

# Suffering

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March 10th, 2024

## We would like your feedback!

Please answer this brief survey to help us provide you with a better small group experience!

<https://forms.gle/1miQBLuCAeKLC1qc7>

## Review Last Week's Next Steps

- I will memorized 1 John 1:9.
- I will follow the 5 step process for confession.
- I will return to this message again and again until I learn to live it out.

## THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

Ever wondered why suffering is a part of the Christian journey? Find out this Sunday as we dive into the profound teachings from the book of James. Learn how trials and difficulties can actually lead to perseverance, character formation, and a closer relationship with God. Don't miss out on discovering the secret to finding joy in the midst of life's challenges!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. For questions 1, 2, & 3, please read James 1:2-4.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2-4)

James' audience was mostly poor, enslaved, or religiously persecuted, and they lived in a time when half of all children died before they reached adulthood. When they heard this passage from James, do you think it made sense to them as they were going through hardships, heartbreaks, pain, and anger?

2. James asks us to interpret the trials of life through the lens of faith. What would help you to interpret your suffering through a lens of faith?

3. The phrase “Let perseverance finish its work” suggests that the maturity that results from perseverance may take a long time. Why is time necessary?

4. Jesus said. “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad.” (Matthew 5:11)

Do you remember a time when you had to persevere after your faith was tested? Were you able to rejoice in the growth that resulted? Can you share it with the group?

5. Paul wrote, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18)

Notice that it is written “revealed *in us*” not “revealed *to us*,” suggesting that becoming “mature and complete, not lacking anything” comes from within. What practical actions can we take to stand firm and see circumstances through the lens of faith?

6. Hope is essential to understanding hardships through the lens of faith. Some people say they left the church when well-meaning Christians tried to give them advice and solace during difficult times. Why might our words sound insincere and disingenuous to others in pain while we try hard to help them with the best intentions?

How can we best help others to use trials for spiritual growth?

## **NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)**

- I will memorize James 1:2-4 and allow it to shape my perspective on trials and suffering.
- I will look through my problems to see where God is at work in them.
- I will allow God to shape my character through problems and pain.
- I will ask God for his comfort and care in the midst of trials.
- I will hold on, look for God, keep the faith, and not quit.

## **SCRIPTURE REFERENCES**

- James 1:2-4
- 1 Peter 4:12-13
- Philippians 2:3
- Philippians 2:6
- Hebrews 10:24
- Acts 26:2
- Matthew 5:11
- John 15:7
- Romans 8:18
- Mark 3:21

## **Prayer Request(s)**

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