


# UNDERSTANDING TROUBLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS


JAMES 1:1-5

- 1 **Does our world today expect and embrace suffering?** How does the prevailing cultural view of suffering affect how Christians in general and you personally respond to it?

 To count suffering as joy, we must realize what God is doing in suffering and trust Him. What is God accomplishing through trials? See Psalm 119:67, 71, Heb. 12:11, Rom. 5:3-5, 1 Pet. 5:10

 What have you seen God personally do in your own life through a trial or difficulty? Spend time thanking God for the trials and what he taught you or how changed in you.

- 2 **The word translated “steadfastness” in verse 3 literally means “to remain under,” like a person holding up a heavy weight for a long period of time.** Read Prov 24:16. What is the difference between the “righteous man” and the “wicked” when they fall? Personalize it by substituting your name for “righteous man.”

 What is the connection between going through a trial and finding joy or growing in steadfastness? Read Psalm 66:10-12, Isaiah 40:28-31, Acts 5:40-41.


 How can these passages along with Pr. 24:16 encourage you? How can you use them to encourage others?

- 3 **James 1:4 tells us that we should let trials do their work so that we can be “perfect and complete lacking in nothing.”** What do you think James means by perfect? Read Phil. 3:12-16 and Ephesians 4:13. Note: the same word is translated “perfect” or “mature.”

 In what areas of your life can the group pray for you that you would grow to maturity in Christlikeness? Spend time in prayer as a group.

- 4 **How do you define “wisdom”?** How is it related to enduring trials?

- 5 **Is there someone in your group that is facing trouble right now?** How can you encourage them this week? What can you do specifically to bless them?

 In your group talk about some of the trials you are going through. What trials trouble you most? Maybe a few people could share one of their top trials in life right now. Take time to pray for each other, for wisdom and endurance in the midst of difficulty.

## FOOD FOR DEEPER THOUGHT

*The fallow [unplowed] field is smug, contented, protected from the shock of the plow and the agitation of [being turned over]. Such a field, as it lies year after year, becomes a familiar landmark to the crow and the blue jay...Safe and undisturbed, it sprawls lazily in the sunshine, the picture of sleepy contentment. But it is paying a terrible price for its tranquility; never does it feel the motions of mounting life, nor see the wonders of bursting seed, nor the beauty of ripening grain. Fruit it can never know, because it is afraid of the plow and [being broken up]. In direct opposite to this, the cultivated field has yielded itself to the adventure of living. The protecting fence has opened to admit the plow, and the plow has come as plows always come, practical, cruel, business-like and in a hurry. Peace has been shattered by the shouting farmer and the rattle of machinery. The field has felt the travail of change; it has been upset, turned over, bruised and broken. But its rewards come hard upon its labors. The seed shoots up into the daylight its miracle of life, curious, exploring the new world above it. All over the field, the hand of God is at work in the age-old and ever renewed service of creation. New things are born, to grow, mature, and consummate the grand prophecy latent in the seed when it entered the ground. Nature's wonders follow the plow. - A. W. Tozer*

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

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