

Session #1: James 1:1-18

Small Group Questions:

1. How is every trial also a temptation? Talk about a time when a trial caused you to be angry, bitter or full of contempt.
2. The big idea of Bill's sermon was this: "Trials don't make our lives ugly—our lives *are* ugly. God uses trials to make our lives beautiful." How did you respond the first time you heard those words? How about later on as the idea developed and sunk in?
3. Can you remember a time when a trial, big or small, exposed some of your ugliness, or a weakness in your character?
4. Talk about a time when God used a trial to make you more "mature and complete, not lacking anything" (v. 4)—or as Bill said, "to make your life more beautiful—more like Jesus."
5. Has a trial ever made you feel like God doesn't love you? Did God eventually prove His love to you in the midst of that trial? How so?
6. Do verses 5-8 strike you as being good news or bad news? Why?
7. When you're going through a trial, do you tend to pray for perseverance and wisdom, or escape?
8. Talk about a time when you realized, in hindsight, that God was putting you through a trial for a purpose. Has that experienced changed the way you approach trials since?
9. To walk with God through our trials, we have to be confident in His goodness and power. But it's often in the midst of trials that God's goodness and power are least evident to us. So how do we keep going? (dig deep into verses 12-18)
10. What else struck you in this passage? Did anything contradict or confuse you? Convict or challenge you? Delight or encourage you?
11. Are their trials in your life right now that this passage gives you guidance for? What are they and how so?

Spend time in prayer with one another.