

**LifeGroup Study**  
**THERE WILL BE TESTS**  
**The Pure Joy of Being Tested**  
**2022-03-20**  
**Leader Notes**

**OVERVIEW:**

Welcome to our series, There Will Be Tests. The Bible is filled with teaching about tests we experience in this life. In James 1:2-4, we read – “My brothers and sisters, consider it nothing but joy when you fall into all sorts of trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect effect, so that you will be perfect and complete, not deficient in anything.” We should expect to be tested. Testing can impact our faith in a way that strengthens us and grows our trust in God. For the first week of this series we’ll see how we can trust that there is a purpose in every test. Even in times of uncertainty, pain, doubt and fear we can hang onto joy, knowing that God will see us through.

**ICEBREAKER:** How I Studied for Tests

Think back to your days in high school or university/college. How did you study for tests? Did you pull “all-nighters”, studying through the wee hours before your test? Did you go in cold, hoping you’d remember enough from your classes and notes to get by? Did you have an amazing system of how you organized yourself to study? **Share with the group how you studied for tests.**

**STUDY:**

The word “test” in the Bible means “to prove by trial”. We get this word from the world of metalworking. Just as silver and gold are refined in the furnace, so Christ-followers are refined through testing.

1. On Sunday Pete talked about how the tests (trials and difficulties) we experience are something God can use to strengthen our faith in Him . **What key idea did you take from Pete’s teaching on Sunday?**

READ: James 1:2-4

“My brothers and sisters, consider it nothing but joy when you fall into all sorts of trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect effect, so that you will be perfect and complete, not deficient in anything.”

2. Trials are certainly not enjoyable, but they can bring us joy. **What does James mean when he says, “ ... consider it nothing but joy?”**

LEADER NOTE: James doesn't expect us to ignore the pain that trials bring. He encourages us to consider them through the lens of our faith in Jesus. Our faith reminds us of some important things – God is in control. He will see me through. His purpose is to grow my faith and make me strong. Seeing our trials through the lens of faith can bring us the joy God longs for us to experience.

3. James talks about “all sorts of trials”. Brainstorm together 5-10 examples of specific trials. **What are some differences between a trial, a consequence, an inconvenience?**

LEADER NOTE: Trials in life can include things like the death of a loved one, disease and injury to ourselves or our loved ones, financial hardships, mental health struggles and more. Consequences are not necessarily the same as trials. For example, receiving a ticket for driving over the speed limit is a consequence. It's not fun, but it's different than a trial. An example of an inconvenience could be a traffic jam or other unanticipated delays in our schedule. Inconveniences are often less severe than trials. Talking about these difference in group can help your group members identify trials they are facing.

4. Think about James' statement – “ ... the testing of your faith ...” **Why is it important for our faith to be tested?**

LEADER NOTE: Testing refines our faith. It shows it for what it really is. Just as silver and gold are refined in the furnace, so Christ followers are refined through testing.

5. James tells us the desired result of our testing is that we would develop endurance. **How might you know you're growing in endurance?**

LEADER NOTE: To develop endurance means to grow in our ability to stay strong in our faith and not give up when trials come. Growing in endurance is not about learning to “grin and bear it” by keeping a stiff upper lip during trials. God wants to help us learn to respond to trials more and more like Jesus did. Jesus endured the ultimate trial of the cross by keeping His eyes on the Father and the promise of what lay beyond His present suffering (see Hebrews 12:1-13).

6. “And let endurance have its perfect effect, so that you will be perfect and complete, not deficient in anything.” Think about how God is at work in your life. In what ways do you see Him moving you toward being “perfect and complete”?

LEADER NOTE: God’s great desire is to help us grow to be spiritually mature, to be like His Son, Jesus. A key part of this experience is learning to endure trials like Jesus did. To be “perfect and complete” means God’s refining work in us has had its desired effect. As your group members think about this process in their own lives, some may be discouraged because they feel they have failed God’s tests in this area. Encourage your group members that God knows our weaknesses. Remind them of Paul’s words – “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” Philippians 1:6 NLT

7. When we face trials, we should ask what lessons God might want to teach us. **What has helped you see God’s purpose in your trials?**

LEADER NOTE: Your LifeGroup can be a key way God helps you learn lessons from your trials. As you share the experiences of your trials with each other and pray and support each other, God can use your fellow LifeGroup members to help you see how He is at work. Reading Scripture, prayer and listening to God are other important helps God gives us to show us the lessons He wants us to learn.

8. Is there someone you know who is facing a difficult trial? **What can you do to encourage and support them during this time?**

LEADER NOTE: God has given us each other to encourage and support one another during the trials we face. Spending time together, writing an encouraging note, calling on the phone, praying with a person, preparing a meal or dropping off a helpful gift – these are some examples of ways we can offer encouragement and support to those God has put on our heart.

## **PRAYER**

This week let’s pray for Celebration Place, our kids ministry arm of Celebrate Recovery.

- Thank God as He continues to work in the hearts and minds of the Celebration Place Kids as their relationships with Jesus grow and strengthen; amazing to witness!
- Ask God to provide volunteers; pray that God will prompt them, and send us the people he has already chosen.
- Pray for the people you have talked about in today’s study who are going through trials. Ask God to strengthen them and help them persevere. Ask Him for wisdom to know how to come alongside to support and encourage them.