

STEADFAST

# JOY

A STUDY  
IN THE  
BOOK OF  
JAMES

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WEEK ONE

## STEADFAST JOY

James 1:1-3

### SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about steadfast joy that you can apply to your life this week?

### BIBLE STUDY

1. James encourages his readers to "count it all joy." What does James mean when he says to "count"? Is this process emotional, intellectual, or both?
2. What is the difference between testing and temptation (James 1:13-15)? What intended end distinguishes between testing and tempting?

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How is it possible for Christians to have joy in the midst of difficult and painful situations? How can someone realistically do this?
2. Which Scriptures do you cling to when trials come? Why do these truths in particular give you joy?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Talk with your children about what trials are and how they help shape us to look more like Jesus.

Explain: *Trials are hard situations that we may not enjoy going through. But God tells us to think about trials as good things God is doing in our lives to help us grow in our trust in God.*

Consider using this object lesson about "[Sanding Rough Edges](#)." Use the lesson to demonstrate the purpose of going through trials. Then, have your child think of an example of a trial, either one they have gone through or a trial the family has gone through. Discuss how that trial has helped them look more like Jesus.

### APPLICATION

- Reflect on a recent time when you've experienced some kind of trial or suffering. Did you respond in the way James instructs? How can you strategically prepare to respond rightly the next time these situations arise?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [\*God's Grace in Your Suffering\*](#)

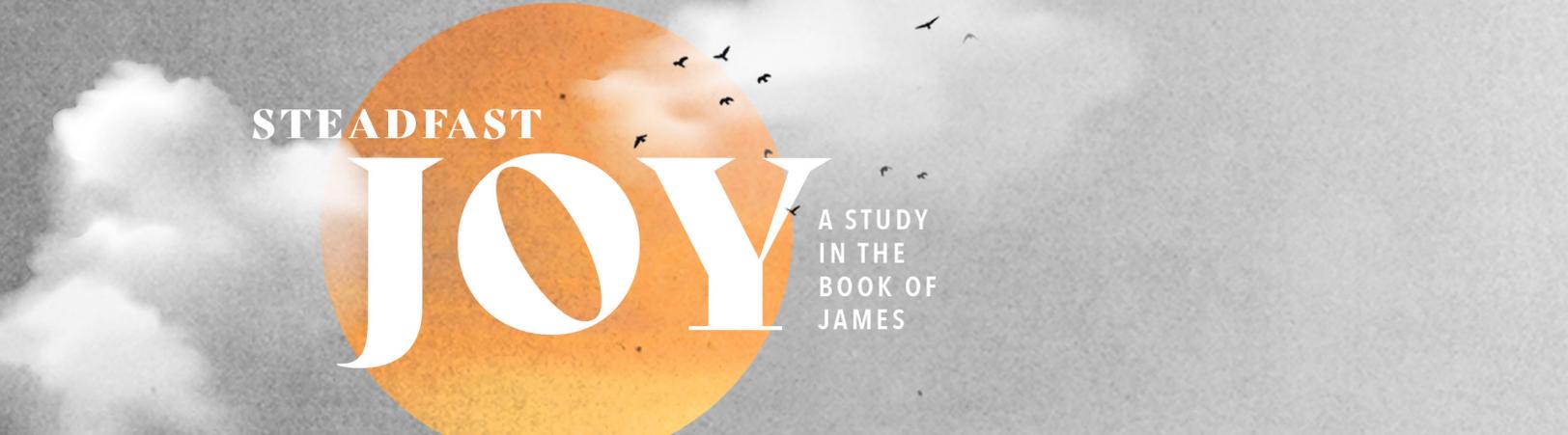
Book: [\*Everyday Faithfulness: The Beauty of Ordinary Perseverance in a Demanding World\*](#)

Article: "[How Suffering Reveals Your True Self](#)"

Article: "[10 Things You Should Know about Suffering](#)"

Bible Reading Plan: [Suffering: A 7-Day Reading Plan](#)

Podcast: [Where Is God in Suffering?](#)



STEADFAST

# JOY

A STUDY  
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WEEK TWO

## GOD'S PLAN TO MAKE YOU COMPLETE

James 1:4

### SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about steadfast joy that you can apply to your life this week?

### BIBLE STUDY

1. Use a Bible concordance or lexicon (either a physical book or [a digital resource](#)) to find some other words that are similar to the word "steadfastness" (Greek—ὑπομονή, hypomonē) used in James 1:4?
2. How does this word study help you better understand James's command to "let steadfastness have its full effect"?

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. At which points in your life have you found yourself trying to avoid hard situations? Why?
2. Why should the promise that believers will lack nothing comfort us? How does this promise impact your perspective of Jesus's return?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Steadfastness includes the idea of "patient endurance." Talk with your children about what patient endurance might look like. Give examples of times you've patiently endured trials in the past.

Talk with your children about God's desire for us to respond to trials in a godly way. Consider using [the sponge object lesson](#) to teach them how we should respond in times of trial.

### APPLICATION

- Reflect on a challenging situation you've experienced. List the ways in which the Lord used the situation to help you mature in your faith. Thank God for his faithfulness during the lowest valleys of life.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Book: [\*God's Grace in Your Suffering\*](#)

Book: [\*Suffering: Gospel Hope When Life Doesn't Make Sense\*](#)

Article: "[How to Suffer Well](#)"

Article: "[If God Loves You, He Will Prune You](#)"

Article: "[Don't Waste Your Suffering](#)"

Bible Reading Plan: [Suffering: A 7-Day Reading Plan](#)

Podcast: "[How Do I Find Hope in Suffering?](#)"

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WEEK THREE

## ASKING GOD FOR WISDOM

James 1:5-8

### SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about steadfast joy that you can apply to your life this week?

### BIBLE STUDY

1. In 1 Kings 3:3-14, we read of a conversation between God and King Solomon in which Solomon asks God for wisdom. Read the story and consider why it is that God gave wisdom to Solomon.
2. The word translated “generously” (ἀπλῶς, haplos) only shows up one time in the New Testament—here in this verse. Do a quick word study to gain a more complete understanding of this word's significance.
3. Reread this week's passage. What condition does James identify for how we are to ask for wisdom? What do you think this means?

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so difficult to ask God for wisdom without doubting? What doubts often arise when you ask God for wisdom?
2. Where do you tend to look for wisdom (wisdom for big decisions as well as wisdom in managing day-to-day life)?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Read James 1:5-7 together. Draw your children's attention to how James compares praying while doubting with waves of the sea. Consider watching [this video](#) as an introduction to your discussion about waves and/or talk about a time your family has seen waves in an ocean or lake.

*As you discuss the power of waves, explain: James compares our faith to the water that should normally be steady and constant. But when doubts come, they blow away our trust in God's control. In those moments, we can get tossed around like waves during a storm. James teaches us that when we ask God for wisdom, we should fully trust him to give it to us. Being double-minded means that someone is asking God for wisdom while also doubting that God will give them wisdom. This person is like a “destructive interference” wave—faith and doubting act as opposite waves that cancel each other out. In verse 7, James teaches that the end result of this kind of prayer is that God does not give them wisdom.*

## APPLICATION

- Make a list of the areas where you have trusted in your own wisdom to make the right decision. Consider the outcomes of these situations, particularly the ones in which God revealed how his ways and his wisdom are much better than your own. Pray with someone, asking God for wisdom in these areas.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [\*Praying Together\*](#)

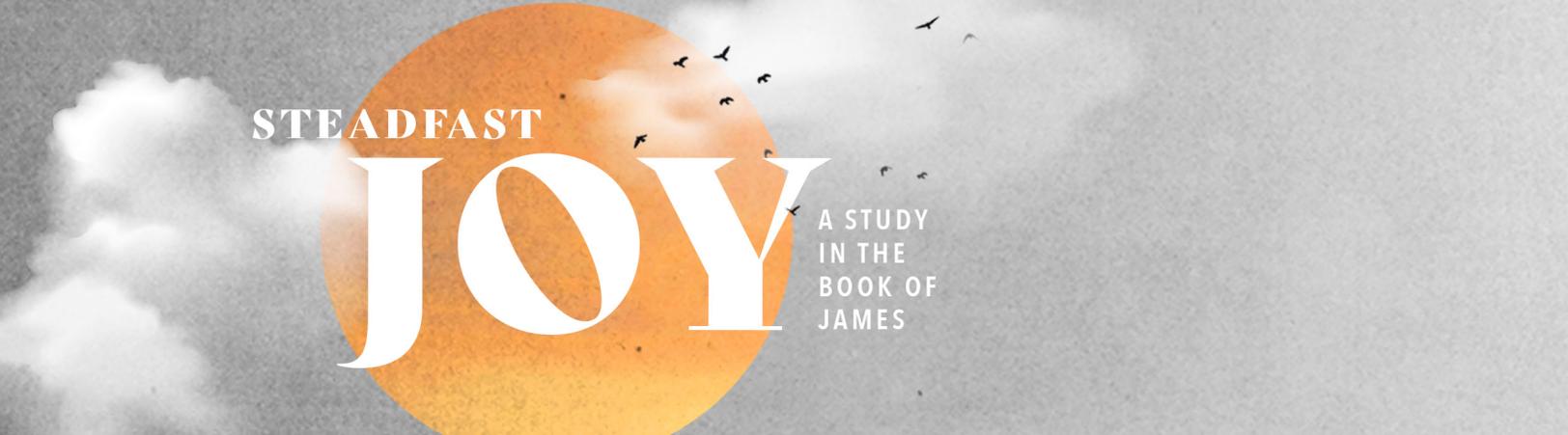
Book: [\*Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church\*](#)

Bible: [ESV Prayer Bible](#)

Article: "[Yoda and Our Search for Wisdom](#)"

Article: "[10 Things You Should Know About Prayer](#)"

Podcast: "[How Do I Grow in Wisdom?](#)"



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WEEK FOUR

## THE GREAT REVERSAL

James 1:9-11

### SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about poverty and wealth that you can apply to your life this week?

### BIBLE STUDY

1. How does James 1:9-11 relate to enduring trials?
2. How should James 1:10-11 affect your attitude about your career and your possessions?
3. In what sense does someone in humble circumstances have a high position? Why is this something to take pride in (see 1:12, 18 and 2:5)?

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Do you consider yourself to be in humble or rich circumstances?
2. What does James instruct you to boast in? Is that difficult for you? Why or why not?
3. How does the knowledge that life is short affect how you live day to day?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Use the questions below from the Sunday Field Guide from Children's Ministries to help you engage your children in this week's sermon. For additional questions and direction on discipling your kids this week, check out the full [Sunday Field Guide](#).

- Does your favorite Christmas gift from last year make you as happy now as it did when you opened it? Why or why not?
- Are riches bad? What are some good things you could do with riches?
- Why can riches tempt us to forget God?

## APPLICATIONS

Reflect on your view of money in light of Jesus's return. Read what Proverbs 11:4 says about the effect money has at the last judgment.

- Pray for God to reveal how you value money compared to how you value Jesus's righteousness.
- Take tangible steps to make Jesus's righteousness a priority in your heart. Consider sharing these steps with a spouse, trusted friend, or accountability partner.
- Need help applying financial wisdom or biblical stewardship? We offer free financial coaching. [Request Financial Coaching](#).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [\*Redeeming Money: How God Reveals and Reorients Our Hearts\*](#)

Book: [\*Money, Possessions, and Eternity\*](#)

Article: "[Money is Not Your Master](#)"

Article: "[The Duality of Money's Power](#)"

Verses: "[10 Key Bible Verses on Money](#)"

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WEEK FIVE

## THE BLESSING OF BEING STEADFAST

James 1:12

### SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. What did you learn about steadfastness that you can apply to your life this week?

### BIBLE STUDY

1. Compare verse 12 with 1 Peter 1:6-7. According to these passages, what is the result of remaining steadfast in trials?
2. Conduct a word study on "crown" (στέφανος, stephanos). As you research, consider how this word is most frequently used in the New Testament. How does this help you better understand the reward for steadfastness?
3. What does James say is the primary motivation of people who endure trials and receive the crown of life? Is this your motivation?

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between trial and temptation? Why is this an important distinction for us to understand before we study verses 13-15 next week?
2. When referring to the crown of life being the Christian's reward, C. L. Mitton said, "The rewards are of a kind that only a true Christian would be able to appreciate." Is this a reward that inspires you to love God while enduring trials?
3. In which area are you constantly asking God for the strength to remain steadfast?

### FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Use the questions below from the Sunday Field Guide from Children's Ministries to help you engage your children in this week's sermon. For additional questions and direction on discipling your kids this week, check out the full [Sunday Field Guide](#).

- What does this verse promise to people who continue in faith until they die?
- How can remembering the ways God promises to bless Christians after they die help you when you are going through something hard?

- Which Bible verses can we remember to help us “stand the test” when things are hard?

## **APPLICATIONS**

Experiencing trials can result in isolation from others if we become focused on our own suffering. This week, ask someone if they are enduring a trial and commit to pray for them. At the end of the week, follow up to see how they are doing.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Book: [\*A Shelter in the Time of Storm: Meditations on God and Trouble\*](#)

Book: [\*Suffering and the Sovereignty of God\*](#)

Book: [\*Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy\*](#)

Article: “[A Timely Reminder on God’s Purpose in Suffering](#)”

Article: “[3 Doctrines that Sustain Us in Suffering](#)”

Article: “[Help! It Feels Like God Is Far Away in My Suffering](#)”

Article: “[10 Key Bible Verses on Endurance](#)”

Article: “[10 Key Bible Verses on Patience](#)”