

STUDY 1

JOYFUL PERSEVERANCE

Workbook

James 1:1-4

"Life is difficult," observes Dr. Scott Peck in his book *The Road Less Traveled*. It's an obvious fact, right? Yet unannounced, painful problems often whirl us into a dazed panic or angry resentment. In the opening of his letter, James acknowledges that life is indeed difficult. But he challenges his readers to look deeper, assuring them that God is involved in the whole of life, working for our growth and our good.

1. How do you usually respond to unexpected changes in your life?

Read James 1:1-4.

2. How does the author identify himself in verse 1? Keeping in mind his background, what does this say about James?

3. James mentions Jesus by name only twice in his letter (1:1 and 2:1). What is the significance of each aspect of the title James gives to Jesus? See Leader's Notes.

4. To whom is this letter addressed (verse 1)? Who would be included in this audience (see Acts 8:1, 4; 11:19-21)? See Leader's Notes.

5. What kinds of trials and difficulties would these people be facing as they settled into new communities?

6. What is James's radical suggestion for facing trials and handling stress (verse 2)? On what basis can we accept trials in this way?

7. What does a tested faith produce (verse 3)? What does this mean?

8. What would happen to our faith if it were never tested?

9. What is God's goal in the life of every believer (verse 4)?

What does it mean to you to be "complete, not lacking anything"?

10. Define *perseverance*. What keeps you from persevering in your walk of faith?

11. Take time to pray for renewed trust and joy in the midst of difficulties.