



HOW TO THRIVE THROUGH TRIALS

START UP

The book of James, written by the brother of Jesus, offers some of the most practical advice in the whole Bible. It is filled with wisdom to help us live better. The first area he focuses on is something all of us are facing, have faced, or will face, and that is handling hardship. When life gets hard, how can we handle it in a way that makes us stronger? Let's continue the conversation started this weekend.

- A life hack is an unusually simple and clever tip or technique for doing something more easily and efficiently. As Merriam-Webster puts it, they are “all about eliminating life’s manifold frustrations in simple and deliciously clever ways.” What is the best life hack you’ve heard of or used?
- Jeff talked about Stretch Armstrong, a popular toy that could be pulled and stretched out a long, long ways. Did you have a Stretch Armstrong growing up? What was the most popular toy from your childhood?
- Have you ever known a “Stretch Armstrong”—a resilient person who handled trials in a way that made him or her stronger? Share with the group why this person stands out to you.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

Read **James 1:1-5** together.

- What irrational perspective does James tell us to have during trials? What does this perspective produce?
- David Brooks said, “When most people think about the future, they dream up ways they might live happier lives. But notice this phenomenon. When people remember the crucial events that formed them, they don’t usually talk about happiness. It is usually the ordeals that seem most significant. Most people shoot for happiness but feel formed through suffering.”
- Is there a hard ordeal in your past that wound up being a crucial event that helped form you for good?
- When someone close in your life is facing a trial, what have you learned about caring for him or her well? What are helpful things to say? What isn’t helpful?
- What do you think it looks like to “journey well” through a trial? What kind of mindset does it require?

Read **James 1:12** together.

- What promise of God does James remind us of when we face trials? What are some other promises of God you’ve found helpful to remember when you’re going through something difficult?
- On a scale of 1-10, how difficult is life for you right now? What trials are you facing, or what is making life challenging?
- What is one thing you took away from the message or this discussion that can encourage you as you face a challenge today?

TAKE AWAY

Take an extended time to pray for each other as you face trials. Ask God to help you all grab hold of the unique opportunities of this season, journey well, and find His encouragement in God’s promises.