

Thriving in Place!

Endure (April 19th, 2020)

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

DISCUSSION

Opening Prayer: (1-2 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.

Thank the Lord for His sovereignty over all things! Praise the Son for his compassion having been able to sympathize with our suffering! Praise Jesus for dying in our place and conquering sin so that by faith, we will be brought into an everlasting kingdom where there will be no more sickness, pain, and suffering as we fellowship with God! As we shelter in place, pray that we would continue to seek the Lord's voice and obey His commands in the power the Holy Spirit! Finally, pray that the good news of Jesus would reach those who are suffering from the Coronavirus and its affects by sending us to represent your love!

Discussion: (45-60 minutes)

What's Going on This Week

This Sunday, Pastor Danny led us into the first week of our new mini-series titled *Thrive-in-Place!* Pastor Danny brought our attention to the conversation about trials in James 1:2-4 in order to help us figure out how we can experience true joy during this shelter-in-place season. Pastor Danny asks all of us to engage in an exercise where we identify our stressors, distinguish between our trivial worries and the true tests of faith that we believe are directly from God, and learn how to endure the trials God has put in front of us. *We have provided you with the space for your group do this activity below!!!*

“You are part way through a process that God has designed to grow you in beautiful ways. Don't give up until God's work is complete in you!” - Pastor Danny Strange

Suggested Questions

Check-In: *Icebreaker* – Over the *Thrive-in-Place* mini-series, we will be offering some fun Check-in questions to lighten the mood! For this week, share the one thing you are secretly pleased that you do not have to do now that you are practicing social distancing?

Study Tip: This week's primary text introduces us to the book of James. This letter is believed to have been written by the brother of Jesus who would become a prominent leader in the strenuous times of the early church (Acts. 15:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:7). James 1:2-4 drives the book as the rest of the letter seeks to answer how we maintain this counterintuitive wisdom about suffering, endure hardship, and come out of trials complete in God's eyes. James does this by confronting the reader with God's law like a mirror (Js. 1:22-25)! The book is notorious for using concepts from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) and other social laws (Lev. 19) in order to promote Jesus' way of life. Using this mirror, James challenges the early Christians to determine whether or not they are actively obeying God's law in their life or settling for an inward and reflective faith (Js. 2:14-26). His conclusion (based on the evidence of their "unbridled speech") is a call for all believers to not only reflect on God's law, but to step out in faith and apply the ways of Jesus in everyday life! Since trials tend to force the issue, consider how God may be using your current trials to bring you back to His word and activate you in your faith journey!

- **Objective #1: Identify specific stressors. Write them down below**

Primary Texts: James 1:2– Pastor Danny begins his sermon by pointing to a diagram of the *motley crew* of stressors that are affecting many of us during this COVID-19 season. As we continue to shelter-in-place, where do you feel like you are experiencing a growing level of stress in your life? What are the specific facets of this time that are contributing to your hardship, angst, or anxiety? Take some time to document each stressor in the blank spaces below.

Supporting Texts: (Expect Numerous Stressors) Pr. 12:25; Jn. 15:20, 16:33; 2 Cor. 6:3-10, 11:16-33; 1 Pet. 4:12-19;

- **Objective #2: Separate your stressors between trivial worries and true tests of faith?**

Primary Texts: James 1:3, 13-15; 1 Corinthians 10:13; – When you think through the lens of “trials”, which of your stressors do you think might actually be tools God is using you to grow in some way? Are you facing any temptations, tests, or troubles that God might be trying to use to grow you? Using the chart below, distinguish between external worries (Column A) and the trials in which you believe God is refining your faith (Column B).

Supporting Texts: (Tests of Faith) Daniel Lion’s Den Dan. 6; Abraham Sacrifices Isaac Gen. 22; Joseph tempted Gen. 39; Jesus Tempted Matt. 4:1-11.

<u>A: Worries</u>	<u>B: Test of Faith</u>

- **Objective #3: Release external worries (Column A) and Endure the tests of faith (Column B)**

Primary Texts: James 1:4, 12 – Pastor Danny encourages us to endure the temporary hardship God has placed in front of us knowing that He continues to heal us much like the temporary pain we experience when rehabilitating a broken part of our body. As you imagine some of the trials God has brought you into right now, what do you think he is asking you to do in response? How can we encourage you to endure your trials of faith (column B) until the shelter-in-place is over?

Supporting Texts: (Refining Fire, Endurance) Heb. 12:1-13; 1 Pet. 1:3-9; Ps. 66; 2 Cor. 4:7-18

Closing Prayer: (5-10 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.

Thank Jesus for being the king over all things! Ask that the Holy Spirit would reveal to us how God is trying to work in us through this challenging time! Finally, pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to transform our minds so that we can set our thoughts on obeying Jesus and seeking the promise of eternal life as we walk through this COVID-19 season.

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

-Further Reading and Exploration: *Read James / Matthew 5 - 7:* It takes a truly transformed mind to consider certain suffering as a source of “pure joy”. As you read the entire book of James, consider how he uses the various teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the mount to illicit an active lifestyle driven by a heart of faith!

-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities: Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to 3Crosses.org/coronavirus. If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at 3Crosses.org/neighborhood

-Extend an invite to Alpha! Are you, or is anyone around you, craving community and seeking answers to life's most difficult questions during this time? Check out our new 3Crosses Alpha course designed to welcome the voices of anyone with questions or doubts about the Christian faith. Learn more at 3Crosses.org/alpha and feel free to invite the skeptic in your life along with you starting *Wednesday Nights at 7:30 pm*

- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week! Pray that the members of your group would find joy in trials knowing that God is making us more dependent on Him!