

# Bookends Sunday

Dr. Donovan  
Kelly

First & last Sundays  
of Mike's sabbatical

Bible Doctrines  
& Theology

Our text both Sundays: James 1.1-27

Today's message comes from  
James 1:2-8 (18)

"Seeking God's wisdom when life happens"

The last Sunday's message comes from  
James 1:19-27

"Being/living as a 'doer' of God's word"



# Background To James' letter

"James" is really  
"Jacob"; Jesus'  
half brother

James' audience is  
made up of  
Jewish believers (1:1)

These believers were  
undergoing various  
trials & being  
mistreated for their  
faith in Jesus

James wrote to  
encourage believers to:  
persevere under trial  
&  
remain faithful to Jesus



## James 1:2-8, ESV

"Count (**add it up**) it all (**pure**) joy, my brothers, when you meet (**encounter**) trials (**difficulties**) of various (**multifaceted**) kinds, for you know (**by experience**) that the testing of your faith (**trust in God**) produces steadfastness (**patient endurance**). And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect (**mature**) & complete (**whole**), lacking in nothing (**being fully equipped for living a whole life**).

And if any of you lacks wisdom (**and you do**), let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach (**finding fault**), and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven & tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded (**two-souls**) man (**living a fractured life**), unstable in all his ways.

(cf Matthew 7:24-27)



# When 'life' happens...

As a 'Christ-follower' how do we/you typically respond to the following trials/difficulties?



Most believers tend to think...

"God must be mad at me"



"I must have done something wrong"



"God must not care about me or my situation"





# When 'life' happens...

"Truths about our trials...part 1"

What we **KNOW** about our trials



Sometimes it's  
the result of  
bad/evil people

## Different degrees of difficulty

We live in a sin-fallen  
world but somehow  
expect life to be perfect



Sometimes I'm  
at fault when  
Life happens

## Different sources of our trials

Many times there's  
just no real good  
explanation





# When 'life' happens...

## "Truths about our trials...part 2"

What we **know** about God from James



God doesn't  
strike your child  
or you with illness

Truth:  
God is NEVER the  
source of your trials



God doesn't set  
your house ablaze  
to get back at you

Every good gift & every perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change... James 1:17



God does not  
cause a spouse  
to leave a  
marriage

"For God makes his sun rise on the  
evil & on the  
good & sends rain on the  
just & unjust."  
Matthew 5:45



God doesn't kill  
others to get your  
attention



# Seeking God's Wisdom for life's daily battles

## 3 questions from James...

How should we view life's trial/difficulties?

How can/does God use life's trials/difficulties in our lives?

What is God's "ultimate end game" for us?



# How should we view life's trial/difficulties?



In order to grow  
a muscle must  
experience adversity





# Seeking God's Wisdom for Daily Living



How should we view  
life's various  
trials/adversities?

James tells us to view our **trials/adversities** as "**faith builders**"  
Just as weights help to build muscle-endurance,  
trials help to build faith-endurance

"Faith" incorporates belief & trust

**Belief**: intellectual knowledge/acknowledgment of a fact/s

**Trust**: acting upon our knowledge of the facts

"Faith" must have an **object**

**God** is the object of our faith

We place our "faith/trust" **in** God based upon the facts **about** God

"Faith" is like a **muscle** in that it must be tested or  
**face adversity** in order to grow



# Seeking God's Wisdom for Daily Living



How should we view  
life's various  
trials/adversities?

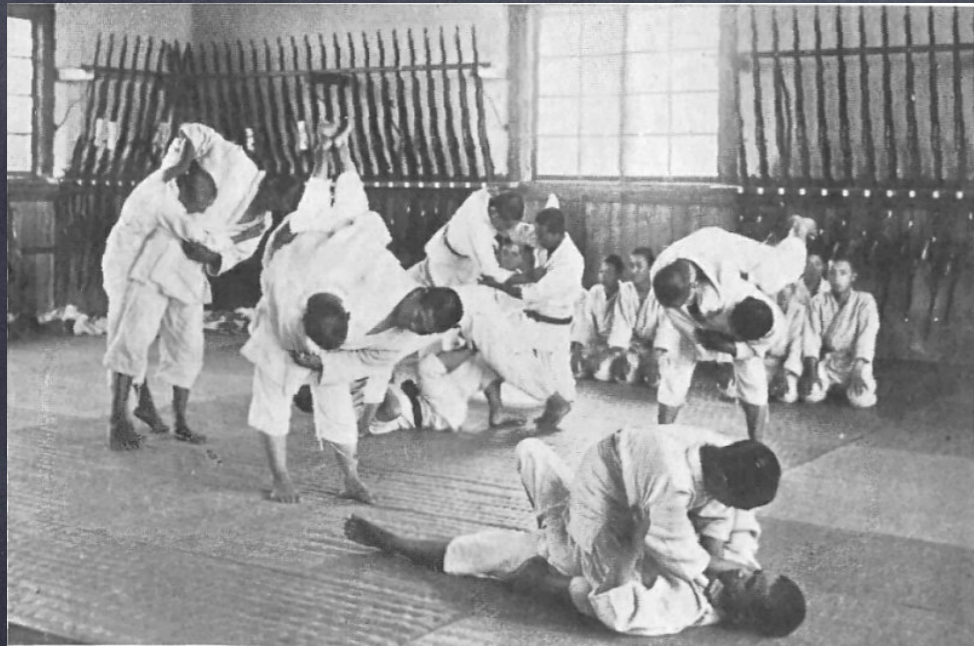
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"Faith" is like a **muscle** in that it must be tested or  
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James is tells us trials/adversities should be  
viewed as **opportunities**  
for **growing/strengthening**  
our faith in God



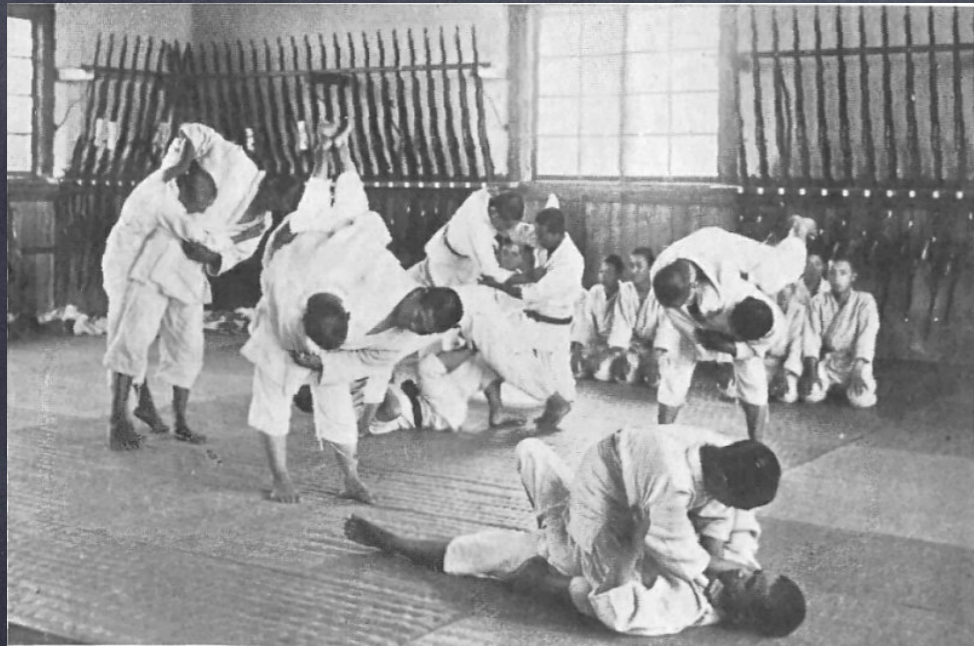
How can/does God use life's trials/difficulties  
in our lives?



Jiu Jitsu is manipulating  
(using) your opponents force  
against themselves



# How can/does God use life's trials/difficulties in our lives?



When we trust God with our trials/adversities, He is able to **turn them on themselves** by **transforming the results**

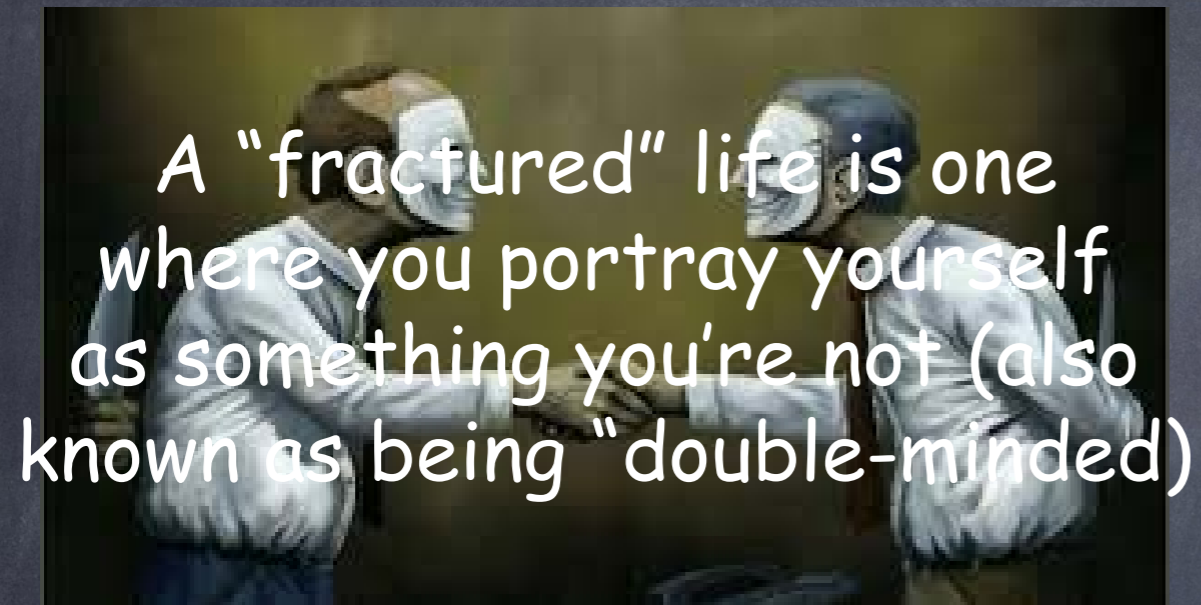
Jesus was made "**perfect**" (**mature**) through through suffering  
Hebrews 2:10

Our suffering is an **evidence** of **fellowship** with Jesus  
Philippians 3:10  
Colossians 1:24  
1 Peter 4:12-19

God is able to use/transform our trials/adversities to:  
**Minister** to others facing similar trials-**2 Corinthians 1:3-7**  
**Conform** (mold) us into the image of Jesus-**Romans 8:28-30**



# What is God's "ultimate end game" for us?

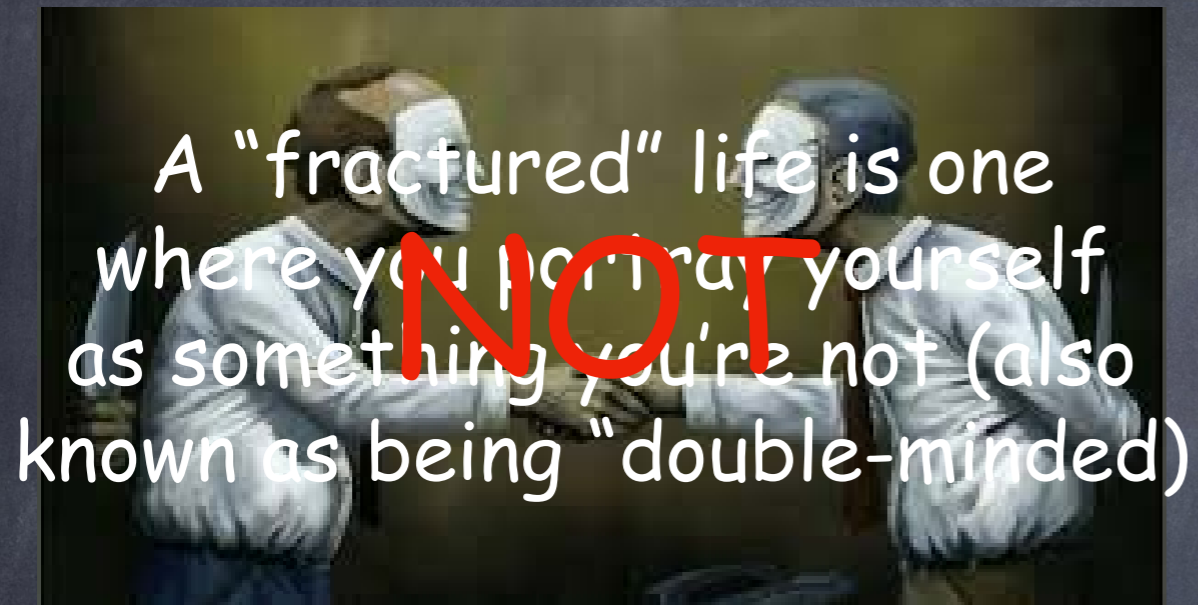


A "fractured" life is one where you portray yourself as something you're not (also known as being "double-minded")

Let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect & complete, lacking in nothing, James 1:4, ESV



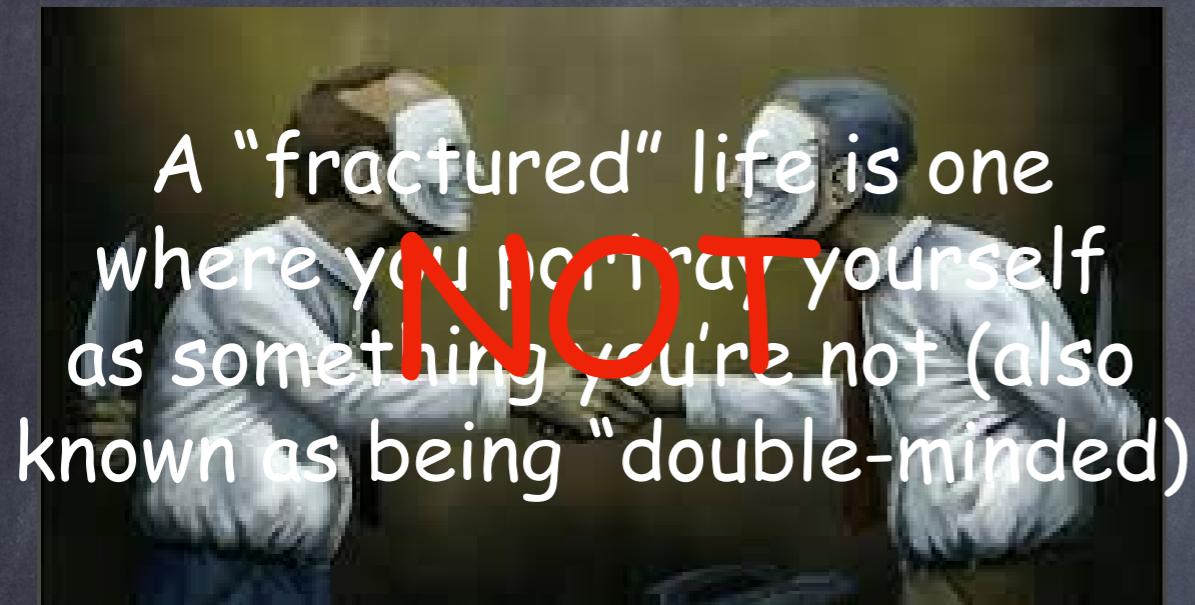
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# What is God's "ultimate end game" for us?



God's goal is for us to live "whole" lives (as "mature" believers) versus "fractured" lives

The Hebrew word "Shalom" or "peace" conveys an overall sense of wellbeing along with human flourishing

"Human flourishing" is "to become ALL that God intends you to become"

Our/Your challenge today...

We need God's wisdom/perspective in order to:

Understand that God is for us; He's on our side

Keep life's trials/adversities in their proper perspective

Successfully navigate through life's trials/adversities

Accurately reflect who we are becoming in Christ