James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy,
because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance;
and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.
If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly.
But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind;
for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.
Let the believer who is lowly boast in being raised up, and the rich in being brought low, because the rich will disappear like a flower in the field.
For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the field; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. It is the same way with the rich; in the midst of a busy life, they will wither away.

Key Verse: If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly. James 1:5

James 1:1-11 (NRSV)
**Word Power!!!**

- **James** – A half-brother of Jesus who doesn’t become a follower of Jesus Christ until after Jesus’ death.
- **Twelve Tribes** – People of Jewish descent who have become followers of Jesus Christ.
- **Dispersion** – The many places around the world where members of the twelve tribes of Israel were forced to move.
- **Endurance** – Ability to keep doing something when it’s hard to do so.
- **Doubter** – Someone who wavers in their belief in something or someone.
- **Double-minded** – Remaining loyal to two opposing points of view.

**GETTING READY!!!**

Jay usually likes listening to church music with his G-ma; but, that changed when she started singing, “When I See Jesus, Amen.” Jay just couldn’t see why the song made his G-ma feel so good. Jay also couldn’t understand why she’d start inviting people to put their trust in Jesus after hearing or singing that song. All Jay felt was confusion and a little anger when he heard that song.

It was the opening words that made Jay feel so bad. They seemed to suggest that people had to suffer in order to live with God forever. Jay just couldn’t see how anyone with sense could feel happy about that thought. He also couldn’t understand why it would make his G-ma want to spread the word about Jesus.

Jay knew his G-ma wasn’t crazy. He also knew Jesus was worth knowing. So, Jay knew he was missing something
important. That’s why he got up the courage to talk to his G-ma about how his faith was being tested by the song’s message. G-ma thanked Jay for sharing his thoughts. Then, she helped him understand what the song was really saying. Jay had the most problems with the line that said:

“I've learned how to suffer for if I suffer, I’ll gain eternal life.”

“Oh, child,” she said, “the song’s not saying we have to suffer to get eternal life. It’s saying we’ll know how to live holy and wise lives if we learn how to suffer. That means we need to learn how to stick with Jesus when it’s confusing and hard. Then we’ll be able to live wise and holy lives just like Jesus.”

**Activity #1 – Hymns That Might Confuse a Kid.** Look at the lyrics from the AME hymns that your teacher has provided. Circle all the lines that confuse you. Then, work with your teacher and classmates to see if you can come to a common understanding of the messages in the hymns.

**INTO GOD’S WORD!!!**

today’s lesson is addressed to a special group of believers in Jesus Christ. They are the Jewish Christians who live outside Jerusalem because they were forced to relocate. They fled Jerusalem after Stephen was stoned for sharing the message about Jesus Christ. Now, they live all over the Greco-Roman empire and feel disconnected from the church in Jerusalem. That’s when James steps in. He lets the Jewish Christians know that they are still connected to the believers in Jerusalem. He reminds them that the faith-challenges they’re dealing with don’t
have to wreck their relationship with God. James says they can end up with a fuller and more complete relationship with God, by keeping their faith when doing so is hard.

James must have realized that his advice sounded weird, so he told the people to go directly to God when they were confused about a matter of faith. He also said God would definitely give them the wisdom they’d needed as long as their faith didn’t waver. Guess what? Those words still ring true today. Holding on to our faith in Jesus when it’s being challenged makes our relationship with God stronger. When that relationship is stronger, we can confidently ask God to show us how to make good and right choices.

**Activity #2 – Faith and Wisdom Work Together.** Circle the words listed below that appear in the word search puzzle. Use the letters that remain to help you identify a special message about the connection between faith and being seen as a wise person.

- BOAST
- COMPLETE
- DOUBTER
- ENDURANCE
- FAITH
- JAMES
- JESUS
- SERVANT
- TESTING
- TRIALS
- TRIBES
USING GOD’S WORD!!!

James, who gives such great advice about the connection between faith and wisdom, wasn’t always a trusted leader of
the church in Jerusalem. He started off being one of the family members who didn’t accept Jesus as Savior. Sure, James was raised to believe Jesus was special. Yes, James believed in God. He just didn’t believe Jesus was the Messiah until after Jesus died and appeared in the Upper Room.

As a half-brother of the Savior, James could have pointed to that relationship as proof of his status in the church. Such a connection would’ve made Jesus seem extra special. Since that rich heritage didn’t help him fully accept Jesus as Savior, James boasts about what he finds more important. He identifies himself as a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, James encourages the other believers to boast about how they obtained such status as well.

This shift that James makes from doubter to servant of Jesus Christ should give us hope. James proves that God will rearrange our point of view and our circumstances so that our faith can grow. James also proves that those changes will make us wise enough to help others, if we hold on to our faith. All we have to do is ask God to give us what we need to meet and grow from what’s challenging our faith. God will do it if we ask with faith, because God wants us to show the wisdom God provides.

**REMIX!!!**

God wants us to live the best life possible. There is a plan in place to help us get the wisdom that we need. However, we’ve got to ask for it with confident faith! We can’t allow anything to weaken our trust in God. Otherwise, we won’t get the wisdom
we need to live like Jesus saved us to be. So, let's ask God for what we need.

**Activity #3 – I Need You Now.** Use a separate sheet of paper to write a text message to God about how you can make a wise and godly decision when you’re troubled by some faith matter.

**PRAISE THE LORD!!!**

I’ll count it all joy even when it seems hard to
I know God will never give me more than I can handle
And when I struggle to do this well, I’ll ask God for help
Then God will step in and give me the wisdom and faith I need
So I can stick with God through thick and thin
For I’m committed to being faithful and wise until the very end.

~ Original poem inspired by the chorus of “Count It All Joy” by the Winans ~