

Day 1

Read James 1:2-4

James 1:2-4 (NLT) — **2** Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. **3** For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. **4** So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

As Christ followers, we are not guaranteed an easy life. It's not a matter *IF* troubles come our way, but rather *WHEN* troubles show up in our lives. Difficult times can show us areas in our lives that we have been trusting in something other than God. Scripture tells us that we are called to see it as an opportunity to trust God more, rather than worrying or avoiding trouble.

In verse 2, James says, "when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy." Take a moment to reflect on this verse and write down two *troubles* you are facing right now. How can these troubles be an opportunity to trust God?

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Now, Read James 1:5-6

James 1:5-6 (NLT) — **5** If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. **6** But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind.

In verse 5, the word for *wisdom* means special knowledge or how to do life, in other words *life advice*. Through His Word, God has given us the tools we need to get through life and the troubles along the way. Take a moment to pause and ask God to give you wisdom.

It's easy to put our faith and trust in our circumstances, other people's opinions, social media, etc. We will eventually be let down every time we do this. As Christ-followers, we place our faith in *God alone*. When it comes to *life advice*, God's Word always has the final say. List out three areas in your life that you receive input or information that isn't from God. What are some steps you can take to replace these areas with God's wisdom found in the Bible?

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As you continue spending time with God throughout this week, consider who can come along and join you in your readings. Reach out to a friend sometime today and ask them to join this study with you.

Day 2

Read John 16:31-33

John 16:31–33 (NLT) — **31** Jesus asked, “Do you finally believe? **32** But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. **33** I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

At some point in our life we have all felt alone. With all of the “social distancing” going on in the world right now, this is not the first time the church has been *scattered*. The feeling of being alone can take a hold of us all. We are promised that we are *not alone* because our *Father is with us*.

After reading John 16:31-33, write down what reason God gives for us to not fear in this passage.

Time to make a list, write down three ways that you are feeling isolated lately. Take a moment to pray over each of these areas individually. Jesus wants us to have *peace* and to *take heart* over any *trials and sorrows* in our life!

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- 3)

Now, read Isaiah 41:10

Isaiah 41:10 (NLT) — **10** Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

List three ways God is strengthening you this week. Could be something small to something big.

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- 3)

Look back over the two lists you have made today about where you feel isolated and where God is strengthening you. Set a timer on your phone for five minutes and spend undistracted time talking to God. If you get stuck in prayer, read Psalm 100 and ask God to help strengthen your faith.

When we pray to God, we experience *peace* from Jesus and His victory over our fears. Today, pray to God and thank him for the ways he is strengthening, helping, and upholding you. Tell God exactly what you need, be honest with him about your fears and worries.

Day 3

Read Hebrews 10:23-25

Hebrews 10:23–25 (NLT) — 23 Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. **24** Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. **25** And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Hope can be defined as “a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.” It can be easy to place our hope(s) in something that will eventually let us down. As Christ-followers, our hope is in God who *can be trusted to keep his promise*.

Look up Hebrews 11:1, Isaiah 43:2, 1 John 1:9, Deuteronomy 31:8, Philippians 4:19, Psalm 23:4, Psalm 9:9-10 and list three promises that God gives us to place our hope in. Make a longer list if you want!

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- 2)
- 3)

What are the two biggest areas in your life right now where you have placed your hope in something other than God’s promises? Take some time to think about it and write them down.

- 1)
- 2)

Now, read 2 Corinthians 1:20-22

2 Corinthians 1:20–22 (NLT) — 20 For all of God’s promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding “Yes!” And through Christ, our “Amen” (which means “Yes”) ascends to God for his glory. **21** It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, **22** and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything, he has promised us.

Take five minutes to thank God for all the ways He *enables* you to *stand firm for Christ*. This could be something that he has done in the past, or something he is currently still doing.

This week, remember that we have a *hope* that never fades! As a result, we are to *motivate* and *encourage* others through love and acts of service. Who are some people in your life that would benefit from knowing that God can be trusted to keep his promises? Think of two people you can intentionally connect with today by sending them a text or calling them on the phone.

- 1)
- 2)

Day 4

Read Matthew 28:18-20

Matthew 28:18–20 (NLT) — **18** Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. **19** Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **20** Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

A lot had just happened in the world of the disciples, and now Jesus was getting ready to go to Heaven to be with the Father. It’s easy to see how the disciples could have felt like Jesus was leaving them all alone without His help. But Jesus gave his disciples a promise, that he would be with them *always*.

That means that Jesus is *always* with us...even right now! List two places you have seen Jesus with you in the last week. Maybe it was in a conversation with a friend, an interaction with a sibling, or doing your daily anchoring time.

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Now read John 14:27

John 14:27 (NLT) — **27** “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

Jesus has given us the gift of *peace of mind and heart*. We get to be confident in knowing that Jesus is with us always, even in the midst of what is happening in the world right now, even in the middle of “social distancing.” We can trust that Jesus is here now!

Take a few minutes to stop and thank God that He is always there for you. If you struggle to believe that is true, take a moment to be totally honest with God and ask Him to show up in your life. Then be ready to look out for Him throughout your day.

Read Romans 5:8-11, Joshua 1:9, Ephesians 2:19-22 and make a list of ways where we can trust that God is with us.

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Day 5

Read Romans 8:38-39

Romans 8:38–39 (NLT) — **38** And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. **39** No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Take a moment to reflect on what Paul is saying about God’s love. *Neither death nor life, neither our fears today nor our worries about tomorrow, can separate us from God’s love.*

In light of all the craziness going on in our world today, it’s crucial that we, as Christ-followers, place our hope and trust in God alone.

Take five minutes to search your heart for any fears. Write three of the biggest fears you have in your life right now, whether big or small. It could be fear about the future, family, coronavirus, friend situations, school, injuries, or sickness. After you have written down your fears, go back down the list and pray about each one individually. Use this time to connect with God and allow Him to cover you in “God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand (Philippians 4:7).”

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Read Psalm 56:3

Psalm 56:3 (NLT) — **3** But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.

Today, be reminded today that God loves you more than you could ever imagine. Write one step you can take to trust God more this week.

This week, we have learned a lot about fears, anxiety, and being alone. Remember that God is bigger than ALL of it. We’ve challenged you to be active and grow in your faith, even with the “social distancing” taking place. We were reminded that God keeps His promises and that even with all the chaos in the world, God is always with us and that we can trust Him no matter what. For the rest of the week, challenge yourself to hold onto the truths you have discovered and experienced. We know that God is going to use your influence to make a difference in the lives of others. We love you and are praying for you!

-- Hillside Student Team