



The book of James is a letter of wisdom full of short wisdom speeches and metaphors that helped the early church follow the teachings of Jesus. As we study this book together, you're going to see that James' letter is primarily influenced by the book of Proverbs and Jesus' teachings from the Sermon on the Mount. In chapter one, James gives an overview of almost every topic he will talk about. Then in chapters two through five he will expand on each of these topics. Today, we're going to talk about finding joy in our trials, finding joy in our position in life, and how to not be deceived by the things of this world.

1. Neal started the sermon with an illustration about the life of Forrest Gump. Forrest was unwilling to quit in many situations, and in the case of the shrimping industry, it worked in his benefit. Where have you persevered in life?
2. **Read James 1:1-8.** James encouraged the church to persevere in their faith despite what was happening around them. **Read Acts 4:1-4, 7:54-60, and 16:22-24.** How did the early Church handle the persecution the early church faced?
3. James teaches us that the testing of our faith develops perseverance. Share about a time in your life when you went through a difficult situation (You don't necessarily have to share the story, just share how you grew in your faith through that time.)
4. **Read James 1:5-8.** We are reminded that we don't have to go through trials alone. **Read Psalm 34:18, 139:7-12, and 145:18.** Thinking about how close God is to you, where do you need to ask for wisdom in your current life situation?
5. James moves on to teaching the church to find joy in their position. **Read James 1:9-12.** Some believers were convinced that gaining wealth was better than a holy life. Talk about how Biblical giving has changed the way you think about money.
6. **Read James 1:13-15.** James gives the believers a practical, logical, progression of the path of sin. Thinking about your own life, where do you see your evil desires begin to give birth to sin? What boundaries do you have in place to flee from sin?
7. Looking at **James 1:16-18**, we learned that the unbeliever is deceived by unbelief and the believer is deceived by misbelief. Share a time in your life when you saw this play out - maybe a time you shared your faith or a time you realized you had been deceived in your faith.
8. Close your time in prayer.