

CAC LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

James: Faith in Real Life - September 7, 2025

Big Idea: God can use trials and suffering as tools for spiritual growth and maturity.

Ice Breaker: Have you ever had an experience so miserable you just had to laugh and find humor in it for your own sanity?

Key Points

Take a few minutes to review the key points from this week's sermon.

- The Book of James is a highlight reel of Jesus's sermons
- James is written to people who are facing trouble
- The Bible tells us trials are not escapable – they are inevitable
- If you don't lead your thoughts about trials, your thoughts will lead you
- Trials provide opportunities for spiritual growth, including humility, compassion, and freedom

Discussion Questions

Based on the sermon, discuss the questions below.

- What was your biggest takeaway? What stuck out the most or moved you on a personal level?
- Did anything bother you? What questions did you have?

Making it Personal

Review with your group the impact this week's sermon made on you personally.

- Is there a difference between joy and happiness? If so, how would you explain it?
- How do you typically respond to challenges or difficulties? Do you lean into them, push through as quickly as possible, or try to avoid them altogether?
- Share about a trial you faced that brought freedom - where you came to realize you actually could live without what you thought you couldn't live without.
- Explain in your own words the difference between sympathy and empathy. Has your personal suffering ever given you a compassion that has helped another person?
- Discuss your reaction to Charles Spurgeon's quote, "... I am certain that I never did grow in grace one-half so much anywhere as I have upon the bed of pain. Where God takes such pains to teach, we ought to be at pains to learn. There is no university for a Christian like that of sorrow and trial."

Scripture Review

Revisit some of the scripture passages from this week and discuss the questions below.

- James 1:1-4
- What is a promise of God that can be found in this passage?
- How does it feel to know that when your faith is being tested, you can be sure God is at work?

Diving Deeper

Use the verses below to explore other Scriptures that relate to this week's sermon passage. How do they align? Are there any apparent contradictions, and what could explain them?

Old Testament: Isaiah 43:2, Isaiah 48:10, Isaiah 49:13, Psalm 66:10, Psalm 34:18-19, Proverbs 17:3

New Testament: 1 Peter 4:13, John 16:33, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 4:8

Application & Action

This section is designed to move us beyond discussion and into action. James reminds us that trials are not wasted—they are used by Jesus to grow perseverance and maturity in us. As we reflect on His Word, we don't just want to talk about suffering; we want to invite Jesus into our trials, listen for His voice, and take steps of faith in response. These questions and practices will help us turn to Him together, apply what we've learned, and leave with clear ways to walk it out this week.

Revisit the Word

- Read James 1:1–4 aloud again. Before you read this, sit quietly for a moment and ask: “Jesus, what do You want me to hear in this for my life right now?”

Personal Reflection

- Take 2-3 minutes to think silently: “What trial am I facing, and how might Jesus be inviting me to trust Him, surrender, or grow through it?” Write down one sentence or phrase from this time.

Group Discussion:

- **Listening to Jesus:** What's one thought or belief you've been holding in a trial that Jesus might want to correct with His truth? (Example: Believing “I'm alone” → Hebrews 13:5 – Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.)
- **Walking with Him:** What is Jesus asking you to surrender, and what's one small step of obedience He's leading you to take? (Example: Surrendering anxiety about finances and making a small budget step or giving generously.)
- **Anchoring in His Word:** Which Scripture or promise will you hold onto this week when things feel heavy? (See diving deeper section for some options)
- **Leaning on His People:** Who is one person you can reach out to this week—either to ask for prayer, or to encourage in their own trial?
- **Growing in His Likeness:** Where do you sense Jesus may be growing humility, perseverance, or compassion in you right now? What would it look like to cooperate with Him in that?
- **Action Step:** Finish this sentence out loud: “This week, I will trust Jesus by...”

Prayer

- Close your group time by praying over one another's action step. This can be short and simple. (Example: “Jesus, give [name] strength to surrender [thing] to You this week. Meet them with Your presence and peace.”)

Daily 2-Minute Practice: Pause, Invite, Anchor

- **Pause** (30 seconds) Take a deep breath and quiet your mind. Ask Jesus: “What are You teaching me through this trial right now?”
- **Invite** (1 minute) Bring one struggle or worry to Him in prayer. Ask Him to correct any false beliefs, give perspective, or show His presence. (Example: “Jesus, I feel alone and overwhelmed—remind me that You are with me.”)
- **Anchor** (30 seconds) Pick one Scripture or promise to focus on for the day. Say it aloud or write it somewhere visible.