

Trials Will Come

One of the most popular verses in the Bible about trials is James 1:2; it begins with “*when* troubles of any kind come your way...” WHEN not if! This implies that trials will come – no one can escape them or is exempt from them! Trials come in all kinds of shapes and sizes... unfavorable circumstances, tragic events, irritating people, etc.

Trials Defined (Merriam-Webster dictionary):

- Definition: “a test of faith, patience, or stamina through subjection to suffering or temptation”
- Synonyms: adversities, afflictions, tribulations, troubles, mishaps, challenges, complications, difficulties, grievances, griefs, hardships, annoyances, discomforts, inconveniences...

What is my response to trials?

- Do I beg God to take them away?
- Do I live in the past before I got the trials?
- Do I get discouraged and become distant from God and people?
- Do I grumble and complain about my trials?
- **OR** Do I realize... God has a purpose? He’s in charge? He wants to grow my faith? He wants to instill godly character qualities in me? He’s using trials to do great things?

Opportunities for JOY

James goes on to say “...**consider it an opportunity for great joy.**” James 1:2-5 sets the stage for how God wants us to view and respond to trials. We are commanded to view trials (problems, afflictions, hardships, etc.) as opportunities for GREAT JOY!

James 1:2-4 (NLT) “Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”

Acts 14:22 (NLT) “...they [Paul and Barnabas] strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that we must suffer many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God.”

As we embark on this series of trusting through the trials, we’ll be finding out how trials are good for us, but to do this we must seek wisdom from God. That’s where we look to **James 1:5 (NLT)** “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.” So we’ll be diving into the Bible to be encouraged and grow as we see trials as “opportunities.”

Bible Character Study

Joseph | Genesis 37, 39-50

Trials Test Our Faith

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

God uses trials to test our faith. What are some of the trials you’re going through? Is your faith strong enough to withstand the test of trials that are coming your way?

Matthew 7:24-27 (NLT) *“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵ Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. ²⁶ But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷ When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”*

Psalms 81:7 (NLT) *“You cried to me in trouble, and I saved you; I answered out of the thundercloud and tested your faith when there was no water at Meribah.”*

Revelation 2:10 (NLT) *“Don’t be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life.”*

Isaiah 7:9b (NIV) *“If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.”*

Trials Develop Endurance

James 1:3b (NLT) *“your endurance has a chance to grow.”*

We need to lean into our trials and LET God develop this incredible thing called endurance. We need to trust God with our feelings and purpose to keep pressing on and not give up!

1 Peter 1:6 (NLT) *“So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while.”*

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT) *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne.”*

James 1:12 (NLT) *“God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”*

Romans 5:3 (NLT) *“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.”*

Trials Perfect and Complete Us

James 1:4a (NLT) *“So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”*

God wants to keep maturing us in our faith, and He uses trials to accomplish that. Do you let trials bring you to maturity, or are you resisting them and missing the benefits God is giving you?

Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT) *“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. ⁷ Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.”*

Ephesians 4:13-14 (NLT) *“This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.”*

Hebrews 5:14 (NLT) *“Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.”*

1 Corinthians 13:10-12 (NLT) *“But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. ¹² Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.”*

Philippians 1:6 (NIV) *“being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Notes:

Reflection and Response from This Week’s Lesson:

What’s my take-away and how will I practice trusting God more through my custom-designed trials?

