

Soul Shaper
22 June 2006
James 1:1-12

Group Shaper

Read James 1:1-12

Side Bar It takes very little to constitute faith, but if you have even a very small amount, it can grow and mature through trials and God's Word.

1. To whom is James writing? What is the significance of knowing who the readers of this letter are?
2. As we live out the instructions James gives us, what might be a common mistake we make regarding our expectations of others? From where should we draw our expectations?
3. James and Jesus in their time would have faced trials like stoning, imprisonment, beatings, death and the destruction of entire families just for saying, "Jesus is Lord." Something we take very much for granted. What are trials we may experience in the course of a day? What do we do in the face of these trials? How do we react?
4. What does it look like to accept the trials we face? What kind of reflection do we do once we have come past them?
5. When a trial is in front of us and we don't know how to handle it where do we tend to turn to gain wisdom? How might a current trial look different if you asked God for the wisdom to handle it?
6. What effect do our trials have on those we lead? What about those who serve alongside us? Are these effects shaped by Christ?

Read James 1:1-12 focus on 1:1

1. To whom is James writing? What is the significance of understanding who the readers of this letter would be?
2. What are the expectations James has of his readers? From what point of common understanding do both James and his readers come?
3. As we live out the instructions James gives us, what might be a common mistake we make regarding our expectations of others? From where should our expectations be built?
4. What expectations do you find yourself having of those who work alongside you at Threads? What about out in the workplace?
5. Who would you identify as someone you follow? What are the expectations you have of your leaders? Can you identify anyone who follows you? What expectations do you have of them?
6. How often do our expectations of others go un-met? Why might that be?

Read James 1:1-12 focus on 1:2-7

Side Bar God's spiritual wisdom is practical. It is divine, going beyond common sense. God's spiritual wisdom is Christ like. It helps us grow to become more like Christ

1. From where are the trials to which James is referring coming?
2. Could it be that our problems exist because of spiritual immaturity? What does that look like in the day to day of life?
3. Upon self reflection, can you identify one or two problems you currently face? Instead of looking at the problem as separate from you, can you identify your connection to the problem and imagine how your role might look different?
4. When we pray to God to help us grow through our problems, how often does the situation remain, but cease to be a problem because our perspective changes?
5. What is your typical reaction under pressure? How does this affect those serving alongside you, what about those who are trying to lead you? Can you see the effects on someone who might be following you? What are they?

Read James 1:1-12 focus on 1:9-12

Side Bar Spiritual Maturity is evident in our life when we pray for God to align our desires with his purposes.

1. If wealth, power and status have no meaning to God, why do we place so much importance on them?
2. If your material possessions were gone, what would you have left? What is produced by focusing on the material things valued by this world? (Mark 4:18-19)
3. In what aspect are we all coming to God from the same place?
4. As you serve alongside others, what effect does this understanding have?
5. As we live among one another, from whom or from where do we get the solid footing we need to mature in our relationships with one another and with God?
6. If you were to step outside the business of everyday life, would you say that your faith is growing? Is it staying about the same? What could you do to grow from wherever you currently are?