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## James 1

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” - James 1:2-3

How often have you experienced joy in hard times? Think back to when you’ve been in a trial, or maybe you’re in one right now. Perhaps a friend mistreated you, being sick or someone close to you going through an illness, or a week nothing seemed to go right. Whatever the case, it’s sometimes impossible to experience joy in hard times. So why is James telling us to consider it pure joy when you are going through trials? It’s because, in those trials, we should trust in God the most. He tells us that trusting God produces endurance, leading to spiritual maturity and inner peace.

The trials we will go through in this world can be challenging, and it’s okay to feel sad as you go through them. Joy isn’t about feeling happy but knowing that even when bad things happen, God is with you and has a good plan for your life. That is the good news we can hold onto today!

*Father, thank you for being with me and working in me to build my faith even during hard times. Help me to rely on You and to remember the promises and plans you have for me. I pray that I can find joy in You in trials. Amen.*

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## James 2

“What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?” -James 2:14

Have you ever encountered someone who said they were a Christian but didn’t act like it? Are you someone like that? Let’s think about ourselves for a moment. When you are hanging out with friends, with your parents, on a sports team, or in a classroom at school, would the people around you be able to tell you were a Christian? Maybe they know because you told them, or they’ve seen you at Red Rocks Youth, but could they tell by your actions or how you speak?

Faith in Jesus is all we need to be a Christian, but James is challenging us by saying genuine faith is shown by how we act. If you have faith in Jesus but live in a way no one can tell, there will be disunity. Doing good doesn’t make us Christian, but living more like Christ (Jesus) shows the world we are Christians.

*God, thank you for all that you’ve done. Help me to live a life in a way that shows others how good and loving You are. Guide me in ways only you can in Jesus’ name, Amen.*

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**Is there someone you should treat with more love in your life?**

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## James 3

“With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.” - James 3:9-10

The tongue is such a small part of our body, yet it can cause so much damage when we use it to say harmful things. Good and bad can come from the same place - our mouths.

We can come to Red Rocks Youth and sing the songs that praise God. We can say mean things. We can encourage a friend. We can call people names. As humans, we can do all these things at any given time, but putting our faith in Jesus calls us higher. Your words matter. We should use the mouths that God gave us to encourage each other, say loving things, to tell people about Jesus.

*Father, I’m sorry for when I’ve said hurtful things; please forgive me. Help me use my words for good and to be kind to others around me. Amen.*

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**Who can you encourage today?**

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Lined area for writing the second response, consisting of 10 horizontal lines.







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## James 4

“Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.” - James 4:8

Think about your best friend. What made you best friends? I imagine it's because you spent time getting to know one another by communicating, asking questions, and spending time together. Now think about your relationship with God. Are you spending time with Him by reading the bible, asking Him questions through prayer, and getting to know Him? Just like getting to know a friend, we have to choose to get to know God by pursuing Him. Making a decision to follow God is not a one-time thing; we have to continue to make it every day. When we choose to come near God, He will come near us.

*Lord, thank you for loving me each day. Please show me who You are as I choose to come close to you every day. I pray the more I pursue You, the more I get to know You. Amen.*

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**What are some things that challenged you?**

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## James 5

“Are you hurting? Pray. Do you feel great? Sing. Are you sick? Call the church leaders together to pray and anoint you with oil in the name of the Master. Believing-prayer will heal you, and Jesus will put you on your feet. And if you’ve sinned, you’ll be forgiven—healed inside and out” - James 5:13-15

Today’s passage makes it clear that prayer is the answer! James is definitely trying to make a point here. At the end of the day, prayer means talking to God. There are all sorts of ways to pray—eyes opened or closed, hands together or by your side, kneeling or standing, reading a guided prayer, or making it up as you go. Whatever the case may be, all that matters is spending time talking to God.

We’ve seen all through scripture the power of prayer. Abraham prayed for offspring, and God answered by promising him nations (Genesis 15:2-3; Genesis 21:1-8); a leper’s pray for healing, and God healed him (Matthew 8:2-3); Hannah was childless, and God answered by giving her a son (1 Samuel 1:11). Prayer is just as powerful today, and the best way to start praying is to start!

*Father, thank you that I can come to You in prayer for anything I need or anything that worries me. Please help me spend more time with you this week. Teach me how to pray and guide me as I learn. Amen.*

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**Do you feel like you hear from God or truly experience Him?**

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