



Serman Study Guide

Wisdom, Humility & Endurance – James 1:9-18

February 13 & 14, 2016

Opening Questions

If you were hanging out with your co-workers in a coffee-shop atmosphere casually sipping coffee (just go with me on this!), what kinds of things would they talk about? How often would the conversation turn towards some manner of tough times they were facing? Why do we gravitate to this kind of topic in our lives?

Read Together

James 1:9-18

Big Idea

God has a different plan for tough times than most of us do.

Discussion Questions

1. When we're in the middle of tough times, why is it that one of the last things we think about is "how we should think about it?!"
2. Read verse 5 of chapter 1. Discuss the phrase, "wisdom takes our will and transforms it into God's will." Is this an easy or hard thing to do? Who is responsible for the transformation?
3. What is the person who has little supposed to take pride in? Why do you think James wants to start off this section by talking about this?
4. Does humility have a high value in our culture? Why is it that we all love to be on the receiving end of someone's humility, but have a hard time living it out ourselves?
5. How much influence does "being in control" play into our decisions when it comes to the practical things of life (finance, choice of work, place where we live, etc.)? Now discuss how much it influences our relationships. How hard is it to lessen our grip on control?
6. As a group, name as many characteristics of God as you can in 1 minute. Now, how many of those characteristics have a specific and deliberate influence in our lives? What does that say about us, and more importantly God?
7. Imagine yourself sitting around in a room with the other Jesus followers during this time of persecution. What would be a typical plan of action? What specifically did they do as a response to the difficulties?
8. Define what a blessing looks like to you. Now define what it looks like to God. Should it surprise us how God looks at blessings?
9. Assuming we all know how hard it is to "patiently endure" during a difficult time, what does it look like to go through the difficulty with the blessing of God?

Challenge

As difficulties (with varying degrees of magnitude) will certainly find their way into your life this week, keep the old adage "practice makes perfect" in the front of your mind. As you encounter them, commit that your default response to ANY difficulty will be to seek the counsel of God first, asking Him to give His wisdom before anything else.

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Prayer

- As you begin to pray, first thank God for every situation you find yourself in – praise Him for unfolding His plan in your life through every circumstance.
- Pray that God will give you wisdom to speak to difficult times in the place He has given you to serve (home, work, etc.). Second, pray that God will enable you (as a group, and as individuals), to endure through any difficulty by blessing you now with His virtues, and as you anticipate eternity with Him.

Next Steps

- Ask for **wisdom** every morning – expect that in God's grace, He will give it to you generously.
- Practice the practice of humility. Give it such a high priority in your heart that it flows out of your actions to others.