

**James 1:2-8**  
**Wisdom through the Fire**

I. We should choose to \_\_\_\_\_ because we \_\_\_\_\_

II. We should acknowledge \_\_\_\_\_ which come from \_\_\_\_\_

a. The \_\_\_\_\_ of wisdom in trials

A definition of wisdom

b. The \_\_\_\_\_ for wisdom while in trials

The question is not \_\_\_\_\_ we will lack wisdom, but \_\_\_\_\_ we lack wisdom

The only way for God to grow our faith is to give us a trial that is \_\_\_\_\_

c. Trials reveal a gap between our \_\_\_\_\_ and our \_\_\_\_\_

III. Seeking \_\_\_\_\_ and building \_\_\_\_\_ in times of trial

a. God calls us to ask \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

b. As we express our \_\_\_\_\_, we must ground our faith in \_\_\_\_\_

Closing challenge;

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. James 1:2 calls us to “count it all joy” when you meet various trials. Pastor Mike pointed out that this is a call to joy, not happiness. And it is a call to “count” or consider (a thinking word) it joy, not to feel joyful.
  - a. How would you describe the difference between feeling happy and counting it joy? If someone isn’t happy, can you still count it joy? If so, how?
  - b. The ultimate example of someone counting a trial joy is Jesus. Hebrews 12:2 tells us “*who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.*” What can we learn about this from the example of Jesus?
2. Many Christians have been taught that a sign of a mature faith is that they will not struggle when facing a trial. They believe a sign of maturity is the ability to have joy in the midst of the greatest trial, without any thoughts of anger toward God or questioning of His purposes.
  - a. What have you been taught over the years as the proper Christian response to trials? Have ever felt a pressure to “be happy” or to “just see the good” in the midst of suffering?
  - b. Have you felt the freedom to voice doubts about God’s wisdom and/or purpose behind the trials you are facing?
  - c. If a person felt doubts about God’s control and purpose in the events of their life, or even an anger at God for what he had allowed, but did not feel the freedom to openly acknowledge or express those feelings, what effect could these repressed doubts and feelings have on their faith?
3. Wisdom can be defined as “*The ability to accurately understand and apply God's teaching and God's promises to the details of the living out of our life.*”
  - a. Can you think of times when you had certain beliefs about God that you suddenly found hard to believe and explain in the light of certain events and/or circumstances?
  - b. Pastor Mike talks about the gap between our theology and our practical beliefs. What is this gap? Why do trials expose this gap?
  - c. Hebrews 11:1 teaches us that “*faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*” According to this, our true faith in God’s promises and character is not revealed until we cannot see His plan, or we cannot understand His purposes. Do you agree with this?
4. James 1 teaches that God expects us to struggle in trials because He is seeking to grow our faith by giving us a trial that is bigger than our current faith can handle.
  - a. Can you think of a time when God gave you a trial that was bigger than your faith? How did you deal with it?
  - b. With each trial, God also provides the means through which we can endure it and grow through it. Looking back at previous trials, what provision and grace of God can you now see in retrospect that you could not see at the time?
  - c. We are called to consider (or think of) trials with joy, because we know God always has a good purpose behind every trial. As you think of previous trials, what good can you

now see that He has accomplished in your life through trials that at the time seemed to have no possible good purpose?

- d. How important is it to be able to look back at God's provision and blessing in the past to help us trust Him in any current trials?