

1. GROWING THROUGH TRIALS

JAMES 1:1-11

REFLECTION

Begin your study by sharing thoughts on this question.

1. Think of a recent problem or difficulty in your life. In what ways did God give you strength to face that situation?

BIBLE READING

Read James 1:1–11 from the NCV or the NKJV.

NCV

¹From James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To all of God's people who are scattered everywhere in the world:

Greetings.

²My brothers and sisters, when you have many kinds of troubles, you should be full of joy, ³because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you patience. ⁴Let your patience show itself perfectly in what you do. Then you will be perfect and complete and will have everything you need. ⁵But if any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He is generous and enjoys giving to all people, so he will give you wisdom. ⁶But when you ask God, you must believe and not doubt. Anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea, blown up and down by the wind. ⁷⁻⁸Such doubters are thinking two different things at the same time, and they cannot decide about anything they do. They should not think they will receive anything from the Lord.

⁹Believers who are poor should be proud, because God has made them spiritually rich. ¹⁰Those who are rich should be proud, because God has shown them that they are spiritually poor. The rich will die like a wild flower in the grass. ¹¹The sun rises with burning heat and dries up the plants. The flower falls off, and its beauty is gone. In the same way the rich will die while they are still taking care of business.

NKJV

¹James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:

Greetings.

²My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. ¹¹For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

DISCOVERY

Explore the Bible reading by discussing these questions.

2. How does Scripture encourage people to respond to trials?
3. How has God brought good into your life through trials?
4. How can a person gain wisdom to deal with problems?
5. Why does God want us to ask for his help without doubting?
6. Who should not expect to receive anything from God? Why?
7. How has your relationship with God changed as you have gone through trials and difficulties?
8. In what ways does this passage relate to your present problems and frustrations?

PRAYER

Father, we come to you just as we are, struggling to cope with the trials of life. We're grateful that you never turn your back on us. You promise to give us the wisdom and strength we need to face each day. Continue to test us until our character shines and brings glory to you.

JOURNALING

Take a few moments to record your personal insights from this lesson.

How can I grow closer to God through trials I am facing now?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

9. How do you usually respond to life's difficulties?
10. How can you find joy in your troubles?

11. Describe a time when God's wisdom helped you through a problem.

For more Bible passages on growing through trials, see Romans 5:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 6:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:5–7; 4:12–14.