

WORSHIP

Suggested worship songs: Still Standing, Firm Foundation (He Won't), Build My Life, Goodness of God

WELCOME

What daily trials has already come your way in the first week of 2026? How about little blessings that God has sent your way to strengthen and encourage you?

WORD

JAMES 1:12-18 (Read verses 1-11 as well)

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷ Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. ¹⁸ In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

Faith is a vital part of our walk with Christ. We're commanded to "test yourselves" if Jesus Christ is really in you (**2 Corinthians 13:5**). Jesus said this will be known by our fruits (**Matthew 7:20-21**). Will others see evidence of our faith? Not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven; it is OBEDIENCE God's will that proves we belong to Jesus. Even people actively doing things for God may find out Jesus never knew them (**Matthew 7:22-23**). Real evidence of our faith is crucial.

Real faith is recognizing and trusting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, anchored in God and His truth—not in circumstances or feelings. The evidence is obedience, works, and a transformed life. Real faith perseveres to the end. James introduced himself as "a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ". This word bondservant literally means SLAVE. This James was Jesus' half-brother; Jesus was identified as a carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of at least four brothers including James, and sisters as well (**Mark 6: 3-4**). At first, Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him but after Jesus resurrected, He appeared to James and the apostles (**1 Corinthians 15:6-7**). Jesus loved His family so much, He revisited them to let them know He is the Son of God and the promised Messiah. James became a leader of the church, and Josephus the historian states James was martyred for his faith in Jesus. REAL FAITH TRIUMPHS and overcomes challenges.

REJOICE IN TRIALS

We are to CONSIDER (think of) trials as ALL JOY when, (not if), we encounter various trials (**James 1:2-4**). Sooner or later all of us will encounter trials (Gk. Peirasmos) in our life and real faith responds differently. Some trials are self-inflicted, when people do bad decisions that have bad consequences. Some trials are caused by others --- it can be persecution because of faith (that believers were experiencing in the time of James), or natural catastrophes – but in all these things, we are supposed to REJOICE. Why? Because the testing of our faith produces ENDURANCE (Gk. Hupomone). Most of us don't have endurance. Many are weak, and wishy-washy. Endurance will have its perfect result. Through trials, we mature, and our character is perfected – this is God's purpose for our lives today. Until we understand this, we will not understand what true Christianity is. God is more concerned with your character, the real you, and not always your physical comfort alone. Character is seldom developed in good times – but in adversity and pain.

Peter wrote that trials can be a cause for rejoicing, because when our faith is tested like gold through fire, it will be shown as real or not (**1 Peter 1:6-7**). Without faith it is impossible to please God (**Hebrews 11:6**)! Real faith is believing God is God, and that He is a rewarder – He is good. How can you trust somebody you do not know? Faith comes from hearing the word of Christ (**Romans 10:17**). Get to know God so

your faith will grow! The object of faith is God's Word. Faith is anchored in God!

PRAY FOR WISDOM

Sometimes it's hard to understand our circumstances. Faith does not eliminate questions but knows where to take them. If we lack wisdom we must ask (pray to) God, because God gives it generously and without reproach (**James 1:5-6**). He is never bothered by your coming to Him again and again. How is your prayer life?

We must learn to pray and ask IN FAITH and WITHOUT ANY DOUBTING. Many people don't pray in faith. Once, Jesus was talking to a father asking for healing for his child – and this man was honest, asking Jesus to help him in his unbelief (**Mark 9:23-24**). Blind men were asked if they believe Jesus can heal them, and they said yes – and Jesus said it shall be done according to their FAITH (**Matthew 9:28-29**). A double-minded man is someone who comes to God, asking for God's will, but in his heart, he is not committed to obey his will (**James 1:7-8**). Why will God keep revealing Himself to you when you don't want to obey Him? James showed the contrast of someone in humble circumstances and one who was rich – both must learn to see things in the right perspective (**v.9-11**). Rich or poor, we are to see our value rooted in our relationship with Jesus Christ!

How do we respond to problems? If we keep focusing on our problems, we end in despair. But if we focus on God's character and promises we can have positive expectation and rejoice! Suffering may be present, but it is nothing compared to the future glory secured for us by Christ (**Romans 8:18**). We admit we have problems, but we see beyond the problems and even death. We KNOW that God causes all things to WORK TOGETHER for good, and only for those who "love God" and "are called according to His purpose" (**Romans 8:28-29**). Wisdom is being able to understand that our circumstances can be redeemed when we see what God is doing in and through our trials!

PERSEVERE

We are blessed if we persevere under trials because we love Jesus, and we'll receive the "crown of life" (**James 1:12, Revelation 2:10**). If our faith has the right object, it gives us great comfort. When you trust God, you will not question or doubt His character. Evil things and trials don't come from God (**James 1:13-14**). God intends to build us up, but when we are not careful our weaknesses entice us by our own desires (Gk. epithumia) and consequences follow. Don't doubt the goodness of God. Guard and assume responsibility for your choices! God's trials for us are always for our good. All good things come from God – even problems and challenges (**James 1:17-18**). Put your faith in God who is good and perfect. He knows what He is doing, so let's persevere!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. How can we rejoice in our trials according to James?
2. Have you ever asked God for wisdom to deal with something in your life? How did God provide help in that situation?
3. How can you consistently make God the object of your faith and triumph over worries and fears?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE

IN ACTION

Pray for those around you who are dealing with various trials. Ask the God of compassion to show them His love and power to them through you and His church. Share Jesus to someone you know who need Him to be able to persevere through trials right now.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- For legislators to promote and support bills and laws aligned with God's Word.
- PRAY for the protection, safety and release of kidnapped American Christian missionary, Kevin, serving in Niger (West Africa). For God to turn the hearts of the kidnappers to repentance and salvation. Peace and comfort for Kevin's family.
- Pray for persecuted Christians in Sudan and Nigeria) --- many have been beheaded and murdered; earnestly seek God's intervention to stop the bloodshed. Pray for freedom from oppression, that God's word and His people bring them comfort and hope.
- PRAISE God that the rest of the living Israeli hostages have been restored to their families safely! Continue to pray that the last remaining dead hostage will be returned to his family for burial.
- For Israel's war with terrorists to end according to God's purpose and for His glory. For Jewish people worldwide who

are experiencing a surge of antisemitism. May this lead them to the Messiah, Jesus as they turn to God for help and comfort.

- For nations in turmoil (e.g., Ukraine, Iran, Venezuela, etc.) to experience true freedom in Christ and become centers for massive spiritual revivals in their regions.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God, and make disciples
- For elders, pastors, deacons, and families to become holy, humble, harmonious, happy, and heart-working)
- For ministries and church expansions worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain (MMRC)

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper and intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

James 1:12

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.