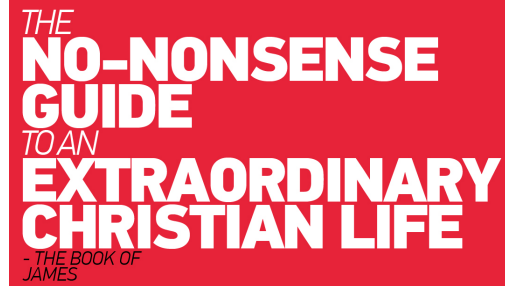

#1 “Count It All Joy”

James 1:1-4

TODD DUGARD | MARCH 9, 2014



Warming Up

1. Who are some of the people you look to for no-nonsense advice? Where do you turn when you need practical help?

Digging In

2. *Your difficult days . . . (1:1, 2b)*
 - What were the difficult days, the “trials,” faced by the author and the recipients of this first century letter? What are some of the trials that we face today?
 - Why is it so important that the text speaks of us meeting trials “when” rather than “if”? What does this indicate? How do trials both stimulate and authenticate our faith? Can you think of a specific example(s) of this in your life?
3. *. . . are an opportunity for genuine joy (1:2a)*
 - What does it mean to “count it all joy”? How did Pastor Todd define the word “joy”? How is it different than mere happiness? In what ways are one’s joy and one’s theology related?
 - Pastor Todd said, “Our joy must be transcendent, moving beyond immediate to see the eternal. Only then will we be able to make enough sense of this life to enjoy the benefits of difficult circumstances.” Unpack this. How does Jesus’ example of joy in Hebrews 12:2 provide further understanding?
4. *. . . so hold on to the very end (1:3-4a)*
 - How does the practice of smelting/refining provide an appropriate picture for the “testing” of our faith? What are the similarities?
 - The Greek word translated in the ESV as “steadfastness” (NASB—“endurance;” NIV—“perseverance”) has the idea of “remaining under.” Why is this so critical? What do we forfeit if we bail out early? What does Matthew 24:13 say about this?
5. *. . . and see what Christ will do (1:4b)*
 - When will we be “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing”? How does this describe both the ongoing process and the ultimate destination of our lives?

Breaking Out

6. Share with the men/women what your greatest trial is right now. How are you doing at counting it all joy? To what degree are you being steadfast? Are you seeing God work in and through that situation to make you perfect and complete? Pray for one another.

