

The Book Of James With Francis Chan: A 12-Day Video Bible Study

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Devotional

Watch Video At: https://youtu.be/sfQv6_Se_BE

Why would you need wisdom? Maybe you're facing challenges. Or you're worried that you've got it all wrong, that Christianity isn't the right way. If it was the right way, then why would God let you experience suffering or hardship like this?

If the thought has ever crossed your mind, you're in good company with James's audience. "The twelve tribes in the Dispersion" at the beginning of the letter described both the Jews who'd been exiled from Israel and also the Christian believers who'd scattered from Jerusalem after persecution settled in to stay.

A people sent packing due to their faith were familiar with suffering, which makes James's opening exhortation imminently practical for them: "Count it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you meet trials of various kinds." Suffering was part of life, but God wanted His children to greet trials with a counter-intuitive response. Joy.

Human nature hasn't changed in two millennia. We want to know *why* we suffer. But James instead tells his readers why trials should provoke joy: ". . . for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." The word for testing (*dokimion*) was often used to describe precious metals put through extreme heat to remove impurities, becoming so pure you could see your reflection in it. Similarly, as God tests us and we go through the heat, we reflect His nature more. We are able to endure and remain faithful to Him.

Francis Chan said in the video, "What God wants to do is not just to make you happy. He wants to make you holy. He says He wants us mature, complete, not lacking in anything. Have you ever thought about that as the goal of your life?"

When persecution drove the Christians out into the wider world, many of them had good reason to doubt their faith. Was it really worth all the pain to stay faithful to Christ? James emphatically says "Yes!" and urges them to trust in God's wise guidance. He says the same to us. Don't jump in and out of your faith. Keep in touch with God when people confront you for living according to your faith, and He will get you through.

In what ways do you demonstrate your steadfast faith in Jesus? What does it look like at home or at work or with your neighbor or family members? Think back to the last time you faltered: Were you silent when you should have spoken up? Did you succumb to peer

pressure and actively sin against someone? Whatever happened, confess it to God and pray for wisdom and strength when the next test comes.

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