

# (in)FORMATION

GAINING INFORMATION FROM JAMES, SO WE CAN BE IN FORMATION LIKE JESUS.



NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN CENTER  
August 23, 2026

## THE PLAN

Pastor Dave Larson | Turlock  
Pastor Jeremy Moore | Patterson

*This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings! Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. James 1:1-5 (NLT)*

### 1. Formation starts with who I \_\_\_\_\_ ... not how I'm \_\_\_\_\_.

*This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ... I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad. James 1:1 (NLT)*

### 2. My formation happens in the \_\_\_\_\_.

*Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. James 1:2-3 (NLT)*

*We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. Romans 5:3-4 (NLT)*

*So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NLT)*

### 3. God invites me to keep \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

*So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. James 1:4-5 (NLT)*

*For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. Proverbs 2:6 (NLT)*

*There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears. Philippians 1:6 (MSG)*

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### 1. Formation starts with who I AM ... not how I'm PERFORMING.

*This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ... I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad. James 1:1 (NLT)*

### 2. My formation happens in the STRUGGLE.

*Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. James 1:2-3 (NLT)*

*We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. Romans 5:3-4 (NLT)*

*So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NLT)*

### 3. God invites me to keep SEEKING Him.

*So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. James 1:4-5 (NLT)*

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONNECT

Tell about a time you tried to put something together (furniture, a recipe, a project) without really reading the instructions. How'd that go?

## ENGAGE

What impacted you the most personally from the message?

## GROW

1. There's a difference between information and formation: knowing stuff about God vs. actually being changed by Him. Where do you feel that gap in your own life right now?
2. James opens his letter by calling himself a "slave" of Christ instead of leading with his resume (brother of Jesus, church leader, etc.). Why do you think he chose to lead with identity instead of accomplishments?
3. James was writing to people who were scattered, displaced, and didn't have it all together. What does it mean to you that God starts forming people right in the middle of their mess, instead of waiting for them to clean it up first?
4. "Consider it an opportunity for great joy" is a tough thing to hear when you're actually in the middle of trouble. Has there ever been a hard season that ended up shaping you in a way you wouldn't trade? What did that process look like?
5. James says wisdom isn't something you manufacture by trying harder, it's something you get by asking God. Is there an area where you've stopped asking God for help because you feel like you should've "figured it out" by now?

## LEAD (YOURSELF):

This week, try reframing your prayers about a hard situation. Instead of praying "get me out of this," try praying "what are You forming in me through this?" What's one specific struggle you could pray that over?