



The Book of JAMES

and why it matters...

STUDY GUIDE

SESSION 1: James 1:1-12

Study Guide by Francis Chan

DISCUSS

- According to verse 1, who was the author of this letter? Who was James? How does he describe himself?
- Why do you think James didn't introduce himself as the brother of Jesus? Wouldn't it help to say, "I know what I'm talking about, because I knew Jesus like a brother—in fact, I am His brother"?
- According to verse 1, who are the recipients of this letter?
- What does that mean? Why does James say it that way?
- According to James 1:2 and the following verses, how should we react when times get tough?
- Why? What is the end result of this "testing"?
- When you think of "testing" can you recall a time in your life where the testing made you better in the end?
- Do you think people expect God to make them happy? Is that a wrong idea?

- If you made this the “goal of your life,” to grow in holiness even if it meant suffering, how would that change your life? What decisions would you make differently? How would you have to adjust your priorities?
- Is that a realistic idea?

LIVE IT OUT

The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.

Conversation: Some of us complain a lot. What if we followed James and started considering our troubles “pure joy”? Who could you contact this week—by email, phone, text, or in person—and instead of complaining, tell them about the way God is helping you grow?

Journaling: Write about your struggles. Don't hold back. Complain all you want. But then go back to your journal the next day and jot some notes in the margins about how God might be making you “mature and complete.”

Memorization: Learn James 1:2-3, and maybe verse 4. This will be a powerful support to you in your toughest times.

Prayer: Consider others you know who are going through difficulties. Ask God to help them grow.

Influence: Have you seen spiritual growth in someone else who has gone through trials? Tell them so.