



REFLECT:

(20 minutes minimum)

10. How have you suffered as a Christian? (Suffering may take different forms and come from different places.)

11. Where in your life do you need God's help to patiently persevere? What can you do to follow the example of the prophets as they dealt with suffering?

12. James says that Jesus' coming is near. Does that give you comfort or concern? (Talk only about yourself, not about others.)



January 6, 2008

Faith that Works #14

A GOOD PATIENT

JAMES 5:7-12

These guides usually have more material than a Life Group will be able to address in the allotted time. Any questions you don't have time to cover in your group can be used in your personal study this week.



OPEN:

(3-5 minutes)

1. What kinds of experiences try your patience?
 - A long line at the checkout with only a couple of lanes open.
 - Waiting for the "dawdlers" in your family when you are already late.
 - Dealing with kids fighting in the car.
 - Trying to teach someone something that seems easy to you and difficult to them.
 - The idiotic drivers around here.

2. Do you find it more difficult to be patient over big things (like dealing with an illness or waiting for God's timing for something you want to do) or over small things (like those mentioned in question #1)?



DIG:

(15-20 minutes)

Before discussing these questions, read James 5:7-12.

3. What illustrations does James use to describe the kind of patience we need?

4. How does God use others to build patience in our lives?

Word Study:

Patience is not so much the brave endurance of afflictions as the self-restraint which enables the sufferer to refrain from hasty retaliation. The opposites of 'patience' in scripture in this sense are wrath and revenge.

5. What makes it hard to wait on God's timing?

6. What lessons from Job's experience can we apply to our lives?

7. For what kinds of reasons do Christians judge each other?

8. What causes us to grumble against each other?

9. How literally do you think Christians should take the command in verse 12? Obviously honesty and keeping your word are important commands but how far should we take the injunction to "not swear by anything"? What about taking an oath to tell the truth in a court of law. What do you see as the main point of this verse?