



These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

**IT REALLY MATTERS HOW WE DETERMINE WHAT REALLY MATTERS. DISCIPLES TAKE SERIOUSLY THE EVALUATION OF PRIORITIES. IN THIS SERIES WE WILL LET SCRIPTURE INFORM OUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT REALLY COUNTS.**

**1** Following Jesus doesn't mean we will suffer less than those who do not follow Jesus. It means we should suffer better. **Read James 1:2-4.** What is the difference between trials we encounter and trials we create?

**2 YOU CAN count on trials... so make your trials count.** James does not say "if" but "when." Trials are not an elective for any of us; they are a required course. To "count" or "consider" is a decision, a determination of the will. How do we steer our thoughts toward joy when we are in the midst of suffering?

**3 MAKE SUFFERING COUNT... What can I learn? Read James 1:5.** Everyone wants to know "why?" when they go through trials. But God does not always promise an answer to "why?". What He does promise is wisdom. What can suffering teach us that will help us follow Jesus better?

**4 MAKE SUFFERING COUNT... How can I grow? James** says those who suffer well are well on their way to maturity. God values growth in character over increase in comfort. **Read Romans 5:3-4 and 2 Corinthians 12:8-9.** How do trials and weaknesses grow our faith and character?

**5 MAKE SUFFERING COUNT... Who can I bless?** Times of suffering give others the opportunity to minister to us, but they can also provide us with opportunities to minister to others. **Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4.** Share an example of a time when you received a blessing when you were hurting. Then share a time where a trial actually turned into an opportunity to bless someone else.

**6 YOU CAN count on God TO MAKE your suffering count. Read 1 Peter 1:6-7.** God promises to make our suffering count. Why can we trust Him to do this? What does God know about suffering, and why should that encourage us?

**7** Rick suggested three prayers when going through a trial: "Teach me." "Grow me." or "Use me." Which one do you need to pray most right now?

