

Truth for Trials James 1:2-4

We do not see the reasons for pain; we are like children, who for a present advantage would forego any amount of future good; but our sympathizing Father is wise, with a full far-seeing wisdom; and he means us to get great blessing, if only we are willing that he should bless us in his own way.

-P.B. Powers

I. **The Hope for Trials**

II. Our Help in Trials

Take it Deeper:

1) James reminds us that we are to consider it pure joy when we are confronted by trials. How would you define joy? Where did Paul tell us that joy comes from in Galatians 5? How does knowing the source of joy help us approach joy during trials? Is there a time in your life that you can remember God giving you peace and joy during a trial that you can share with the group?

2) James repeatedly talks about what we know to be true. It's the understanding and conviction of these truths that ultimately leads us to joy in the midst of trials. What truths do we know that impact our thinking? What do we know about God's nature? What do we know about God's promises? How can we practically come alongside others during times of suffering with these truths in a way that is gentle, compassionate, and truthful?

3) James says that what we need in trials is wisdom. What do we tend to naturally pursue when things are difficult? Why is wisdom the real need? What is the source of true wisdom? What are some practical ways that we can seek wisdom when life is difficult? How can we develop the habit of seeking wisdom rather than comfort?

4) James points out that God is generous in giving wisdom, and that he does so without reproach. Why is that such a comforting and encouraging thought? Are you ever hesitant about approaching God in times of need? What makes us slow to ask or doubtful when we ask? What do we know about God and his call to us as his children that should help alleviate those doubts? Can you think of and perhaps share a time when God provided wisdom during a trial that you went through?

5) This week is a great opportunity to talk with your children about trials. It's important that they understand that living in a fallen world will be difficult for any number of reasons, but that God cares and is there with us during trials. What can you tell them about God that would be a comfort during times of trouble? Help them realize that their greatest goal, even during hard times, is not to be more comfortable or to have things get easier. Talk to them about the good things that God does for us during trials. Help them see that the greatest goal that they can have is to be more like Jesus. Share with them examples of how God encouraged you during trials, or even how you can look back and see how your own trials have made you more like Christ.