

Small Group/Sermon Notes for James Part 1: Interpreting Trials.

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- Make sure everyone knows each other's names. Have everyone share a little about themselves and how life is going right now.
- **James Part 1: Interpreting Trials**
- Let's jump in. **James 1:1-4**
 - This book is addressed to all believers. (12 Tribes is to be interpreted that way.)
- First topic, how we interpret trials.
 - Last week Corey said "suffering is inevitable but misery is optional."
 - That is all about how we personally handle and interpret suffering.
 - James says to interpret trials of many kinds as "pure joy!" Wow!
 - Does that seem normal? (Can we take this too far? What are the ditches we can fall in?)
 - What is James getting at?
 - Well, what is the goal here in vv2-4?
 - The goal is to become mature and complete, not lacking anything!
 - Can you get on board with that?
 - Often next level maturity comes on the other side of a trial. Examples?
 - Not lacking what?
 - Experience. Courage. Fortitude. Emotional strength. Perspective. Knowledge. Wisdom. Etc.
 - Have you gone through a trial and come out stronger on the other side?
 - Give some examples.
 - James is saying that personal growth is well worth the hardships.
 - Problem: people don't have to mature when they go through trials of many kinds.
 - Just because you are suffering doesn't mean you are maturing and getting stronger.
 - Some people get bitter. (The, "get better not bitter" thing.)
 - Some people get crushed or deflated. Victim mentality.
 - Some people just pretend everything is out of their control. (You drive!)
 - The hidden promise is that you don't have to become jaded or broken from the trials of life, but you can become more than you were before!
 - But you have to interpret it right. See it as a growth opportunity:
 - There may be a lesson to be learned. Why waste the pain?
 - There may be a heart skill to develop. (perseverance from **James 1:12**, patience, contentment, thankfulness, etc.)
 - There may be a future testimony to help others that experience the same trial.
 - 3 types of suffering and how we respond:
 - Personal sin: Repent! **James 1:13-15** (God will test but not tempt.)
 - **1 Corinthians 10:13**
 - The Curse/imperfection of this world: Resist! **James 4:7**
 - The War: Rejoice! **James 1:2**
 - Key Skill: **James 1:19-20**
 - Observe. Listen. Watch. Learn. THEN SPEAK!!
 - I don't want to make little of your pain. God does not either.
 - Your pain may be great. You may be broken.
 - Jesus brings healing.
 - But not just healing. Jesus also brings victory.
 - Let's bring our wounds and our trials to Jesus and let him turn them into maturity and completeness.
 - Pray for each other before you finish up!