

Before the Lesson

Read the Scriptures and overview below before your LIFE Group meets.

Scripture passage: James 5:7-12

Life Is Complicated: Keep Calm and Carry On! Fifteen weeks into our study, we have come to the crux of James' writing. In these few verses of Scripture from chapter 5, James gives the "keep calm and carry on" formula for facing the challenges of life. He encourages the struggling and weary first-century believers by reminding them that although their difficulties were many and the waiting for relief fierce, these circumstances of life need not define them. Joy and peace was still possible, as Jesus' imminent return awaited them and their hope in Him was key to thriving and surviving.

The comforting and powerful words of Jesus from John 16:33 encapsulate our "keep calm" maxim: "I have told these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." The life of a believer, though still full of complications, can be overcome with peace and hope because we are "in Christ," who has overcome the world. We can rest in that promise! It is sure! So in the midst of waiting for Christ's return, we can learn to "Keep Calm and Carry On," knowing that our Savior, Jesus, will refresh, renew, and restore us as we remain steadfast and look to Him.

Focus question:

What is your response to waiting through the difficulties of life?

Group Discussion

- What difficulties are you facing this week? Are you waiting with steadfast hope and assurance, or with grumbling, complaining, and worry?
- Read James 5:7-12. Using the following verses and the phrase "until the coming of the Lord" from James 5:7-8, discuss this question. What assurance does the second coming of Christ give the believer?
 - Matthew 24:27, 36-39
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:2
 - Titus 2:11-13
 - 2 Timothy 4:8
 - 2 Peter 3:4, 8-10
- How does James tell believers they are to "wait"?

- The Greek word for patience here is “makrothumia.” It means to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart, to persevere patiently and bravely when enduring misfortunes and troubles, to be mild and slow in avenging, slow to anger, slow to punish. In other words, we are to be long suffering. Read the following verses that give description and application to this truth.
 - Psalm 86:15
 - Isaiah 30:18
 - Romans 2:4
 - Romans 3:25
 - 1 Corinthians 2:9
 - Galatians 5:22
 - Ephesians 4:2
 - 2 Peter 3:9
- Looking closely at the three examples from James 5:7-12, how do the following illustrations give us applications for our daily living, daily waiting, and daily toiling?
 - Farmers waiting for their harvest
 - Prophets awaiting the fulfillment of God’s foretelling
 - Job remaining steadfast under great duress
- When faced with the issue of waiting, how can we:
 - “Establish our hearts” when there are circumstances beyond our control? (See Isaiah 41:10, Ephesians 6:9, Philippians 4:4-8, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 2 Thessalonians 3:5.)
 - Honor God when faced with resistance? (Remember the greatness of God: Psalm 104.)
 - Lean into God and remain steadfast? (See Job 13:15, 19:25, 42:5.)
- A sure way to finding victory while suffering or waiting is to infuse your life with praise and thankfulness to God. What are some “positives” you have seen as a result of your times of difficulty? Can you turn those into prayers of praise and thanksgiving?
- Read Isaiah 40:30-31. The word “wait” in verse 31 means to bind together by twisting, to hope or expect, to wait or look eagerly for. One way we can wait is to bind ourselves to God in the midst of our sufferings. What can you do to “bind yourself to God” in trials or waiting?
- Read these verses and apply them to your current struggle: Hebrews 6:19, 2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

Further Study (to be used in your personal Quiet Time)

Read through the book of Job this week. Look at the sufferings of Job and the patient endurance that he learned. What truths did Job learn from his experience of suffering? How can you apply these same truths to your life this week?