

# Small group notes - 15 April 2018

## Welcome

What is the greatest challenge you have faced? Or hardest test?

## Word

### ‘Faith with boots on’ – The challenge of trials / James 1:1-12

The big theme of the book of James is ‘authenticity’ - A practical ‘*how to*’ manual.

Three things about trials:

- **Reality of trials** – verses 2-4

**Trials are inevitable** – James says whenever, not if!

There are ‘trials of many kinds’ and are universal to all persons. James 1:2 & 1 Peter 1:6

**Trials are valuable** – God is able to use our trials for spiritual growth and character formation especially in the area of perseverance which is not attained by reading a book, listening to a sermon, or even praying a prayer. We will go through the difficulties of life.

- **Response to trials** – verses 2-10

**Consider** (Mindset – thought)

*“Our values determine our evaluations. If we value comfort more than character, then trials will upset us. If we value the material and physical more than the spiritual, we will not be able to count it all joy! If we live only for the present and forget the future, the trials will make us bitter, not better” - Warren Wiersbe*

## Communicate

When we are going through difficulties what should we do?

Talk to God. Pray, confess our weakness, our needs, acknowledge our dependence on him. Ask God for wisdom – verse 5. We require wisdom so we will not waste the opportunities God is giving us to mature. Wisdom helps us understand how to use these circumstances for our growth and God’s glory.

## Cooperate

If God’s goal for our lives is maturity, we have to see difficulties and trials as an opportunity to trust God and keep our eyes fixed on him and through the process grow and mature in Christ. Let’s not be tossed back and forth like double-minded people.

- **Reward of trials** – verse 12

James is not saying we are saved because of these trials, however, we are rewarded by persevering through these trials. How are we rewarded? By growth in our Christian character, bringing glory to God and receiving the crown of life promised by God.

## Questions

- What is the big theme of James? Discuss what it means to be authentic.
- Why does James tell his readers to celebrate trials?
- When faced with trials how should we respond?
- Is it really possible, or reasonable to experience joy in the midst of trials?
- Wisdom is needed to cope with trials and to build patience. Why does James emphasise asking for wisdom with faith?
- What does James say will happen when we ask for wisdom yet doubt that God will give it?
- In what ways has life tossed you about?
- What are the rewards for being patient and persevering through trials?
- As you consider this passage, what steps will you take towards character growth and faith that comes from knowing God?