

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Open your group with a prayer. Use this sheet as a guide; select the points you want to discuss.

### GETTING STARTED

1. The sermon defined a practical atheist as “someone who believes God exists but lives as if He doesn’t.” How do you react to the idea that many Christians live as practical atheists?
2. Discuss the emotions typically associated with trials.
3. How often and in what circumstances would you place “pure joy” on that list?

### DIGGING DEEPER

4. Read James 1:2-4. God tells us to *expect* trials; it’s not “if” but “when.” Why are trials necessary?
5. Read James 1:5-8. When in a trial, what should we pray about? Why is this so difficult?
6. Read Prov 2:1-6; 3:5-6. What does wisdom provide in a time of trial?

7. Read James 1:9-12. Both the rich and the poor have their trials. How does taking the long view result in a Beatitude for each?
8. Read James 1:13. Why do we frequently blame God when we’re in a trial?
9. Read James 1:14-15. When we fail a trial, explain the stages James says we progress through. What does the last stage mean for a Christian?
10. Read James 1:16-18. James insists God is good. What is his ultimate proof?

### LIVING IT OUT

11. How do trials reveal what we *really* believe about God?
12. In what ways have trials weakened or strengthened your faith?
13. Are you currently facing a trial that has you wrestling with giving up?

### CHANGING YOUR MIND

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds...”*

- James 1:2

