

TODAY'S VERSES:

John 1:2-3

John 7:5

1 Corinthians 15:7

Acts 1:13

James 1:1-4

Hebrews 12:11

2 Corinthians 7:4

Acts 5:41

Acts 16

Revelation 3:10

Hebrews 12:2

Matthew 16:18

2 Corinthians 12:7

Hebrews 12:1-2

THIS WEEK, I CAN APPLY THIS LESSON
TO MY LIFE IN THESE WAYS:

MY NOTES:

The word "JAMES" is rendered in a bold, hand-painted style. Each letter is composed of multiple overlapping, horizontal brush strokes, giving it a three-dimensional, textured appearance. The color is a dark, muted green. The letters are set against a light beige background that features faint, vertical, light-colored lines, suggesting a weathered or aged surface.

A FAITH THAT WORKS

PART ONE: JAMES 1:1-4

WHO WHAT WHEN WHERE - TRIALS

JAMES

A FAITH THAT WORKS

PART ONE: JAMES 1:1-4 WHO WHAT WHEN WHERE - TRIALS

This week launches our 19 week series through the book of James, a book written by Jesus' own half-brother. James moved from seeing Jesus not just as a family member, but as God and Savior. In his opening verses, James encourages readers to "count it all joy" as we come face to face with trials and suffering. The word "count" (NIV says "consider") has at its root the idea of being first, meaning when you face trials, *before* you focus on the trial, *think* about what it means. He doesn't say, "Consider your *trials* joy." He says, "Count *it* all joy....when..." James is commending the conscious embrace of a uniquely Christian understanding of every trial: that all things can grow us and glorify God.

"Count it all joy," means to make a deliberate and careful decision to experience joy even in times of trouble. While the trials themselves are likely not a joyful or happy experience, we are challenged to view all of life—ups and downs—through the lens of the Gospel. Because God is good and sovereign, because Jesus came and lived a perfect life, died the death we deserved, and rose victoriously, we can have joy as we face of trials.

Our God sees and knows our pain, and we can trust that He allows that pain in our lives for growth and maturity. Not only is Jesus the perfect example of how to suffer well (through the Cross), but He is with us in the midst of our pain and He promises to bring an end to it one day. Jesus alone is the reason why we can experience joy, freedom, and faith in the midst of trials.

Teresa of Avila once said "From heaven the most miserable earthly life will look like one bad night in an inconvenient hotel!"

Read James 1:2-3.

What is a "trial?"

How did you view this passage before the message?

How can we practically encourage those who are facing their own trials?

If you have been a Christian for a while and you find yourself joyless, what might be the underlying cause of this?

What do you need to begin focusing on today?

Why is the cross reason enough for joy?

Recap the difference between James' subjective view of faith and Paul's objective view. Which one do you relate to more?

What does it mean to "count it all joy?"

What is a trial that you have faced that you were genuinely able to count as joy, and how were you able to navigate it?

How did that trial grow you?

How does Jesus bring meaning to our suffering and hardships?

How is Jesus more than an example of suffering well?