

SESSION ONE

James 1:1-8

:00-:05 - Opening Prayer

:05-:10 - Read Overview

:10-:20 - Group Readings

1. Read the passage aloud. **Quickly answer any of the “5 W” Questions as a group.**
2. Read the passage again. **Quickly answer any of the “5 Senses” Questions as a group.** (Imagine details in things like color, sound, flavor, temperature, and scent.)

:20-:50 - Spiritual Listening

Each person takes 5 minutes and answer one of the questions below. Listeners have 5 minutes to ask follow-up questions.

- How does this passage challenge me to obey God? What is God asking me to do?
- How does this passage relate to my life right now?
- What is changing in me as I listen to God?
- What did we deal with last week that I need to follow up on?

:50-1:00 - Prayer and Share

Pray for one another to see God’s hand, hear God’s voice, and feel God’s presence.

OVERVIEW

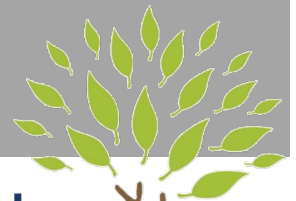
The Growth Process

For you straightforward, no-nonsense types, James is the book for you. James was the Lord’s brother—he grew up with Jesus. Imagine that. But he did not believe in Jesus until the Lord appeared to him after the resurrection.

James was a devout man, like his father, Joseph. He was committed to right living and justice in the world. For this reason, he was known as James the Just.

James also had a very rich spiritual life. He begins his letter by sharing the rule he lived by to grow in his walk with God and faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

James instructs us to see every challenge or crisis in life as a test. He tells us to get our attitudes right and pass the test. If we need wisdom to pass it, ask God and patiently wait for God’s leading.



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Mutual Prayer, Mutual Encouragement

SESSION TWO

John 3:1-16

:00-:05 - Opening Prayer

:05-:10 - Read Overview

:10-:20 - Group Readings

1. Read the passage aloud. **Quickly answer any of the “5 W” Questions as a group.**
2. Read the passage again. **Quickly answer any of the “5 Senses” Questions as a group.** (Imagine details in things like color, sound, flavor, temperature, and scent.)

:20-:50 - Spiritual Listening

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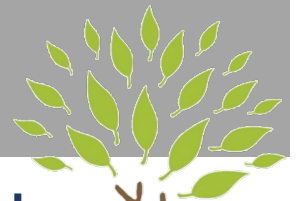
Have You Been Born Again?

John was a devout Jewish man who was a very accomplished writer. He used a lot of Temple imagery and prophetic reference from the Old Testament. He also was a master of using Jewish literary forms.

In John 3, the writer uses a literary tool called parallelism. He states a point twice, but in slightly different ways. The idea is that the second point builds on the first point, like layering bricks to build a wall.

Jesus states in verse 3, unless you are born again, you will not *see* God’s kingdom. In verse 5, he says you must be born again to *enter* God’s kingdom. Jesus’s point was you must see God’s kingdom — that is, see things God’s way — to enter God’s kingdom and experience God’s divine action in the world.

When you are born again, the Holy Spirit awakens you to see God’s kingdom. You begin to God’s hand, hear God’s voice, and feel God’s presence in your life and the world. Follow God’s leading and become a part of God’s kingdom.



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SESSION THREE

Romans 12:1-12

:00-:05 - Opening Prayer

:05-:10 - Read Overview

:10-:20 - Group Readings

1. Read the passage aloud. **Quickly answer any of the “5 W” Questions as a group.**
2. Read the passage again. **Quickly answer any of the “5 Senses” Questions as a group.** (Imagine details in things like color, sound, flavor, temperature, and scent.)

:20-:50 - Spiritual Listening

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:50-1:00 - Prayer and Share

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OVERVIEW

The Secret to JOY

Romans is a historical masterpiece. Paul folds into a few pages what it took other famous philosophers and thinkers hundreds of pages to write. Paul was no slouch.

Paul wrestled with the big questions. One of the biggest questions was about living the good life. What does it mean to live purposefully and joyfully in the world? Romans 12 addresses living the good life.

Paul taught that in Christ, you are blessed and, given God’s mercy, you should put Christ first in everything. The rest of Romans 12 instructs you to love and honor others before yourself.

Because you overflow with God’s love and forgiveness, put Jesus first, others second, and yourself last is the pathway to JOY and live the good life.



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SESSION FOUR

Galatians 5:13-25

:00-:05 - Opening Prayer

:05-:10 - Read Overview

:10-:20 - Group Readings

1. Read the passage aloud. **Quickly answer any of the “5 W” Questions as a group.**
2. Read the passage again. **Quickly answer any of the “5 Senses” Questions as a group.** (Imagine details in things like color, sound, flavor, temperature, and scent.)

:20-:50 - Spiritual Listening

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- How does this passage challenge me to obey God? What is God asking me to do?
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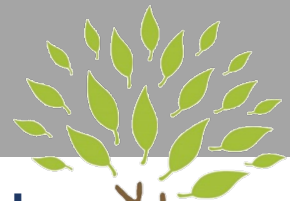
Emotional and Spiritual Freedom

You are made free in Christ to be free. However, you only experience freedom when you grow in Christ.

Growing in Christ involves consistently walking with the Holy Spirit. But what does “walking with the Spirit mean,” and how do you do it consistently?

Once the Holy Spirit awakes you, you see God’s hand, hear God’s voice, and feel God’s presence. You find God is working in the world and on you personally. You walk with the Spirit by joining God’s kingdom work in the world and following God’s leading through your personal tests and trials.

Follow God’s mission and the Spirit’s leading through personal crises, and you will build character and become more like Jesus.



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SESSION FIVE

Romans 5:1-5

:00-:05 - Opening Prayer

:05-:10 - Read Overview

:10-:20 - Group Readings

1. Read the passage aloud. **Quickly answer any of the “5 W” Questions as a group.**
2. Read the passage again. **Quickly answer any of the “5 Senses” Questions as a group.** (Imagine details in things like color, sound, flavor, temperature, and scent.)

:20-:50 - Spiritual Listening

Each person takes 5 minutes and answer one of the questions below. Listeners have 5 minutes to ask follow-up questions.

- How does this passage challenge me to obey God? What is God asking me to do?
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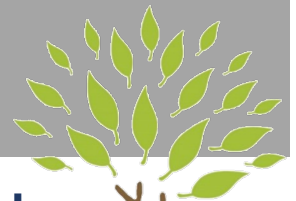
Developing Character through Crisis

God uses every experience to enrich your life. The things once meant to break you down, God will use to build you up if you are patient and trust God.

Trust God when you find yourself in a crisis. Think of your trouble as a test of faith that you are determined to pass.

Paul was an experienced master at facing trouble. His life was filled with traumatic experiences that God turned into triumphant testimonies. His words at the beginning of Romans 5 display the secret to his mastery and can help you see your crisis turn to character.

Rebel against your trauma and rejoice in your tribulation. God works everything together for good for those that love and patiently trust God.



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SESSION SIX

John 5:16-20

:00-:05 - Opening Prayer

:05-:10 - Read Overview

:10-:20 - Group Readings

1. Read the passage aloud. **Quickly answer any of the “5 W” Questions as a group.**
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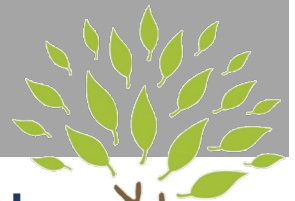
Seeing God at Work and Joining God

Jesus laid aside his divine privileges in the Incarnation and became truly human. He became like us and showed us how to walk with God.

Jesus prayed to the Father to show him what to do. He depended on the Holy Spirit to do his miracles. He did nothing by himself. The Father and Spirit worked through him.

When Jesus went to Heaven, he gave his access to the Father through him. We pray in his Name. He also sent the Holy Spirit to empower us.

As Jesus did, we must discover what God is doing and allow God to work through us.



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SESSION SEVEN

1 John 4:7-11

:00-:05 - Opening Prayer

:05-:10 - Read Overview

:10-:20 - Group Readings

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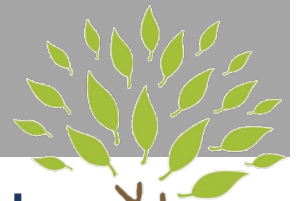
Growing in Love

Paul explained that life with God hangs on three things—faith, love, and hope—and the greatest principle is love. John took it another step when he said, “God is love.”

John witnessed God come in the flesh. Like a warrior-father come home, Jesus took off all his might and power, disrobed his glory, and dwelt with us in love.

John wanted God’s unpretentious love to be duplicated in us.

Growing in God is growing in a love that ever seeks to uplift and add value to others.



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SESSION EIGHT

Romans 8:1-15

:00-:05 - Opening Prayer

:05-:10 - Read Overview

:10-:20 - Group Readings

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OVERVIEW

From Condemnation to Spiritual Conviction

Spiritual and emotional freedom comes when you move from a personal sense of condemnation to spiritual conviction. In Christ, you can live guilt and shame-free.

Many Christians live with a sense of condemnation. When you experience God’s righteousness and justice, it is unbelievably convicting.

God wants you to be convicted, but not that you are condemned. God wants you to follow God with conviction because God is true and right and good.

God’s grace saves you at God’s initiative. Jesus did not die to condemn you, but to give you conviction to turn from sin and death and gladly live for righteousness and life.



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