



DISCIPLE *for* LIFE

Pursuing Holiness

APPLICATIONS FROM JAMES

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About the Author

PHILIP NATION is the pastor of First Baptist Church in Bradenton, Florida. He is wildly in love with his wife, Angie, and constantly amazed by their two sons, Andrew and Chris. He's the author of numerous works, including *Habits for Our Holiness: How the Spiritual Disciplines Grow Us Up, Draw Us Together, and Send Us Out*. Philip regularly writes about life and faith, as well as various silly things, at PhilipNation.net.



Introduction

Jesus Christ saves us so that we can live lives of holiness. The concept of holiness is misunderstood, often interpreted in legalistic terms and rejected in favor of a desire to have more fun in life. But holiness isn't a way of life reserved for the most dedicated people of faith. It's the righteous standing all believers have before God because of Jesus' death and resurrection.

In this Bible study we'll walk through the Book of James to gain a more accurate understanding of holiness, and we'll learn how to align our thoughts and actions with the sanctifying work that Jesus has already accomplished for us. We'll discover that Jesus provides the empowerment and guidance for us to pursue holiness in our everyday decisions, circumstances, and interactions.

During this study we'll look at pursuing holiness in six arenas of life:

1. Wise and humble endurance
2. Obedience in real time
3. Relationships of grace
4. Putting holiness into practice
5. The way of humility
6. Powerful lives of prayer

My prayer is that you'll embrace the pursuit of holiness. It's not the natural tendency of the human soul. We normally pursue power, achievements, and pleasures. Through the transforming power of the gospel, however, Jesus leads us in a new way. We can pursue and live holy lives that declare the greatness of God, display the gospel of Jesus, and demonstrate the Holy Spirit's power in us.

How to Use This Study

This Bible study book includes six weeks of content. Each week has an introductory page summarizing the focus of the week's study, followed by content designed for groups and individuals.

GROUP SESSIONS

Regardless of the day of the week your group meets, each week of content begins with a group session. This group session is designed to be one hour or more, with approximately fifteen to twenty minutes of teaching and forty-five minutes of personal interaction. Meeting longer than an hour will allow even more time for participants to interact with one another.

Each group session uses the following format to facilitate simple yet meaningful interaction among group members, with God's Word, and with the video teaching by Philip Nation.

Start

This page includes questions to get the conversation started and to introduce the video session.

Watch

This page includes key points from the video teaching, along with space for taking notes as participants watch the video.

Discuss

These two pages include questions and statements that guide the group to respond to the video teaching and to relevant Bible passages.

Pray

This final page of each group session includes a prompt for a closing time of prayer together and space for recording prayer requests of group members.

INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY

Each *Disciple for Life* small-group resource provides individuals with optional activities during the week, appealing to different learning styles, schedules, and levels of engagement. These options include a plan for application and accountability, a Scripture-reading plan with journaling prompts, a devotion, and two personal studies. You can choose to take advantage of some or all of the options provided.

This Week's Plan

Immediately following the group session's prayer page is a weekly plan offering guidance for everyone to engage with that week's focal point, regardless of a person's maturity level or that week's schedule.

Read

A daily reading plan is outlined for Scriptures related to the group session. Space for personal notes is also provided. Instructions for using the HEAR journaling method for reading Scripture can be found on pages 8–11.

Reflect

A one-page devotional option is provided each week to help members reflect on a biblical truth related to the group session.

Personal Study

Two personal studies are provided each week to take individuals deeper into Scripture and to supplement the biblical truths introduced in the teaching time. These pages challenge individuals to grow in their understanding of God's Word and to make practical application to their lives.

LEADER GUIDE

Pages 120–31 at the back of this book contain a guide that develops a leader's understanding of the thought process behind questions and suggests ways to engage members at different levels of life-changing discussion.

The HEAR Journaling Method for Reading Scripture

Daily Bible Reading

Disciple for Life small-group Bible studies include a daily reading plan for each week. Making time in a busy schedule to focus on God through His Word is a vital part of the Christian life. If you're unable to do anything else provided in your Bible study book during a certain week, try to spend a few minutes in God's Word. The verse selections will take you deeper into stories and concepts that support the teaching and discussion during that week's group session.

Why Do You Need a Plan?

When you're a new believer or at various other times in your life, you may find yourself in a place where you don't know where to begin reading your Bible or how to personally approach Scripture. You may have tried the open-and-point method when you simply opened your Bible and pointed to a verse, hoping to get something out of the random selection from God's Word. Reading random Scriptures won't provide solid biblical growth any more than eating random food from your pantry will provide solid physical growth.

An effective plan must be well balanced for healthy growth. When it comes to reading the Bible, *well balanced* and *effective* mean reading and applying. A regular habit is great, but simply checking a box off your task list when you've completed your daily reading isn't enough. Knowing more about God is also great, but simply reading for spiritual knowledge still isn't enough. You also want to respond to what you're reading by taking action as you listen to what God is saying. After all, it's God's Word.

To digest more of the Word, *Disciple for Life* small-group Bible studies not only provide a weekly reading plan but also encourage you to use a simplified version of the HEAR journaling method. (If this method advances your personal growth, check out *Foundations: A 260-Day Bible-Reading Plan for Busy Believers* by Robby and Kandi Gallaty.)

Journaling What You HEAR in God's Word

You may or may not choose to keep a separate journal in addition to the space provided in this book. A separate journal would provide extra space as well as the opportunity to continue your journal after this study is completed. The HEAR journaling method promotes reading the Bible with a life-transforming purpose. You'll read in order to understand and respond to God's Word.

The HEAR acronym stands for *highlight*, *explain*, *apply*, and *respond*. Each of these four steps creates an atmosphere for hearing God speak. After settling on a reading plan, like the one provided in this book in the "Read" section each week, establish a time for studying God's Word. Then you'll be ready to HEAR from God.

Before You Begin: The Most Important Step

To really HEAR God speak to you through His Word, always begin your time with prayer. Pause and sincerely ask God to speak to you. It's absolutely imperative that you seek God's guidance in order to understand His Word (see I Cor. 2:12-14). Every time you open your Bible, pray a simple prayer like the one David prayed: "Open my eyes so that I may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction" (Ps. 119:18).

H = Highlight

After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, open this book to the week's reading plan, open a journal if you'd like more space than this book provides, and open your Bible. For an illustration let's assume you're reading Philippians 4:10-13. Verse 13 may jump out and speak to you as something you want to remember, so you'd simply highlight that verse in your Bible.

If keeping a HEAR journal, on the top line write the Scripture reference and the date and make up a title to summarize the meaning of the passage. Then write the letter H and record the verse that stood out and that you highlighted in your Bible. This practice will make it easy to look back through your journal to find a passage you want to revisit in the future.

E = Explain

After you've highlighted your verse(s), explain what the text means. Most simply, how would you summarize this passage in your own words? By asking some simple questions, with the help of God's Spirit, you can understand the meaning of the passage or verse. (A good study Bible can help answer more in-depth questions as you learn to explain a passage of Scripture.) Here are a few good questions to get you started:

- Why was the verse or passage written?
- To whom was it originally written?
- How does the verse or passage fit with the verses before and after it?
- Why would the Holy Spirit include this passage in the Bible book?
- What does God intend to communicate through the text?

If keeping a HEAR journal, below the H write the letter E and explain the text in your own words. Record any answers to questions that help you understand the passage of Scripture.

A = Apply

At this point you're beginning the process of discovering the specific personal word God has for you from His Word. What's important is that you're engaging with the text and wrestling with the meaning. Application is the heart of the process. Everything you've done so far coalesces under this heading. As you've done before, answer a series of questions to discover the significance of these verses to you personally, questions like:

- How can this verse or passage help me?
- What's God saying to me?
- What would the application of this verse look like in my life?

These questions bridge the gap between the ancient world and your world today. They provide a way for God to speak to you through the specific passage or verse.

If keeping a HEAR journal, write the letter A under the letter E, where you wrote a short summary explaining the text. Challenge yourself to write between two and five sentences about the way the text applies to your life.

R = Respond

Finally, you'll respond to the text. A personal response may take on many forms. You may write an action step to do, describe a change in perspective, or simply respond in prayer to what you've learned. For example, you may ask for help in being bold or generous, you may need to repent of unconfessed sin, or you may need to praise God. Keep in mind that you're responding to what you've just read.

In this book or in your journal, record your personal application of each passage of Scripture. You may want to write a brief explanation-and-application summary: "The verse means _____, so I can or will _____."

If keeping a HEAR journal, write the letter R, along with the way you'll respond to what you highlighted, explained, and applied.

Notice that all the words in the HEAR method are action words: *highlight, explain, apply, respond*. God doesn't want us to sit back and wait for Him to drop truth into our laps. God wants us to actively pursue Him instead of waiting passively. Jesus said:

Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find.

Knock, and the door will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:7

Wise and Humble Endurance

Week 1

Physical endurance has never been one of my strong points. As a teenager, I hiked. In my twenties and thirties I played racquetball. Along the way I've tried to be a runner. But I hate it. I pant and get a stitch in my side. Running makes my feet hurt, and I'm generally in a bad mood when it's all over. Whatever switch needs to be flipped in my psyche and in my body never seems to function. I just don't have the patience or endurance to be a runner. I've never been able to make the necessary adjustments to transition from amateur attempts to resolved runner. It's likely a combination of bad form and bad attitude.

If we're to pursue holiness, it must become a greater priority than my attempts at running. Simply adjusting our behavior to present a better version of ourselves before God and others isn't enough. The Book of James helps us see that a walk of holiness is so much more than making exterior adjustments.

Holiness is a life that's completely devoted to the purposes of God. It's the way we can move from the attempt to be mannerly people to the total life commitment made by mature followers of Christ. As we pursue a biblical idea of holiness, endurance is essential, because life is going to get in the way of that pursuit. It won't be a breezy run down a comfortable slope. It's a challenging path that requires perseverance. Nevertheless, it's a race we run together as we're empowered by God's grace.

Start

Welcome everyone to session 1 of *Pursuing Holiness*. Use the following content to begin your group session together.

The Christian life can feel that it has a certain dual meaning. Jesus Christ paid the debt for our eternal salvation. Our position in Christ is established. It can't change. The moment we placed our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit sealed us in a covenant relationship that will last forever.

At the same time, we now live out our salvation in a body that still desires the wrong things and in a world that's filled with temptations. These facts don't change our status with God, but they challenge our fellowship with Him.

Pursuing holiness can seem to be an odd concept because we're holy in our eternal standing with God as a result of our salvation in Jesus. Yet we must pursue a holy life every day because we live in a world broken by sin.

When you hear the word *holiness*, what images come to mind?

As you begin this Bible study, what are your hopes for living a more focused life of faith?

The first characteristic of holiness we will dig into is endurance. Endurance isn't exerting energy to make it on our own. Rather, it means accessing God's grace to live out the holiness we've already received through Christ.

We need wise and humble endurance. The world pelts us with commercials and products that promise to make us stronger men, independent women, and champions of all kinds. The gospel reminds us that we need holiness that's induced by grace, not by moral superiority.

Pray that God will open your hearts and minds before you watch video session 1.

Watch

Use the space below to follow along and take notes as you watch video session 1.

Holiness is something that happens in real life.

Holiness is how you've set your life apart.

Holiness requires endurance of all of your heart, your mind, your soul, and your strength.

Holiness is so much more than choosing between right and wrong. It is the choice to trust in Christ for His direction in everything that you're going to face, whether it's easy or whether it is the greatest hardship you think that you can endure.

Endurance is rooted in the work of Christ, not in your own personal strength.

Discuss

Use the following statements and questions to discuss the video.

When we think about holiness, we often think about a particular person or kind of person who seems to fit that concept. It might be a sweet grandma who always went to church and had a Bible by her bedside. Or it could be a monk who's hidden away from the temptations of the world. But holiness means a lot more than these images suggest.

What have been your usual definitions or ways of thinking about the concept of holiness?

Holiness is living according to the will and ways of God. But it's more than just making ethical choices. Holy living is born from the gospel's transforming work in us, and it's revealed in the way we live each day.

How would a more extensive definition of *holiness* change the way you relate to Jesus?

Read aloud James 1:2-8.

How can we turn our trials into joyful experiences?

James encouraged the first-century Christians to endure the difficulties in life by seeking God's insight. Living from God's revealed wisdom is a critical part of understanding life as God understands it.

In what areas of life—trials, temptations, or victories—do you need to seek God's wisdom to better understand your circumstances?

Asking for and receiving God's wisdom is an important step. But as we'll see, to progress in holiness, we must move beyond hearing to doing.

Choosing to live according to God's perspective instead of our own will require changes in both our thinking and our actions.

Read aloud James 1:19-27.

How can you make a deeper connection in your life between hearing the Word and obeying it?

What's one way you need to obey God's Word this week?

Many opportunities are available for us to hear God's Word, such as Bible studies like this one, sermons, personal devotional times, and podcasts. But the opportunities to obey the Word come at every moment of the day. James wrote to a group of believers who had to endure persecution while remaining faithful to Christ. He called them to hear God's Word and live it out, no matter the circumstances.

Why do faith and good works operate as companions for Christians?

Read aloud James 5:7-11.

Describe a current circumstance in your life that requires faithful waiting and endurance.

What changes would you like Jesus to make in your life in order to be glorified in you?

Endurance isn't just waiting but waiting with faith. A "Fake it till you make it" mentality won't suffice. Jesus is actively working in us so that we can rejoice in trials because they give Him more opportunities to increase our holiness. Endurance is rooted in Christ's work in you.

Conclude the group session with the prayer activity on the following page.

Pray

Conclude the group session by praying for yourself and group members in specific ways. Here are some prayer priorities to focus on before the next group session.

- Love for Christ that exceeds the joy you find in anything else
- Persevering faith no matter what trials you've recently faced
- Humility during times of testing so that your faith in Christ will grow stronger
- Strength to resist the temptation to become bitter or angry with people who offend you
- Faithfulness to Bible study and to a consistent prayer life that will draw you closer to God

Prayer Requests

Encourage members to complete "This Week's Plan" before the next group session.

This Week's Plan

Work with your group leader each week to create a plan for personal study, worship, and application between group sessions. Select from the following optional activities to match your personal preferences and available time.

Worship

- ☐ Read your Bible. Complete the reading plan on page 20.
- ☐ Spend time with God by engaging with the devotional experience on page 21.
- ☐ Pray daily for the church and for group members.

Personal Study

- ☐ Read and interact with “Trials and Our Maturity” on page 22.
- ☐ Read and interact with “Enduring until the End” on page 26.

Application

- ☐ Identify an area of your life in which spiritual growth isn't taking place. Invite a small group of believers (perhaps from your Bible-study group) to begin holding you accountable in this area.
- ☐ Memorize James 1:4: “Let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.”
- ☐ Start a journal by recording different ways you benefit from the ministry of the church. Specifically address how the church prepares you to endure trials and obey God faithfully.
- ☐ List five other Christians you want to encourage to endure through their trials and temptations. Decide how you can actively encourage them over the next few weeks.

Read

Read the following Scripture passages this week. Use the acronym HEAR and the space provided to record your thoughts or action steps.

Day 1: Romans 5:1-5

Day 2: Galatians 6:6-9

Day 3: Psalm 100:1-5

Day 4: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Day 5: Daniel 3:13-18

Day 6: Psalm 121:1-8

Day 7: Hebrews 11:32-40

Reflect

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Pursuing endurance seems to be an impossible task. If you need endurance, you often don't have much stamina. But you're called to a life of holiness that requires that you endure. So how do you get persistence and tenacity when you're struggling just to survive each day? Let's start with a challenge based on some encouragement:

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2

The writer of Hebrews shows us what it looks like to endure through troubles. The first verse starts with *therefore*, signaling that a conclusion is being drawn from what came before this verse. Hebrews II is often called the hall of faith because it contains a long list of Old Testament examples of enduring faith.

We're often told to learn from our past. Many times the lessons are in negative form because we commonly learn from our mistakes. In contrast, the writer of Hebrews said to learn from the persistent faith of godly people who overcame life's toughest challenges.

Hebrews II presses us to remember the stories of Abraham, Noah, Sarah, Moses, Gideon, and others in the "large cloud of witnesses" (12:1). They were normal people who, when facing brutal challenges, chose to believe in a grace-giving God. Their faithfulness is a great encouragement for every challenge you currently face.

Personal Study 1

TRIALS AND OUR MATURITY

The idea that you can be happy when things go wrong seems unreasonable. But pursuing a holy life makes that possible. To be holy means to be set apart or distinct. Our entire purpose as Christians is to be set apart from the way of life that seems normal to the world. In fact, God uses our trials to shape our Christian lives so that we grow more like Jesus and bring glory to Him.

Holiness is a state of life that comes with a cost. Our eternally righteous status before God cost: He gave His life on the cross in our place for our sins. Our own pursuit of holiness will also come at a cost. When we die to our old way of life, we're able to view life's circumstances very differently from the way the world views them.

Trials for Our Good

Unbelievers view calamities and may feel hopelessness or despair. In contrast, believers have a spiritual frame of reference that allows us to see trials and temptations through a new lens. This is why James wrote:

Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

James 1:2-3

Identify a recent test that tried your patience in a relationship, a temptation to do something immoral, or an unexpected circumstance that could have led you to question God's good character.

In what ways did your trial present an opportunity for your faith to increase? Did it increase? Explain.

Counterintuitive is one of my favorite words. It means something is the opposite of what we expect. When we think about spending our lives pursuing holiness, we might expect life to get easier: *I'm doing the right thing, so only good things will happen to me.* But pursuing holiness is a counterintuitive lifestyle, especially when it comes with difficult circumstances. James teaches us that trials are designed to mature us in our faith.

Read James 1:4. What will endurance produce in a joyful disciple?

How do faith and endurance advance your maturity so that you'll be complete as a Christian?

Wisdom Granted

Endurance isn't done mindlessly. To persevere in the faith, you need wisdom.

What current circumstances in your life require greater wisdom from God so that you can navigate them with maturity?

Issues	Answers You Need

Read James 1:5-8.

James promises that God's wisdom is available to us. If that were all it said, we would walk away with gratefulness. But these verses promise so much more.

What if God made His wisdom available, but you had to fill out paperwork, make endless pilgrimages to mystics on mountaintops, and offer innumerable sacrifices to pay for it? You would be glad that it's available but likely frustrated that it was so hard to secure. All we must do to receive God's wisdom is to ask for it. The pursuit of a holy life is also the pursuit of an informed life. Knowing God's mind and heart will allow us to endure in our trials:

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God—who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly—and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without doubting.

James 1:5-6

What are the only requirements to receive wisdom from God?

Circle the key words in the following verses that warn us about how not to seek God's wisdom.

The doubter is like the surging sea, driven and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord, being double-minded and unstable in all his ways.

James 1:6-8

God will grant His wisdom to any believer who asks in faith, but if we doubt that God will grant it to us, we'll miss out on what's available. Being determined in our Christian living is critical. God won't entrust the

eternally precious gift of His wisdom to someone who's bent on wasting it. Instead, God desires to give wisdom to people who'll put it into practice.

What's the difference between someone who holds on to an enduring faith and the doubter described in James 1:6-8?

People with enduring faith can count on godly wisdom to guide them.

Bragging Properly

If you've navigated difficult trials by using heavenly wisdom, you may be tempted to brag about the way you handled your trials. But people who have pursued holiness must remember that any success they enjoyed came through the grace of God. We brag on God in humble gratitude.

Read James 1:12. What's the reward of a believer who endures trials?

This verse states that the people who receive the crown of life—the reward of eternal life—are the ones who love God. The importance of this promise can't be overstated. Our endurance in pursuing a life set apart for God must be birthed from love. We'll possess endurance only when we love God to the extent that we allow Him to reign in our lives.

Recognizing our weakness and our dependence on God puts us in a position to properly boast in His work in us. In pursuing holiness, if you regard trials as opportunities to fail, you'll likely do just that. Flip the script. Look at every test as an opportunity to reveal God's work in you. Commit your life to Christ as a showcase for His power. Then you can consider each trial with joy.

End your study today by placing your trial in God's hands and asking for His wisdom to endure in a way that brings glory to Him.

Personal Study 2

ENDURING UNTIL THE END

Endurance requires the proper motivation. When athletes train, they're motivated by the ideas of gaining victory over competitors or beating their personal bests. Musicians and other artists are motivated to produce great beauty in their craft. Motivations can also be negative, as when students or employees strive to succeed in order to avoid punishment.

What's the motivation in your life for common tasks like work and family responsibilities?

Throughout James's letter we consistently see that endurance finds its motivation in who God is rather than in who we are. Endurance isn't focused just on outlasting trials, temptations, and demonic attacks. Its true purpose is for us to know who God is and why we want to pursue a life that honors Him.

Learning God's Character and Ours

Trials, maturity, and understanding God's character are linked in James I.

Read James I:13. What's revealed about God's relationship with us by the fact that He's never tempted by evil?

How is your faith increased by knowing God would never lead you to do something unholy?

The temptations we face often begin internally. The old nature we still carry in our flesh has evil desires. We face plenty of external temptations in the world, but our own hidden desires are very strong. They present a progressive path for sin to take hold of our lives.

Using James 1:14-15, chart the progression from temptation to death.

To have enduring holiness, we must recognize the proper authority. Submission to God's reign will guide us to reject the rebellious longings of our flesh. But the opposite is also true: if we give in to the flesh, we'll displace God's reign. When we honestly face the scheming nature of our own flesh and recognize God's pure holiness, we'll happily pursue holiness with God's character as our strength and motivation.

Anticipating the End of the World

Follow God's heart and nature rather than our flesh gives us a long view of life. In fact, it helps us endure because we have eternity in mind. The shortsighted nature of the flesh wants us to consider only the pleasure we can have in the moment. God has much more in mind.

Read James 5:7-11. Underline the examples of endurance.

Brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and is patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the Lord's coming is near. Brothers and sisters, do not complain about one another, so that you will not be judged. Look, the judge stands at the door!

Brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord's name as an example of suffering and patience. See, we count as blessed those who have endured. You have heard of Job's endurance and have seen the outcome that the Lord brought about—the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

James 5:7-11

Which of the images for patience and endurance seems to connect most deeply with your life right now? Explain.

Athletes have a time clock or a finish line. Students have maximum scores and dates that end each academic year. Businesses have budget cycles. Parents know they have their children for only a certain number of years. What do Christians have as a motivation to endure? We know the Lord will return to bring a close to human history, according to His good plan. We endure while keeping in mind that Jesus will return in glory and with authority to judge all people.

PROPER RELATIONSHIPS. Verse 9 may seem a bit out of place, but our relationships relate to our need for endurance. As we wait for Jesus' arrival and endure difficulties, we need to have strong relationships with fellow believers. We shouldn't waste our time complaining about one another. Instead, our focus must be on living well in light of Jesus' impending arrival.

Instead of complaining about other believers, what should the characteristics of strong Christian friendship be?

This week how could you encourage endurance and patience in the other members of your Bible-study group?

James reminds us that pursuing holiness is a personal matter, but it isn't a private journey. Because we're related to one another in the body of Christ, we need one another. Our endurance isn't accomplished in a relational vacuum. It's lived out with all people of faith. It's critical that we refuse to complain but "watch out for one another to provoke love and good works" (Heb. 10:24).

LIKE THE PROPHETS AND JOB. James drew other great examples of endurance from the Old Testament. God called most of the prophets to deliver difficult messages to rebellious people in grueling periods of time. When we read the books of prophecy in the Old Testament, we find all sorts of stories that show us what endurance looks like. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, remained steadfast in his ministry while the Israelites rebelled for decades. The Lord assigned Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman and then buy her back when she ran away. But they endured because they knew God's mercy is trustworthy and His judgment is certain.

The story of Job's enduring faith pierces our hearts. In the face of losing everything dear to him, including his children, Job refused to turn from a holy life. He endured, not because he wanted to regain what he lost but because he knew God is just and can be trusted.

James's examples challenge us to pursue holiness as we anticipate the end of time. We continue to join God's good purpose for the world and to grow in Christlikeness as we prepare for the time when we see Jesus face-to-face.

How should the trustworthy character of God change the way you view difficulties in life?

How does knowing that God will bring all things to completion in the end increase your willingness to endure trials and temptations?