

**Small Group Leaders:** This week I am beginning to send out notes for the James study discussions. Feel free to use these or not. I simply want to provide you my insight and with all the resources you might need. The most important thing to keep in mind is that we want to focus on relationships with the attention to building our faith in God and His Word and growing closer together with one another and putting our faith in action. Faith Lived Out is about transformation, not answering the questions. If you get through these questions great. If you don't that is ok too.

- As a part of your group meeting you may want to consider asking everyone to share what they wrote on Day 1 "Discovering Truth About Faith".
- You also might find it good to ask them what scripture they read that week that impacted them. For example, 1 Peter 1:7 reminds me that my Faith endures to bring Jesus Christ praise, glory and honor.
- Make sure you take time at the end or the beginning to pray for one another. Some groups send out email prayer lists for the group. Some take prayer requests in the group. Some just pray. You choose. Also sharing as God answers prayers is a good way to strengthen faith of the group and bring glory and praise to our Father in Heaven.

1. Based on what you have read this week, how does God want you to live out your faith?

**Leaders: Use this question to create a sense of understanding from the group of what God is telling us about Faith Lived Out.**

I know God wants me to trust Him in all circumstances. My faith lived out means I trust in His promise, power and purpose no matter what happens in life. I see it all as part of God's plan and purpose and even when I don't understand or I don't know what to do I trust Him and that changes the way I handle every situation. Faith gives me an eternal perspective on the events of today. It is through our faith that we can live our lives filled with peace and joy. That is Faith Lived Out!

2. What did God teach you through your personal study this week?

**Use this question to launch into a discussion on what you have heard this week from God. Ask people to share individually with the group to create an interactive discussion. Don't skip this step as it is key to discovering truth from God's Word and involving everyone in the group.**

3. How does James 1:2-5 instruct people to respond to trials? Why?

**Leaders: Read James 1:2-5 before you answer this question.**

I think God wants us to live our lives differently than the world. He says we should consider it joy to face trials. We should see those trials circumstances as opportunities for God to work in our lives as He makes us who He wants us to be.

#### **QUESTIONS #4, #5, & #6 TIE CLOSELY TOGETHER**

4. Have the trials of life ever prompted you to seek God?

**This is a personal question. Most of us should be able to say yes and share why we sought God for help. Encourage your group to share personal testimony of such a time as this. These situations always end up strengthening our faith.**

I will share a couple personal stories from my days at OSH.

**First story, when I was at OSH my job got really stressful as travel increased I found myself gone away from home 2 or 3 weeks each month. I got so frustrated and depressed I wanted to quit my**

job. Then I finally realized I needed God more than ever and needed to trust in Him and focus my eyes on Him.

Second story, Steve and I had started a small group Bible Study at OSH and after just a few months Steve's boss told him we must stop and could no longer do Bible study at the office. Rather than get angry or feel crushed and defeated, we chose to pray it through and depend on God do His work completely trusting in Him.

5. How has God brought good into your life through trials?

This question is simply a continuation to the previous question. Share how God demonstrated His promise, power and purpose in your life.

First story continued, as I began to spend more time with God, praying and reading His word in my hotel rooms and in the planes God began to work in my life despite my travel circumstances. He brought me into a new and much deeper relationship with Him than I ever knew before. Had I not gone through the trial of constant travel God would not have become as important in my life. He worked a miracle in my heart and as I submitted my life to His Lordship no matter what the circumstances, He then performed a miracle in my travel. It came to a screeching halt. Well not really a halt but I traveled much less frequently and it no longer was a trial at all.

Second story continued, Following releasing this to God through prayer trusting He would do what He chooses, we went to my boss about the situation who in turn talked to Steve's boss indicating our complete freedom to continue the study. This group continues to meet to this very day.

6. How has your relationship with God changed as He has carried you through trials and difficult situations?

Let people use this question to come to a conclusion of how God used these situations.

God showed me that He wants to be the most important part of my life and that if I will make Him a priority He will work out all the details. I have learned that when I commit my ways to the Lord, He does His work. These situations, like countless others have served to strengthen my faith in God. These things have become a Spiritual markers in my life to remember and know that God can and will do miracles. My job is to trust and obey what He tells me to do. I should look at every situation through the backdrop of the cross. If God found a way to use the death of His Son for my sin to bring Him glory, He will find a way to do the same in every trial I could ever face.

7. According to James 1:5, how can we gain wisdom for dealing with problems in life?

**PRAYER & THE BIBLE.** Asking God is always the key to gaining Wisdom. He gives us everything we need in His Word.

8. Describe a time when God gave you the wisdom to take you through a circumstance.

If you get this far, ask the group if anyone wants to share.

Often as Elders we are placed in situations that we must make decisions that have great consequence on individual people and the Church as a whole. God has blessed us with the wisdom to call on Him and seek His guidance. Every time we must make an important decision we put it to prayer before proceeding. Every time God gives us the answer and it becomes a unanimous consensus among the elders. We are not "wise" men but God makes us wise. I believe that we have experienced a confirmation on all of our decisions as the right one. That proves this scripture. We would make mistakes for sure on our own. So in the future, when we do screw up, it is either because we didn't ask God for wisdom and/or we didn't listen anyway.