



LESSON ONE:

INDISCRIMINATE ADVERSITY

TO BEGIN

What was your very first paid job? Where did you work?
What did you do? Did you like it?

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. Biblical scholar, John Stott writes in his book, *The Cross of Christ*, "The fact of suffering undoubtedly constitutes the single greatest challenge to the Christian faith, and has been in every generation." Do you agree with Stott's statement? Why or why not?

2. While some trials are the consequences of our actions, other trials are not of our own doing. Yet, we can easily assume, "What did I do wrong?" Why are we so quick to blame ourselves?

3. James 1:2 says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds..."

- In your opinion, what is a trial and what is not a trial?
- Is there a difference between "happiness" and "joy"? If so, what is the difference?

4. The famous preacher, Charles Spurgeon once said, "Trials teach us what we are; they dig up the soil, and let us see what we are made of." Read James 1:2-4, as well as Romans 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5; Philippians 3:10; and Hebrews 10:35-36. According to these verses, how can we benefit from trials?

5. Read James 1:14-15. How does James describe the progression from temptation to death? How can temptation be a trial?

6. In John 16:33, Jesus promises that we will have trouble. After reading some or all of the following verses, answer the questions below. James 1:5-6; Proverbs 3:5-6; John 14:16; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Peter 5:6-8; and Revelation 2:2-5.

- What help does God offer us during trials?
- How do these verses increase your trust in God?

7. Paul writes in Romans 8:28, "All things work for the good of those who love him, who are called according to his purpose." How has God leveraged your bad experiences for good purposes?

8. Read James 1:12; 1 Corinthians 2:9; 2 Corinthians 4:17; and Revelation 7:16-17. According to these verses, how will God reward believers for faithfulness during trials?

PERSONAL REFLECTION AND DEEPER STUDY

Read James 1 every day for the next 7 days.

Memorize James 1:2-5.

Do a deeper study on some of the passages listed in this lesson.

Read Psalm 118 and follow the prompts below:

- What does this passage say about God?
- What sins and mistakes does the passage warn you to avoid?
- Make a list of the promises that God makes in the passage.
- According to the passage, what attitude should we maintain during trials? Were you convicted to change or re-examine your attitude? If so, how?
- How were you challenged by this passage?
- How might this passage inspire you to set a better example for others?
- Summarize this passage in one sentence.