

Teaching #1: "Do It!"

NOT IN OUR OWN _____

REMEMBER OUR _____ IN CHRIST.

1. I _____ TO BEAR _____
JOHN 15:4-5

1. I AM _____ WITH _____ OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
ACTS 1:8, EPH. 5:18, EPH. 1:19

THE _____ OF THE SPIRIT IS DISPLAYED THROUGHOUT OUR _____ IN
THE BOOK OF JAMES, GALATIANS 5:22-25

week

ONE

Week 1: Day 1:

James 1: Discover

Read through James 1. As you read it, write down key words that summarize topics he addresses in this chapter. I've done one for you as an example.

- Trials
-
-
-
-
-

Which verse stands out to you as something you could really benefit from in your life?

Write down any verses that you would like to understand more.

Is there a verse in this chapter that you have had a personal experience with? For example, I wrote verse 17 on my wedding brochures I gave to everyone at our wedding. Perhaps you made a decision in your life based on one of these verses. If so, share below. If not, you will soon after continuing on in this study!

Communication with God:

Thank God for the life lessons you are about to undertake.

Ask God for strength and help to daily do your study and to apply what you learn.

Thank Him for what you are about to learn.

Week 1: Day 2: James 1:1: My Position

James is one of the earliest letters written in the New Testament, written 2-5 years before Paul ever set pen to papyrus to write one of his famous letters. It was written by Jesus' half brother James.

What does John 7:5 tell us about James, as one of Jesus' brothers?

Somewhere through Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection, James had a change of heart, mind, and life. How does he now refer to himself in verse 1?

How does he refer to his half brother Jesus?

What are some characteristics you know about a relationship between a slave (or bondservant as some translations say) and her master or Lord?

Who is in charge?

Who is the owner of all?

Who serves whom?

In Biblical times, a bondservant could have been one who voluntarily gave up her rights to serve another. This slave had been set free but then voluntarily bound herself to her master. What did Jesus set us free from in Romans 8:1-2?

What does Jesus say we are to do as His followers in Matthew 16:24-25?

How do you practice this in your own life?

How might your obedience to Christ change if you put into practice the idea of being a voluntary slave to Christ rather than just a follower of Christ?

Can you truthfully say that you are a voluntary slave of Jesus?

Have you given Him complete control over all you own and hold dear to your heart?

If the answer is yes, then you are ready to receive the practical teaching of this book of the Bible. If the answer is no, ask God to bring you to the place where you are able to say yes. This book will still speak, comfort, and challenge you. It is layered with one rich application after another from beginning to end. It is full of life lessons for us as bondservants of Jesus.

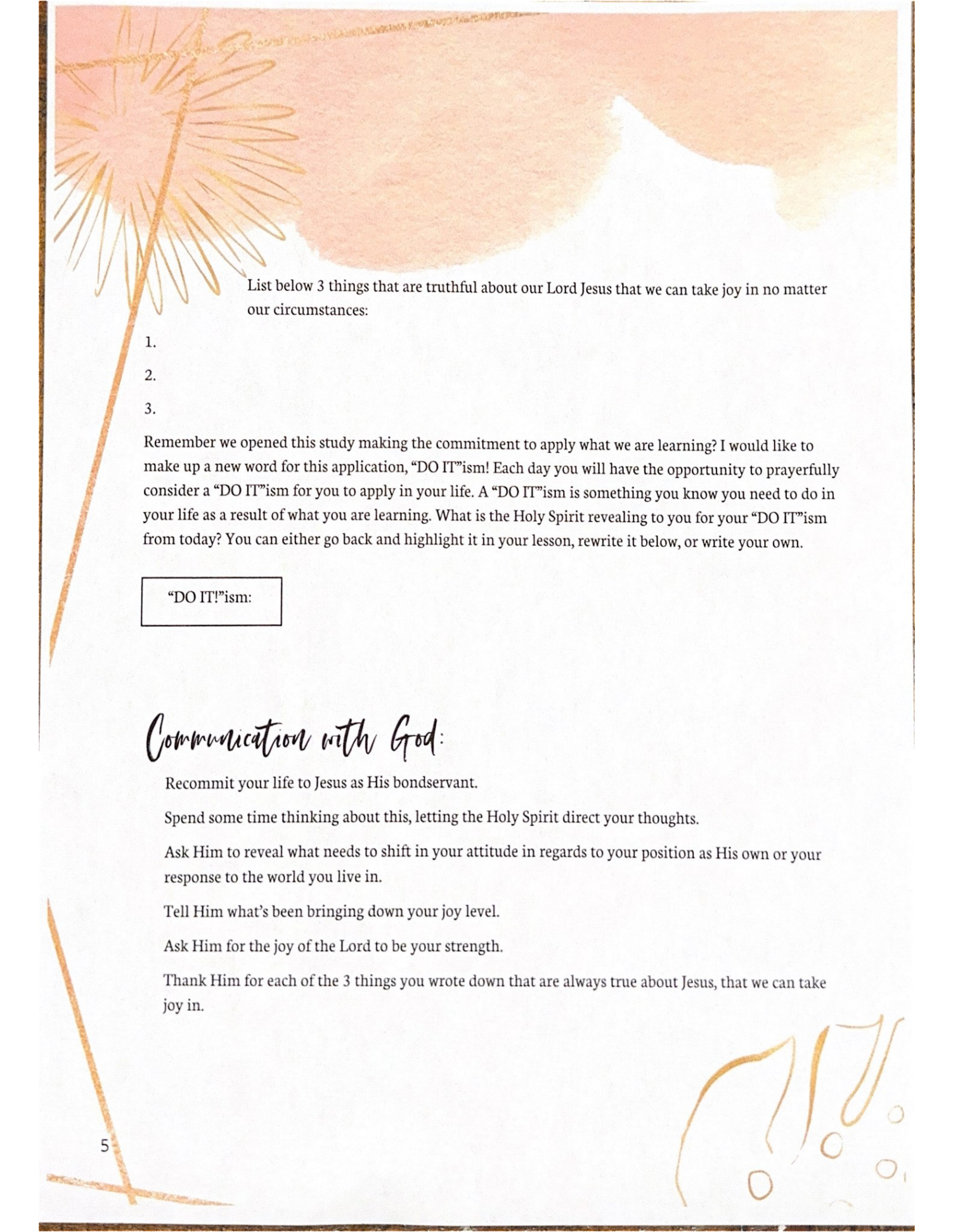
Who were the original followers of Jesus that this was written to in the second half of verse 1?

These 12 tribes refer to the Jewish Christians that were scattered around the world. They were Jewish believers living among a Greek culture. They had been used to living according to a strict set of laws and rules and now were wondering how to live their new lives in Christ. James had a lot to tell them about this through the leading of the Holy Spirit. We too are believers scattered among the world. We are believers living among those who do not necessarily follow Jesus. What is our response to be?

The first answer to this is actually found uncovered in the Greek word that James chooses for "Greetings." If you have Blue Letter Bible App on your device (or you can get it for free on the internet), you can look up this verse, tap on it, and tap on Interlinear. From there it gives you each word in English and Greek. If you click on that, it shows you how this Greek word is translated into English throughout the Bible. In this case, it is translated 62 times in some form of JOY! Our response to living in the world as a believer is JOY!

What does joy give us according to Nehemiah 8:10?

In the midst of a world that is sad, struggling, and sinful, we can still have JOY as a voluntary slave of Jesus! How's your joy in the Lord been lately on a scale of 1 to 10?



List below 3 things that are truthful about our Lord Jesus that we can take joy in no matter our circumstances:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Remember we opened this study making the commitment to apply what we are learning? I would like to make up a new word for this application, "DO IT"ism! Each day you will have the opportunity to prayerfully consider a "DO IT"ism for you to apply in your life. A "DO IT"ism is something you know you need to do in your life as a result of what you are learning. What is the Holy Spirit revealing to you for your "DO IT"ism from today? You can either go back and highlight it in your lesson, rewrite it below, or write your own.

"DO IT!"ism:

Communication with God:

Recommit your life to Jesus as His bondservant.

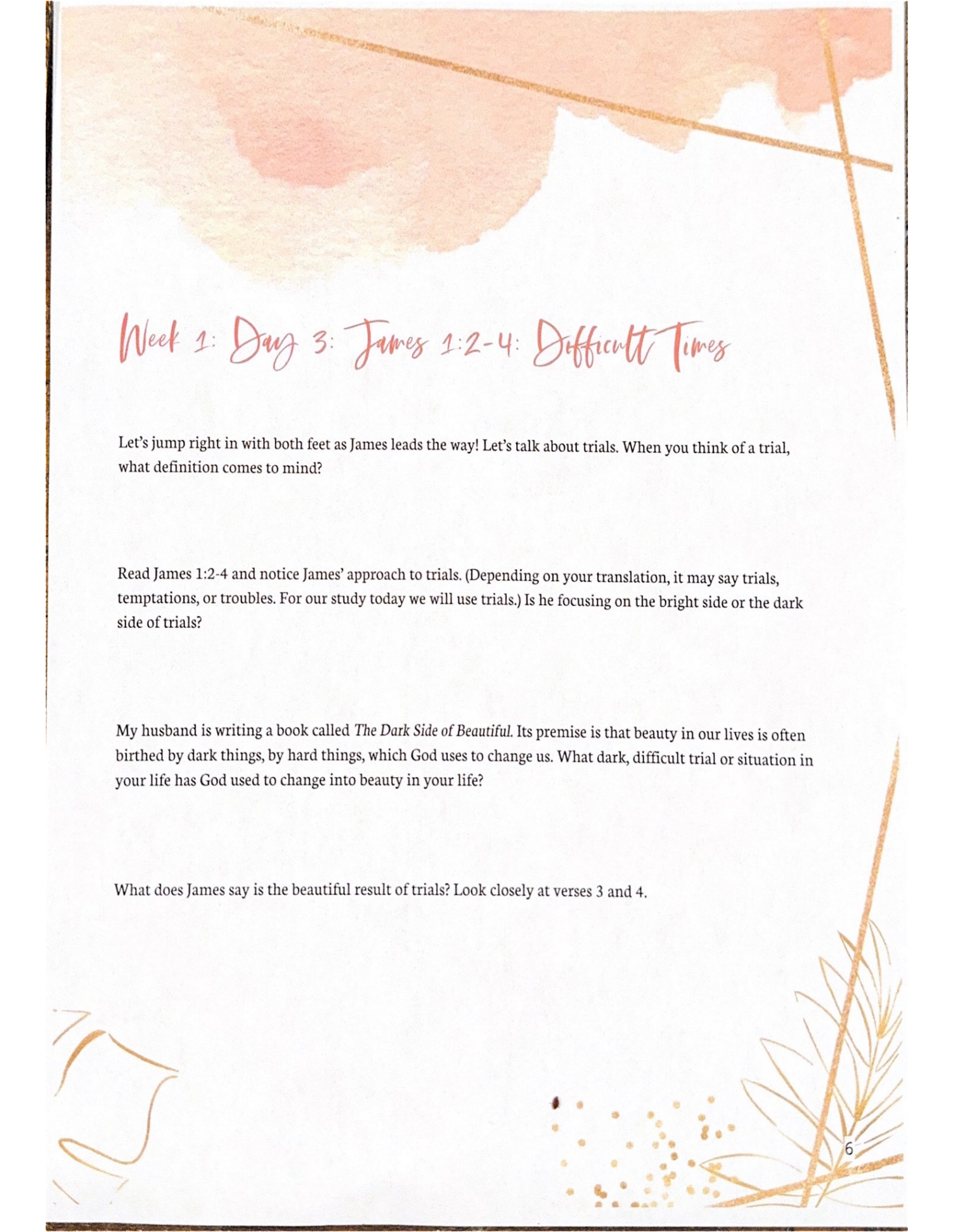
Spend some time thinking about this, letting the Holy Spirit direct your thoughts.

Ask Him to reveal what needs to shift in your attitude in regards to your position as His own or your response to the world you live in.

Tell Him what's been bringing down your joy level.

Ask Him for the joy of the Lord to be your strength.

Thank Him for each of the 3 things you wrote down that are always true about Jesus, that we can take joy in.



Week 1: Day 3: James 1:2-4: Difficult Times

Let's jump right in with both feet as James leads the way! Let's talk about trials. When you think of a trial, what definition comes to mind?

Read James 1:2-4 and notice James' approach to trials. (Depending on your translation, it may say trials, temptations, or troubles. For our study today we will use trials.) Is he focusing on the bright side or the dark side of trials?

My husband is writing a book called *The Dark Side of Beautiful*. Its premise is that beauty in our lives is often birthed by dark things, by hard things, which God uses to change us. What dark, difficult trial or situation in your life has God used to change into beauty in your life?

What does James say is the beautiful result of trials? Look closely at verses 3 and 4.

Depending on the version you are using, James says it produces patience, endurance, or steadfastness. We want our faith to last for eternity. We don't want to be the kind of Jesus follower that Jesus referred to in Matthew 13:20-21 that has no root and withers quickly. That's what happens if we never experience hardship. Our faith will not last. The difficulties make our roots grow deeper into the truth of God's Word and the engagement with Jesus through prayer. Endurance hangs onto Jesus in the struggle. Endurance listens for God in the pain.

C.S. Lewis wrote, "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains." (*The Problem of Pain*, p.81)

This is a theme that is repeated continually by various authors in the New Testament. Trials/difficult situations are used by God for good. Let's see what a couple other famous authors of the New Testament through the Holy Spirit have to say about the benefits of trials.

Paul:

2 Corinthians 12:9-10: What was Paul's attitude about why he welcomed weakness and hard times?

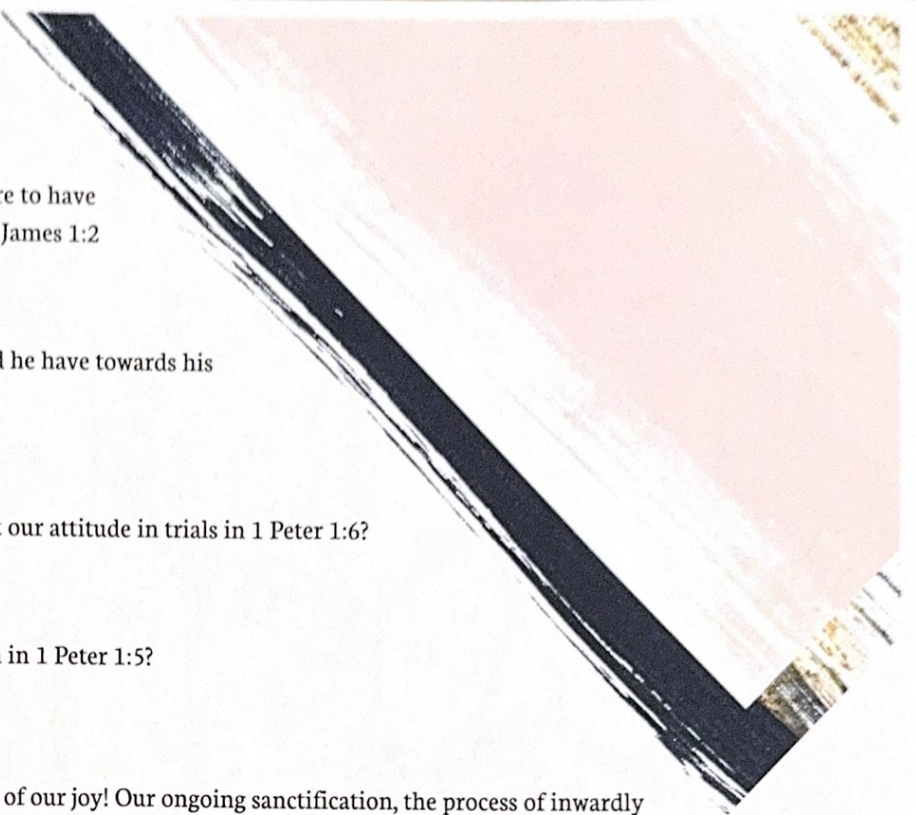
2 Corinthians 4:16-18: What is happening inside of us as we go through each trial that gives us strength and purpose through the difficulties?

Peter:

1 Peter 1:6-7: What did Peter think the purpose of trials is?

Do you need some more endurance, some more patience, some more dependence on God, some more genuineness of your faith, some more renewing of your inner woman? The answer for each of us should be a resounding "YES!" Then let those trials, those situations that we tend to cringe toward, do their work in you.

When we have this perspective, we are able, with the help of our Helper the Holy Spirit, to change our attitudes toward these difficulties.



What attitude does James say we are to have when we are going through a trial? James 1:2

How about Paul? What attitude did he have towards his struggles in 2 Corinthians 12:10?

And Peter? What does he say about our attitude in trials in 1 Peter 1:6?

What fact are we finding our joy in in 1 Peter 1:5?

Our coming salvation is the source of our joy! Our ongoing sanctification, the process of inwardly being renewed to become more dependent on and more like Jesus, is what is to bring us joy! What a challenge this is for me personally and, if I'm reading many Christians right, for others as well. How often do we ask one another, "How's your week going?" The response is truthful, but not joyful, "Oh, I'm going through trials. I'm hanging in there." What do you think a more joyful, yet still truthful, response should be?

What difficulty are you currently going through that God wants to use to grow you in?

Up to this point, what has your attitude toward this struggle been? Does it need changing to joy?

What is God shouting to you that He can sanctify (or develop) in you through this?

Are you letting this difficulty pull you closer to God? Are you seeking Him in prayer and His Word to reveal His purpose, to come through with an act that only God can do?

I want to close this day with a quote from a sister of ours, Maggie Elizondo. This sister was paralyzed by gunshot wounds in a traumatic happening in her life. She almost died, yet it was this event that God used to introduce her to Himself. I have always known Maggie in a wheelchair. I have watched her grow in her faith through her physical suffering and challenges. I have rejoiced in seeing the work God is doing in her. Recently in an Instagram post, Maggie posted a throwback picture of herself standing upright and following is what she wrote underneath it. "I can't help but reflect on who I was, am, and how much I have grown as a woman, mother, and daughter of the most high God. Tragedy falls upon all of us in life at some point and in different ways. It is meant to make us stronger and wiser in our individual purpose, not to tear us down. Do not allow the enemy to victimize you with demise. Keep your smile on and stay true to you always."

Yes sister! Stay true to who God is making you to be for eternity. Welcome with joy the salvation and sanctification He is working in you through your trials.

I would like to help you with your "DO IT"ism for today: CHOOSE JOY. Do it! LIVE IN JOY! Even through the trials and especially as a result of the trials. James says to "consider it joy"...make a choice to think of this trial as a joy. This choice made continually will eventually help us to be able to more naturally rejoice. A new habit, a different attitude, always begins with a choice. Choose joy!

Partner up with someone from your small group this week and share the struggle and pray for one another. Commit to continue to pray for one another through the week and follow up the following week to see what God is doing in this trial.

What's another "DO IT!"ism God is showing you from your work today?

Communication with God:

Tell God about the struggle you are going through.

Ask Him to reveal what character quality He is using this struggle to develop in you. Write it below.

Ask Him to change your attitude to joy.

Meditate (spend some time in thoughtfulness while allowing God to guide your thoughts) on your coming eternal salvation. Think on your future glory self. Thank God that this quality He is developing in you is something that will last for eternity.

Write down any reflections or prayers below during or after your conversation with God.

Week 1: Day 4: James 1:5-8: Need Wisdom? Have Doubt?

When going through challenges, trials, difficulties, and daily life, if we are truthful with ourselves, we know that we need wisdom! We can try to figure it out on our own and often we do. However, this passage for today contains a sound promise for us to grasp onto and put into practice in our lives. Read James 1:5-8.

How do you define wisdom?

How does the Bible define wisdom? Psalm 111:10

How are the righteous characterized? Psalm 37:30

This is a lofty calling, to be a woman who speaks wisdom. How can we receive this wisdom according to James 1:5?

What do we learn about God's character in James 1:5?

Our God loves to give! The CEB version says it well... *But anyone who needs wisdom should ask God, whose very nature is to give to everyone without a second thought, without keeping score. Wisdom will certainly be given to those who ask. It doesn't matter to God how many times we ask or what we ask about, He loves to speak wisdom into our lives!*

What situation or topic do you need wisdom from God in right now in your life?

Ask Him for wisdom and when He gives it, come back here and write the wisdom He gave you below.

Why if we ask, do we not always receive it right away?

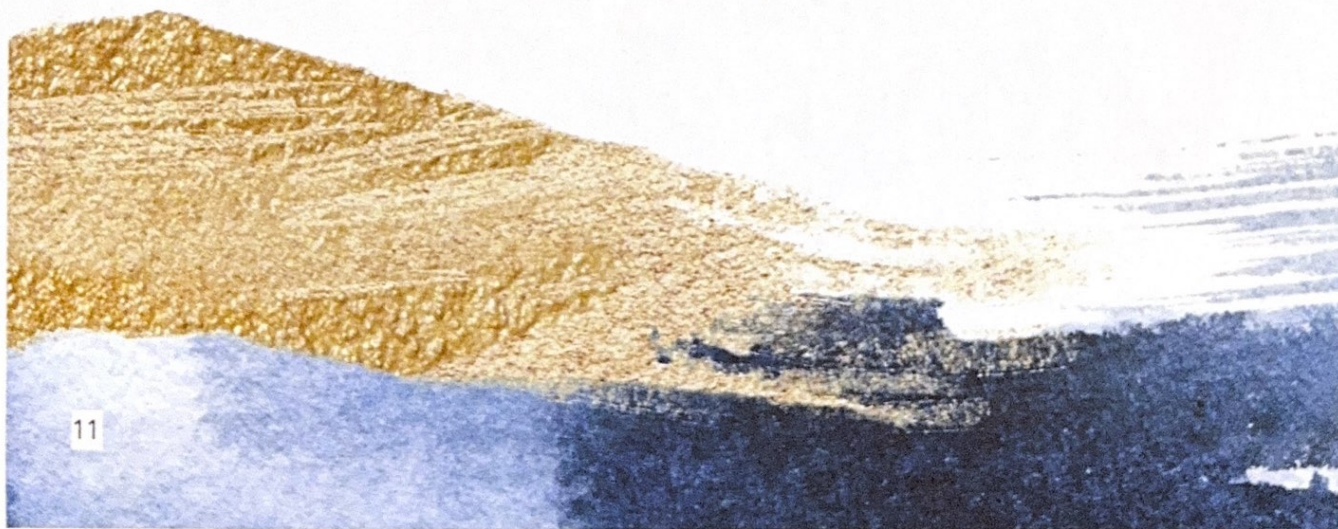
I believe there are two reasons for this. We will deal with the one addressed in this passage for today in James 1:6-8. What is it?

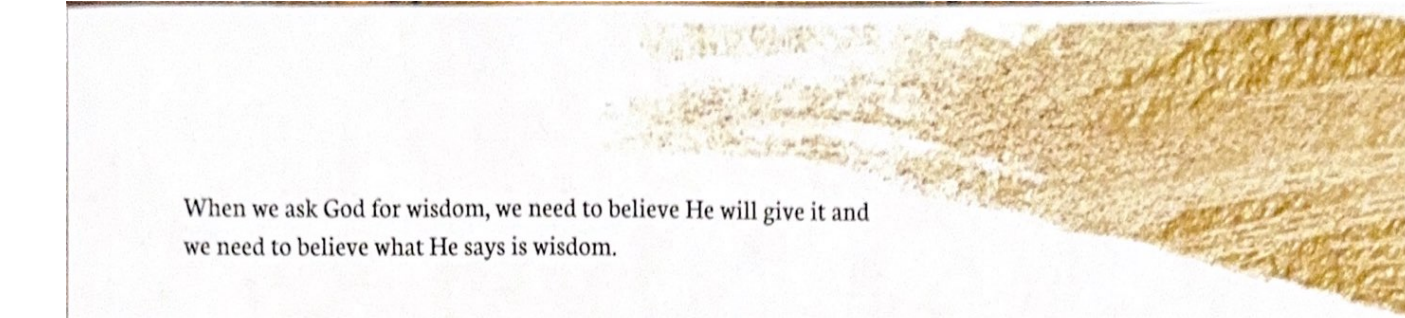
I believe the doubting here can come down to two types of doubt. The first type is doubting that God even exists. Hebrews 11: 6 tells us, *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.* In fact, faith itself is defined in Hebrews 11: 1 as, *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (NIV)* We can say that we ask God, but do we really have the faith that He is real and He is able to answer? For most of us doing this Bible Study the answer is, "Yes, of course I do!"

The second type of doubting is doubting the wisdom that God gives. Often the wisdom God gives is not what we expect. Paul makes an attempt to contrast God's wisdom with the world's wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1. Here are some highlights from his thoughts on that. **18** *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* **19** *For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."* **25** *For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.* **27** *But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.* **28** *God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,* **29** *so that no one may boast before him.*

In summary, what God says is wisdom, the world says is _____.

God says, "Love your enemy. Lose your life to find it. Deny yourself. Fix your eyes on eternal things." The world says, "Give them what they deserve. Put yourself first. Do what feels good at the moment." These things are in sharp contrast with one another.





When we ask God for wisdom, we need to believe He will give it and we need to believe what He says is wisdom.

What is our doubting likened to in James 1:6?

Living in Southern California, I have spent my fair share of time boogie boarding and body surfing in the Pacific Ocean. I have been rescued by lifeguards before when drug out to sea by an unforeseen rip tide current. These currents are unpredictable and will drag you out without you even realizing it. Our doubts are the same way. We get caught in them and they lead us to a dangerous place. "Does God really want me to do that?" "Will God really take care of me if I follow Him in the direction He is showing me to go?" Sister, if you ask God for the wisdom, be ready to "Do It"!

What does 2 Corinthians 10:5 say we should do with these thoughts of doubt that are trying to lead us to dangerous places?

We take it captive by identifying the doubt, speaking the truth of God's wisdom, and acting on it.



James 1:7-8 seems so harsh. Before we grow discouraged, let's look at a couple of things from Jesus' ministry. How did Jesus heal in Matthew 9:28-29?

Doubting is another term for double-minded. We believe God, but then we don't believe God. I wonder if you can identify with me? I personally have often felt that I want to believe but I'm having trouble believing. I want to live with no doubts, yet they seem to overtake me. I have always experienced such comfort and victory from reading the following verses. Read Mark 9:20-25.

The father knew Jesus was the One to go to. What did Jesus challenge him on in verse 23?

How did the father respond in verse 24?


How did Jesus respond to this heartfelt plea of the father in verse 25?

Oh, the joy of Jesus' response! When we are real with God and express our hearts to Him, He always responds in grace and love. When asking for wisdom and struggling with doubt, cry out, "Lord, I want to believe you. Overtake any part of me that is doubting!" He will do that and you will have the wisdom you need.

James 1:8 is a terrific gauge to determine if we are letting doubt overcome us in our seeking wisdom from God. From this verse, what characterizes a person who can't decide to firmly believe in God, one who is letting doubts rather than faith rule?

Where is your life unstable?

Are you fully committing this area of your life to God, surrendering your doubts, and choosing to walk in faith, in the wisdom that God wants to give you?



What practical "DO IT!"ism would you like to apply to your life today?

Communication with God:

End this devotion time by being completely vulnerable with God.

Tell Him the areas your life is unstable in.

Tell Him where you need wisdom.

Confess where you feel double-minded.

Surrender your doubt to Him.

Ask Him to increase your faith, to take every thought captive, and to be obedient to follow through on the wisdom He gives.

Ask Him for wisdom.

Go back and write above the wisdom He gives for you "Do It" ism.



Week 1: Day 5: James 1:9-11: Money,

Money, Money!

Joy and faith, two things that are challenged by our earthly circumstances. Poverty or the daily struggle to get by, is often a trial that we can allow to rob us of our joy and faith or we can allow to grow our joy and faith. Have you ever experienced this? In other words, have you ever worried about how an extra or even essential bill was going to get paid? Has this worry ever caused you stress or lack of sleep? And there we have it... our joy and faith have been robbed by the daily financial struggle!

Read James 1:9-11

When thinking of your own current financial situation do you identify more with the “humble, lowly, or poor circumstances” or with the “rich”?

What has your attitude been regarding this situation throughout your life?

What does James say we should rejoice in if we are poor?

What do you think he means that the poor are glorying in their exaltation? Who is exalting and in what manner?

The International Children’s Bible says, *If a believer is poor, he should take pride that God has made him spiritually rich.* While the poor believer in this world may be poor according to the world’s standards, every believer possesses a richness that cannot be measured by this world’s standard. Every believer holds eternal riches of forgiveness, grace, love, the Holy Spirit, a heavenly future and so much more! What are some riches you can glory in now regardless of your current financial situation?

How are the rich contrasted here? How are they going to be humiliated or humbled according to the second half of verse 10?

What does Jesus say about the rich in Matthew 19:24?

What do you think James is cautioning against here in verse 10 and 11 for people who possess earthly riches? (Here's a clue. Notice whose pursuits the earthly rich person is following.)

Do earthly rich believers have the same inheritance and spiritual riches as the earthly poor Christian? Yes, every believer has the same riches! A true believer, whether rich or poor on earth, is following Jesus' pursuits. I believe Jesus and James are recognizing the fact that it is hard for a rich person to lay all that down to follow Jesus. Self-sufficiency, which riches bring, easily can draw one away from dependency on Christ.

What happens to OUR pursuits that are not led by God? Notice the powerful analogy James uses in verse 11.

Take a moment to consider your own pursuits. Write below a list of people, projects, and/or purposes you currently spend your time, energy, and money on throughout the typical month.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

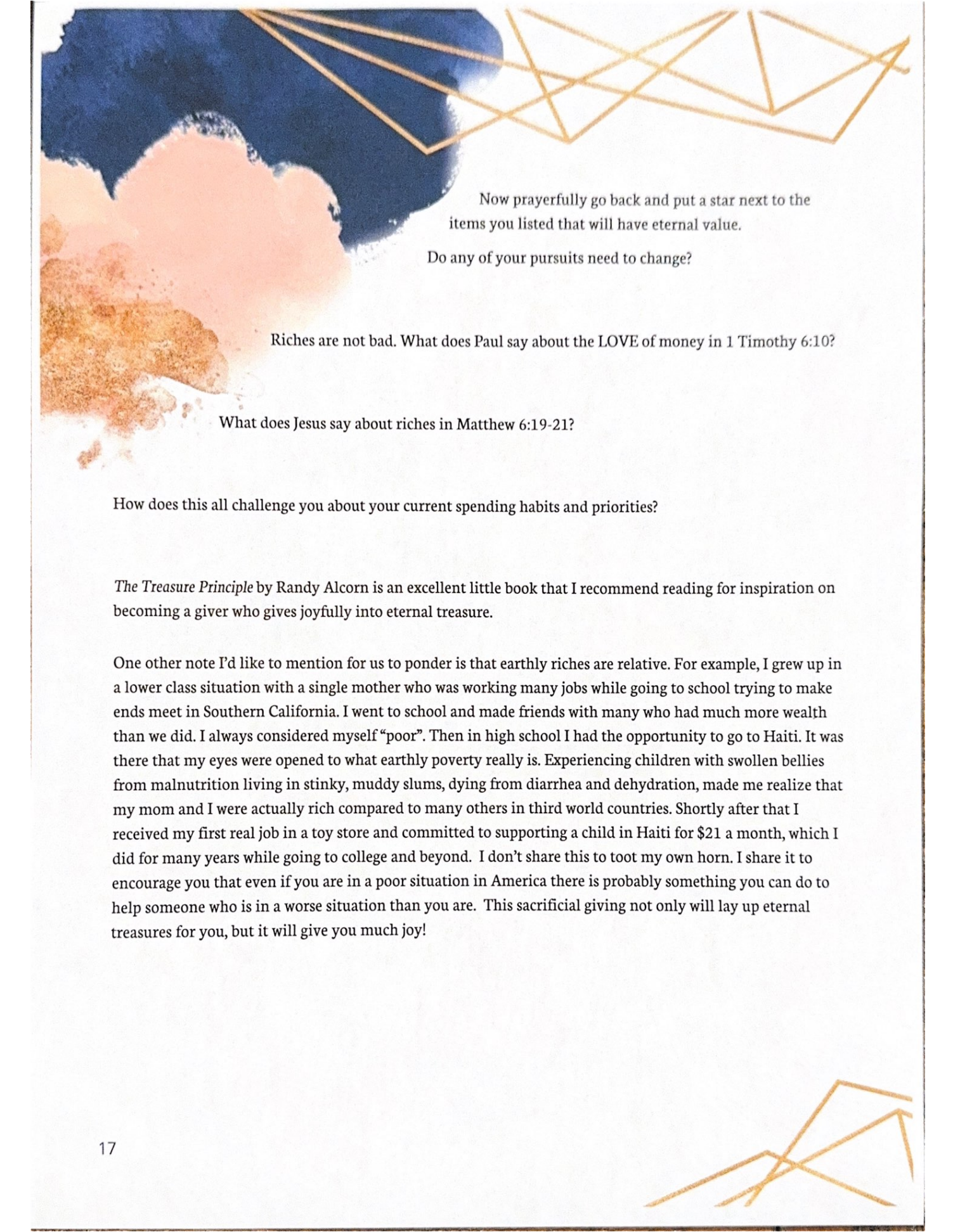
7.

8.

9.

10.





Now prayerfully go back and put a star next to the items you listed that will have eternal value.

Do any of your pursuits need to change?

Riches are not bad. What does Paul say about the LOVE of money in 1 Timothy 6:10?

What does Jesus say about riches in Matthew 6:19-21?

How does this all challenge you about your current spending habits and priorities?

The Treasure Principle by Randy Alcorn is an excellent little book that I recommend reading for inspiration on becoming a giver who gives joyfully into eternal treasure.

One other note I'd like to mention for us to ponder is that earthly riches are relative. For example, I grew up in a lower class situation with a single mother who was working many jobs while going to school trying to make ends meet in Southern California. I went to school and made friends with many who had much more wealth than we did. I always considered myself "poor". Then in high school I had the opportunity to go to Haiti. It was there that my eyes were opened to what earthly poverty really is. Experiencing children with swollen bellies from malnutrition living in stinky, muddy slums, dying from diarrhea and dehydration, made me realize that my mom and I were actually rich compared to many others in third world countries. Shortly after that I received my first real job in a toy store and committed to supporting a child in Haiti for \$21 a month, which I did for many years while going to college and beyond. I don't share this to toot my own horn. I share it to encourage you that even if you are in a poor situation in America there is probably something you can do to help someone who is in a worse situation than you are. This sacrificial giving not only will lay up eternal treasures for you, but it will give you much joy!

Is there something the Lord is putting on your heart today to invest in?

Ask Him how you will be able to do this sacrifice. Could it be giving up that daily Starbucks or recycling cans and bottles to give to another in need?

What "DO IT!"ism is God impressing on your heart today?

Take a few moments to look over your study from this first week. Is there a pattern God is revealing to you of what He wants to do in your life? If so, what is it?

Think about your week. As you have applied your "DO IT!"isms, what has been the result?

Communication with God:

Thank the Lord for your current earthly situation, whether rich or poor.

Ask Him to help you live entirely for Him in this situation you are in.

Thank God for the eternal riches that are yours right now.

Ask Him to help you glory or rejoice in these riches.

Present your pursuits to Jesus. Ask Him if there are any that need changing. Receive His approval and blessing on the things that you are pursuing that have eternal value.

Ask Him if there is someone else He wants you to invest in financially and ask Him how to do that.

Teaching # 2 : Do Grow in Endurance

JAMES 1:2-4, 1:12-18, AND 5:7-8

1. TRUTH ABOUT TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

2. TIPS FOR HOW TO GROW IN ENDURANCE