



February 4: James 1:1-11

1. James identifies himself as “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Knowing that James would have grown up with Jesus—known him as a child, teenager, young adult—does it seem remarkable to you that James would now call his brother “Lord” and “Christ”?
2. James addresses his letter “to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion,” but he is not writing only to Jewish believers. He is alluding to the fact that just as the children of Israel were dispersed throughout the world in their exile, so also believers in Christ are now aliens and strangers who are waiting for God to gather them home to himself (see also 1 Peter 1:1; 2:11). What, then, is the connection between verses 1 and 2? How does a reminder to Christians of their status as aliens and strangers in this world set up James’s exhortation to them to “count it all joy” when they meet trials?
3. The exhortation in verse 5 to ask God for wisdom is not disconnected from the theme of persevering under trials. Read Proverbs 2:1-15 in your group. What is wisdom? Where does it come from? What are the benefits of having wisdom?

4. The word translated “doubt” in verse 6 is literally “dispute.” It is used in many different contexts to refer to a dispute with another person. Here, though, James uses the word to refer to a person disputing within one’s own self! In other words, to *doubt* is to be a person of a fundamentally divided mind and a fundamentally inconsistent attitude toward God. It’s a reckless and wavering distrust—a *refusal* finally to trust God. The point is not that a Christian never has doubts; it’s that a Christian never allows his mind to become so divided and self-disputing that it *welcomes* those doubts. A Christian will always strive to take the side of God and truth against doubts when they arise. What are some strategies Christians can use to fight doubt? How can you resist becoming “a double-minded person, unstable in all your ways?”

5. What kinds of things besides wealth do we tend to rely on and boast in for a sense of well-being and security, rather than on God?