

Introduction:

1. In what area of your life can you thank God that your patience has increased?
2. Have you ever been unjustly accused of something? How did you react?

Understanding:

3. Verse 8 mentions the Lord's coming. Read 1 Thess 4:16-18 about the return of Christ. Is this just a bunch of theological facts? What else is here beyond mere facts? How does this affect how you live?
4. Verse 9 says "Don't grumble against one another" Grumbling as a response has quite a long history. Read Gen 3:12-13. Who did each of the 2 people in this account grumble against? In what way do you react in a similar way to either or both of them?
5. We know that we can confess our sins directly to God. So why is it worthwhile for someone else to know about our sins?
6. Read 1 John 1:8-10. Why is it important to confess our sin? What are the two wonderful results of confessing? Do you think that we reach a point where we no longer need to do this?
7. One reason people wander from the truth is "they were counting on God to do something for them, and God didn't come through. And it was so disappointing, they walked away from their faith." How might you win them back without simply lecturing them?
8. We have hope because God will bring justice in the end. Read Matt. 12:15-21. What does this passage say about having a quarrelsome attitude as we pursue justice? What is Jesus' attitude towards bruised people? What is the final result? Where should our hope be? How does this passage cause you to rethink your own attitude?
9. A friend faced with a struggle says "Everything I have tried in this situation has not worked so now I will turn to prayer". Is this a biblical attitude towards prayer? Why or why not?
10. Ken Jones, an African American pastor, wrote "all men are created in the image of God, and although that image is marred because of The Fall, we are to respect and grant to every human being the dignity warranted by the divine image they bear. This is the biblical basis for our acts of mercy and compassion." How does what Jones said connect to the recent controversy in Ferguson and New York? How does it fit in with the whole message of the book of James?

Application:

11. Verse 10 speaks of the patience of the prophets. Read Hebrews 11:32-38. What were some of the powerful actions of the prophets? What were some of the harsh measures taken against them? What are some of the actions you can do (even if it does not involve shutting the mouths of lions!) What kind of risks of retribution (even if not being sawed in two!) do you face for using your voice for good?
12. Think of a situation where you are most likely to take your impatience or anger out on someone. Confess this as sin. Pray that God will change your heart in this.
13. When are you most likely to lack confidence when you pray? How does today's scripture help increase that confidence? Now: take time to pray with increased confidence!