

God Time Day 1: James, the Brother of Jesus



Read James 1:1

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ: To the twelve tribes dispersed abroad.



Circle the word “servant.” Underline whom James serves.

James was the half-brother of Jesus. Initially, he didn’t believe that Jesus was the Savior of the world. But after witnessing Jesus’ resurrected body, he became a faithful follower and servant of Christ. He even became the head of the Christian church in Jerusalem. James wrote to encourage the faith of other Christians.

The Book of James is believed to be the oldest book of the New Testament. The focus is on what the Christian faith looks like as someone lives it out. Through this book, God teaches us that good works aren’t the way to salvation, but that they are the result of it.



Pray today that God will let your works reflect your faith.

God Time Day 2: Joy of a Trial



Read James 1:2

Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials...

A trial is any painful, difficult experience caused by things outside or inside of our control. So why would anyone consider a trial a time for great joy? Knowing that God is sovereign (in charge, completely) and only allows things in our lives meant for His glory and our eternal good, we get a glimpse at why we can have joy during trials.



Think back. Have you ever had any trial in your life that resulted in something good? Describe it and the outcome.



Spend time thanking God for the good He brought from that trial and share this good news with someone.

God Time Day 3: The Problem of Suffering



One of the hardest dilemmas for any human to solve is this: “If there is a good God, why does He allow suffering?”

As Christians, we know God is good, so our question becomes, “Since God is good, why does He allow suffering?”

This is an age-old question with a relatively simple answer. It begins with the fact that God doesn’t want robot-children, so He gives us free-will. Sometimes we choose evil just like the first man back in Genesis Chapter 3 when he chose to disobey God. Sin entered the world, and it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to see its effects all around us. Immorality, racism, crime, hatred, pride, gossip, and so on. Even the natural world is affected – damaging hurricanes, floods, storms, and fires. First-century Christians faced trials like persecution, slander, exploitation, and extreme poverty. James’ words to “consider [trials] a great joy” must have been a shock.



Read James 1:2-4

²Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.



Circle what testing produces and underline the full effect of the endurance (the “so that...” part).

Suffering happens, but that doesn’t negate God’s goodness. In His love and grace, God allows good things to come from the pain we experience, and He is present with us in our suffering, always helping us. That’s a reason for joy!



Write down how you would address the problem of suffering if someone asked you.



(Check out: Bible Project: Wisdom – Job)

God Time Day 4: God Loves You Enough to...



God loves you enough to let you go through difficult times. It sounds weird, and it might not make sense until you think about parenting. When a child never experiences something hard, they grow up spoiled at worst and unequipped at best to handle the struggles of life. God is a good Father who wants us to be "mature and complete, lacking nothing" and so... enter trials.



Read Romans 5:3-5
³And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, ⁴endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. ⁵This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.



Trace the progression from afflictions to hope:
Affliction produces _____,
_____ produces _____,
and _____ produces _____.



Verse 5 says, "This hope will not disappoint us." Why?
Because _____

Hope never lets us down because it comes from God. Our loving Father allows things in our life that grow our hope. The worst trials often result in the greatest spiritual maturity.

Spiritual maturity is evidenced by making fewer sinful choices, knowing and pursuing purpose, and living out faith in a way that impacts others and brings glory to God.



Rate your spiritual maturity, low to high, in each category:

- Choices: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Purpose: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Impact: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Tomorrow we will look at how to improve each.

God Time Day 5: Responding to Trials



Read 1 Peter 1:6-7, three times:
⁶You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials ⁷so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We all have gone through trials and guess what, we'll surely go through more! That's just a fact of life. The question is, "How can I respond to trials in a way that honors God?"



Here are three answers with actions to that question:

1. **Do Not Create Difficulty** - Sometimes trials are due to something inside of our control. If you are suffering because of sinful choices, deal with the sin and don't blame God. What sin in your life do you need to deal with today? What will you do to be obedient to God?

2. **Watch Your Direction** - Are you moving away from God, or are you moving toward Him? Remember that even though trials aren't technically temptations, they can create temptations – to solve problems our way, to run from God, to react in an ungodly way, and so on. In what direction are you moving? What will you do to move closer to God today?

3. **Keep it Simple** - There may be trials in life that are completely outside of our control, but times spent in prayer, God's Word, with our Christian community, and serving Him are all inside of our control. What will you do to invest in your relationship with God and others?

