowing and harvesting (3:18), early and latter rains (5:7), drought (5:17).
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ANNOUNCEMENTS – *What's your next step? Stay informed and connected to ALL the things God is doing in and through The Church of Eleven22 at coe22.com/news.*

School Supply Drive: 6/6-7/1•These supplies will be distributed to both our local ministry partners that fight to end childhood poverty and Eleven22 foster care families before school starts in the fall. Supplies can be dropped off at either Hope's Closet® location or in the Eleven22 Kids lobby at all campuses in the marked bins. For more information and a list of supplies needed, [click here](#).

Bible Basics•6/23 and 6/24•Orange Park•San Pablo•Online•Learn why you can trust the Bible and how to study it. The cost is \$10 for online workshops and \$15 for in-person workshops. [Click here to register](#).

THIS WEEK'S READING PLAN: coe22.com/readingplan

Share Wins, Praises and Prayers: Where did you see God move this week?

The Point: God uses the trials in our life like a hammer and chisel to take away everything in us that doesn't look like Jesus.

SERMON TEXT: *James 1:1-12; Colossians 2:3; 1 Corinthians 1:30*

Discussion Questions

LEADERS: There's no pressure to get through all the questions, we suggest prayerfully planning your choices for your group. Your leadership of sharing and questioning will determine how deep your group goes with each question.

- **To start this new sermon series, please ask:** Who was James, when did he believe in Jesus, who was he writing to and for what purpose? *(Use the leader notes on the book of James to answer these questions.)*
- **What stood out to you in the sermon this week?**
- **Read James 1:1-12.** What did God reveal to you in the scriptures this week, maybe for the first time?
- **Discover:** James had amazing credentials and yet he identifies himself as a servant of Christ. What three words would you use to describe yourself to someone?
Deepen: What pulls you from your identity in Christ? *(Tim Keller says, "The Bible says that our real problem is that every one of us is building our identity on something besides Jesus.")*
- **Discover:** James 1:2 says, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds." What does it mean to "count it all joy"? *(Count (consider) it all joy - settled, right and good. Your happiness depends on circumstances, your joy is enduring through Christ in ALL circumstances. Don't let your feelings be your god. Lean on Jesus as he walks you through your trials and temptations.)*
Deepen: How does the truth in James help us reframe the trials we're going through? *("for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (James 1:2-4). Trials can come from our own stupidity, sin, others sinning, the enemy or our broken world. Sometimes our good God allows or puts us through a hard season because nothing else would refine and strengthen us the same way. Allowing steadfastness to have its full effect means persevering through trials, patiently trusting in God's guidance, and allowing Him to develop our character and faith.)*
- **Discover:** How does the Bible's definition of wisdom contrast with how our culture defines wisdom? What do you do when you lack wisdom? *(Wisdom isn't just knowledge or street smarts. Colossians 2:3 says all wisdom is in Jesus. Wisdom is in who you know. Wisdom is Christ in you being lived out in your life. Pray to Jesus for wisdom. See James 1:5.)*
Deepen: What's the difference between asking God questions and doubting God? *(Legitimate questions come when you don't understand and want help from God. Doubts can become dangerous when they lead you to trust yourself more than Jesus. See James 1:6-8.)*
- **What sets you free from worrying about money or focusing on how much money you've earned?** *(Your income doesn't equal your worth in the eyes of God. Your money, or lack of it, is temporary. Let the rich remember their humility and that it's all temporary, and let the poor find comfort in their exaltation through faith in Jesus Christ. If you're in Christ you are a co-heir to the kingdom and at some point, it's all yours. See James 1:9-11.)*

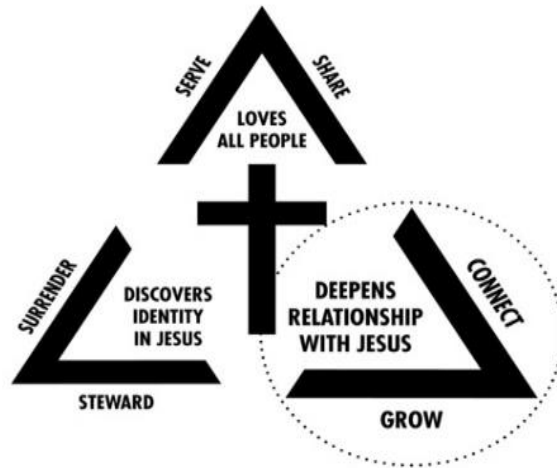
ACTION STEP

A Disciple...Loves All People, Discovers Identity in Jesus, Deepens Relationship with Jesus.

If you didn't watch it during group, watch the James Bible Project Video to get background and context for this book and sermon series: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/james/>

Additional Resources:

- **RightNow Media:** Find *an unending supply of resources* by signing up for a FREE RightNow Media account. Go to coe22.com/rightnowmedia or text "RightNow" to 441122.
(Note: You'll need to login or create an account to view RightNow Media content.)
- Details on the 10:10 Life are available at coe22.com/1010life.



Go to coe22.com/resources and click "Download Tool" to download or print a discipleship journey tool with questions for you to ask yourself and others. Please share the link and directions with others in your group.