

James Lacking Nothing

God uses trials to increase faith in our lives (James 1:1-4). The book of James – written by James, the half-brother of Jesus – makes it clear that God wants us *mature and complete, not lacking anything* (James 1:4). That maturity produces abundance in our lives. At the beginning of the book, James establishes that part of maturity is learning to find joy when we face challenges and difficulty. Trials are an inevitable part of life, and faith in Jesus does not remove those trials. Instead, God uses our difficulties to shape our character and perspective, to develop trust and dependence on Him. He uses our trials to help us grow, and as we grow, He blesses us with inexplicable joy.

GET THINGS STARTED

What do you think it means to be mature, and what are the indicators that someone has spiritual maturity? What possibly keeps someone from growing up spiritually, even if they desire it on some level?

GO DEEPER

1. From James 1:4, what is the connection between being mature and lacking nothing? What point is James making in this connection?
2. How does the testing of our faith produce perseverance or faith in us (James 1:3)? What else can our trials produce in us (healthy or unhealthy), and how do we ensure that our trials are producing the right things in us?
3. What does it look like – and not look like – to have joy while also having struggles or difficulties? What was the joy set before Jesus that motivated Him to endure the cross and scorn its shame (Hebrews 12:2)?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. How would you rate your own spiritual maturity, and what are the indicators of maturity or immaturity in your life? What is the biggest roadblock to your next step of spiritual growth?
2. What is the most significant trial you are facing right now, and what does growth possibly look like in that struggle? What does God want to produce in you through your difficulty?

PRACTICE IT NOW

Take time as a group in a posture of prayer to ask God to help you grow to spiritual maturity. Ask Him what He wants to produce in you in this season through the challenges you are facing. Invite Him to be present in your current struggle, to work and move in such a way that you grow spiritually and even experience joy. Affirm that God is good and that He can bring good things from our hardships. And ask Him for grace to not merely survive but to be transformed.