talk it over

Sermon Discussion Guide

How to Profit from Your Problems

James - Part 1

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations. Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, [3] because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. [4] Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. [5] If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. [6] But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."

James 1:1-6

1. Share why James says to "consider it pure joy" when you encounter problems. What assurance did James have about the results that would come from these trials in life (vs. 3,4)?

2. James urges three godly responses to problems: Rejoice, pray, and relax. Which of these responses is the most difficult for you when you are facing a problem? Why?

3. Most of the time we don't understand why problems come our way or what their purpose could be. In verse 5, how does James encourage us? How can these words help us when we find ourselves in circumstances that don't make sense to us?

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all
our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort
we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ
flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.
If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted,
it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the
same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm,
because we know that just as you share in our
sufferings, so also you share in our comfort."
2 Corinthians 1:3-7

1. According to the verses above, how can the difficulties of life prepare you and provide opportunities to serve others?

2. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 clearly tells us how our own suffering can be used to help others in times of trouble. What are some specific ways God has comforted you in suffering that you might use to comfort others in their times of need?

Problems often provide us with opportunities to purify our faith, fortify our patience, and sanctify our character. As we see God's work in our lives, we naturally desire to share with others what God has done for us.

In what ways can a life that has "profited from problems" open doors to sharing Christ with those around us?