

JAMES

MARK IT UP

James 1:1-4 Discussion Guide

Week of 2/13/22

Icebreaker: Can you think of examples from life where trials or tests can produce something good? What are some of them?

Getting Started: Read James 1:1-4 as a group.

1. We may not be as familiar with who James was as we are with other New Testament authors like Paul and Peter. Look up Mark 6:1-3, John 7:1-5, and 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. What can we learn about James from these verses?

2. “Dispersion” in verse 1 means that James is writing to people “scattered” across the Mediterranean region. What kind of challenges can you imagine these early Christians faced as they sought to follow Jesus within an empire known for its pagan, un-Christian beliefs and customs?

Application: Can we relate to similar challenges today? If so, how?

3. In verse 2, James commands his audience to count or “consider” trials as pure joy!? What’s his rationale in verses 3-4 for this perspective?

Application: Think of a recent trial you’ve faced. Now, try applying the lens James is describing in these verses. Can you see how the outcome of the trial could actually become a cause for joy? Talk about it with the group.

4. Trials can produce endurance, which in-turn can lead us to being “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing”—a description commentators relate to maturity in faith and character.

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Application: What difference does it make in our life that trials are a tool God uses to bring about something good rather than something outside God's control and to be avoided at all costs?

5. Look up Matthew 5:11-12, Romans 5:3-5 and 1 Peter 1:6-7. What do you see in these passages that is similar to James 1:2-4?

Application: Pray together that you would have the perspective James is calling for in these verses as you encounter your own trials.