INTRODUCTION

3 OBSERVATIONS ABOUT LIFE IN A FALLEN WORLD

1. **Trials are inevitable.**

   Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. (1 Peter 4:12)

   These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

   Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted; 13 and evil persons and impostors will keep on going from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived themselves.(2 Timothy 3:12-13)

2. **Trials tend to "make us" or "break us."**

3. **Victims fail to move beyond asking "why" and remain stuck in their pain.**

A WORD FROM GOD TO THOSE WHOSE WORLD IS "FALLING APART"

James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings. Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:1-4)

1. **What can I control when my world falls apart?**

   Answer: MY ATTITUDE (James 1:2)

   "Consider" – evaluate, calculate, choose

   "All joy" – an attitude = literally "unmixed, or pure joy"

   "Trials" – surrounded by

2. **What must I do to make it through today?**

   Answer: ENDURE / PERSERVERE (James 1:3)

   "Knowing" – by experience = perspective

   "Testing" – to approve, to purify, to demonstrate as genuine

   "Endurance" – hupo-meno = staying power

3. **What hope do I have for tomorrow?**

   Answer: God will take the WORSE and use it for my BEST. (James 1:4)

   "Let perseverance" – allow, cooperate with God's work so that you will become…

   "Perfect" – mature, ripe, full-grown

   "Complete" – full, all parts being well-rounded and developed, lacking nothing

HOW GOD USES ADVERSITY TO MATURE US

4. We are forced to DEPEND on God at a new level. Left to ourselves, we tend to be self-sufficient, proud, and insensitive to God.
5. We are WEANED from the temporal, the urgent, and the worldly affairs of life. We are forced to REEXAMINE our values, priorities, commitments, and future.
6. Trials allow us to WITNESS first-hand the reality and power of God. Our need becomes the vehicle of God's grace; our problems the object of His power.
7. They serve as an awesome TESTIMONY to the unbelieving world. How we endure hardship shows the world how real God is.
8. We become sensitive, caring, and compassionate CHRIST-LIKE people. Those who have been hurt deeply tend to love deeply.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share a negative experience in your past that (although difficult) has had positive results in your life.
2. Although very normal, why is it important to get beyond asking "why?"
3. What is an area in your life right now that qualifies as a trial, or "world-breaker"?
4. Take a moment and walk through the three "what" questions that God gives us in James 1:2-4.
5. Discuss how you can put this truth into practice in your current situations. Close with a time of upholding each other in prayer.