

# Small Group Guide



## Small Group Guide: Patience and Perseverance in Suffering

Based on James 5:7-12

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### Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Ask someone to open in prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and transform hearts through God's Word.

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### Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

Share a time when you had to wait for something important (a medical test result, a job offer, a relationship decision). How did waiting affect you?

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### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Be Long-Tempered:** Patience means enduring wrong without retaliating, not apathy toward evil
  2. **Trust God's Timeline:** We're called to wait until the Lord's coming for ultimate justice
  3. **Strengthen Your Heart:** Right living requires inner transformation, not just trying harder
  4. **Follow Jesus' Example:** Christ absorbed suffering and responded with love, leaving us a pattern to follow
  5. **Guard Against Misdirected Frustration:** Suffering often causes us to hurt those closest to us
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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text (15-20 minutes)

1. **Read James 5:7-12 together.** What stands out to you most from this passage? Why?
2. What does it mean to be "long-tempered" rather than just patient? How is this different from being passive or indifferent to evil?
3. James uses the farmer as an example. What specifically can we learn from how a farmer waits? What can't a farmer control?
4. Why does James bring up the prophets and Job as examples? What do their stories teach us about suffering and faithfulness?

### Personal Reflection (20-25 minutes)

5. The sermon stated: "No amount of evil ever justifies evil." How does this challenge the way our culture thinks about justice and retaliation? Where do you see the "they did bad, so we can do bad" mentality in today's world?
6. **Be honest:** When have you struggled with wanting immediate justice rather than waiting on God's timing? What made that situation difficult?
7. Jeff mentioned we can "overstep our boundaries and try to seize control of what is not ours." In what areas of life are you most tempted to take control instead of trusting God?
8. Read 1 Peter 2:19-24 (quoted in the sermon). What does it mean that "to this you were called"? How does knowing that suffering is part of our calling change your perspective?

### Going Deeper (15-20 minutes)

9. The sermon says, "Right living demands a steady heart." What practices help you "strengthen your heart" and stabilize your inner self when facing difficulty?
10. James warns against grumbling against one another when we're suffering. Why do you think we tend to take out our frustrations on those closest to us? Have you seen this pattern in your own life?
11. Jeff suggested that **honesty and transparency** are keys to not misdirecting our frustration. How did Jesus model this? How can we practice this in healthy ways?
12. What's the difference between:
  - Absorbing suffering and transforming it (Jesus' way)
  - Suppressing suffering and pretending everything is fine
  - Retaliating and seeking revenge

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### Practical Application (15-20 minutes)

# Individual Commitments

Choose 1-2 of these to focus on this week:

1. **Practice Long-Temperedness:** Identify one person or situation where you're tempted to retaliate or hold a grudge. Commit to responding with patience and blessing instead.
2. **Strengthen Your Heart:** Choose one spiritual discipline this week specifically to stabilize your inner self:
  - Daily Scripture meditation on God's character
  - Journaling about God's faithfulness in past situations
  - Memorizing a verse about God's justice or timing
  - Practicing gratitude even in difficulty
3. **Be Honest About Your Struggles:** Share with at least one trusted person this week when you're having a hard time, rather than letting frustration build up.
4. **Study the Prophets or Job:** Read through one story of a prophet's suffering (Jeremiah, Daniel, etc.) or Job's story. What can you learn about perseverance?
5. **Examine Your Justice Expectations:** Write down areas where you're demanding immediate justice. Pray through each one, surrendering your timeline to God's.

## Group Challenge

As a group, discuss:

- Is there a current situation in our community, church, or nation where Christians are being called to respond differently than the world would respond?
  - How can we support each other in choosing Jesus' way rather than retaliation?
  - How can we pray for each other regarding specific sufferings or frustrations we're facing?
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## Reflection Questions for the Week

Journal or meditate on these throughout the week:

1. What does my response to suffering and injustice reveal about what I truly believe about God?
  2. Where am I trying to "control the spigot" instead of waiting for God's rain?
  3. How would my life look different if I truly believed that "nobody ever really gets away with a thing"?
  4. What would it look like for me to "absorb suffering and see it transformed by the grace of Jesus Christ"?
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## Memory Verse

**James 5:7-8** - "Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near."

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## Closing Prayer (5-10 minutes)

- **Confession:** Acknowledge areas where we've sought revenge or harbored bitterness
  - **Petition:** Ask God for strength to endure suffering without retaliating
  - **Thanksgiving:** Thank God for Jesus' example and His promise to make all things right
  - **Intercession:** Pray for group members facing specific trials or temptations to retaliate
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## Before Next Week

- Read James 5:13-20 in preparation for next week's discussion
  - Follow through on your individual commitment
  - Check in with at least one group member during the week about how you're applying this teaching
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*"By his wounds you have been healed." - 1 Peter 2:24*