

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read James 5:7-11 aloud.

1. What stuck out to you from the text or the sermon this morning?

Why do you think that word, phrase, or point stuck out to you?

2. James begins this text with an opening admonition (7). What is it?

Share a time in your life when you struggled with patience.

How did you feel during that experience? What made patience hard?

What makes patience hard in the world in which we live?

Why do you think patience is so difficult when it comes to our Christians lives?

3. What example does James use to help Christians understand waiting (7)?

In what ways do farmers (and farming) teach us patience?
Make sure that any farmers in your group take time to share their insight.

Are there specific practices or attitudes of farmers that Christians might think about adopting in order to be better at patience?

What other types of practices and attitudes might Christians adopt to help wait for the day of the Lord?

4. James' discussion on patient endurance inserts a brief admonition against grumbling against one another (9).

What do you think grumbling against one another has to do with patience?

What do you find yourself grumbling about when you have to wait and your patience gets tried?

What other kinds of things might Christians do for each other instead of grumbling against each other when they are waiting?

5. James holds up two examples from Scripture in his discussion of patience and endurance (10-11). Who does he specifically name?

What do you think the prophets teach us about living patiently?

What do you think Job teaches us about endurance?

Are there other characters from Scripture you think of as being filled with patience and endurance? Who do you think of and why?
One extra exercise you might try is reading Hebrews 11 to spark ideas about heroes of faith to whom we can look for inspiration.

Who are some modern day examples of patient endurance? What about them serves as an example to you?

6. James concludes his discussion with an affirmation of God's identity (11). What does he name about God?

How does thinking of God as being merciful and compassionate help you to be patient?

What other traits of God might believers think about in order to be more patient?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

Based on your discussion name one specific thing you will do this week in order to become a more patient person.

Resources

Bible notes

James holds up “the prophets” as an example of patience in suffering. For other references to these heroes of faith in the NT see also Matt 5:12; 23:31; Acts 7:52.

James also references “Job” as an example for believers. To see exactly “what the Lord finally brought about” read Job 42:7-17.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

“Planted Patience”

Prep: Find Dixie cups, dirt, seeds, a marker, and a place you can get messy. Write “James 5:7-11” and the child’s name on each cup.

Delivery: Give each kid one cup. Let them fill the cup with dirt and plant a seed in their cup. (And yes, you are allowed to have fun while doing this activity). Have them sit with the cup in front of them.

Discuss 1: What did we just do? And now that the seed is planted what is the next step? Will the seed sprout immediately? So you are saying that we are going to have to take care of the seed, but we are also going to have to do some waiting, right?

Read: James 5:7-11

Discuss 2: James tells us that the Christian walk involves patient waiting. When do Christians have to be patient? What kinds of things does James say we wait for? What makes patience difficult?

Discuss 3: James holds us farmers (those who plant things) as an example of patience for Christians. What lessons do you think we can learn from farmers and being patient? Which of those might we apply in our lives this week? How might we apply them?

Pray: God, help us to have more faith in your compassion and mercy. Help us to be more patient people no matter what we are going through. Amen.

Dismiss: Let the kids take their cups with them as a reminder.

LIFE Group Guide

James 5:7-11 – A Faith That Waits

By Wilson McCoy (wilson.mccoy@gmail.com)

The theme: The Christian life is a marathon and not a sprint. As we journey towards the promised day of the Lord’s return many obstacles challenge us. Therefore we need patient endurance to finish the race. In a world of instant gratification Christians are challenged to persevere in hope. James reminds us of the faithful before us, around us, and the One who is ever faithful.

This week Kevin challenged us to have a faith that waits. Inherent to such faith is carrying deep hope in the God who is faithful to his promises. Even when we face suffering as believers examples such as the prophets and Job remind us our faith is not futile. Their God of mercy and compassion is still our God of mercy and compassion.

Leadership tip: A central theme through Scripture is for the people of God to “love one another.” Life groups are an ideal time to embody this command. As a leader one way you can make sure everyone feels love is to keep track of those who do not regularly attend your meeting (or may have stopped coming). This week give them a call or write them a note to let you know that you miss them...and that they are loved.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone’s spiritual pulse, and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ What is the last CD that you purchased? If you cannot remember then name one of your favorite music groups of all time.
- ❖ Many groups are currently enjoying fall break. If this includes you then share how your family is enjoying this time off.
- ❖ On October 22-23 College Hills will be conducting 24 Hours of Prayer at the building. Take some time to discuss as a group how your group (or some from your group) might participate in this Overflow event.