

## **Slumps**

### **Ready:**

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” - James 1:2-4 (NIV)

**Set** The Major League Baseball season is in full swing. Already, some ballplayers have started off with extremely high batting averages, and others have started off rather slowly. Only time will tell whether those hot hitters will taper off or if the slow starters will elevate their averages as the season progresses, but either way, it is likely that at some point during the season, they all will experience a slump. The long baseball season will culminate deep in the fall with the World Series. It will be full of highs and lows and ups and downs--much like our lives. We all will experience highs and lows, but what will happen when we do? In the New Testament, James wrote that we should “consider it pure joy... WHENever you face trials.” He did not say IF we face trials, he said WHEN. He knew that trials would be inevitable for us all. The lesson we can take from this passage is that when God gives a trial to face, He does it to help us improve our walk with Him. Just as hitters go into slumps, Christians can go into spiritual slumps, as well. Slumping hitters often go into the cage with a coach and play “soft toss” and hit off the tee. Christians can go into the Word and spend time in prayer with their heavenly Coach to work things out. Either way, both are seeking counsel and getting back to the fundamentals and basics of what made them successful in the first place. As Christians, we need to spend time in prayer, spend time reading the divine Word of God, seeking godly counsel, and (probably the most overlooked element of getting back on track) being still and waiting for God’s leadership and direction. Just as players listen to their coaches, we need to listen to God’s instruction for our lives. Today, if you find yourself in a spiritual slump, seek God’s instruction to get back in the game.

**Go** 1. What are some warning signs of a spiritual slump? 2. Are you in one right now? If not, when was the last time you were? 3. Along with getting in touch with God through prayer and the Word, do you also have wise, godly counsel you can turn to for advice?

**Workout** Matthew 6:25-34 James 1:5



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