

Trying Trials

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We are assured that trials will come. "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12). There is no loophole or exemption clause; there is no way around it. In fact, Peter says not to be surprised when they come upon us, "as though some strange thing were happening" (1 Pet. 4:12). And James prepares us from "when" they happen, not "if" (Jam. 1:2). Seeing that we cannot escape these "various" trials, coming in different shapes and sizes, often from unexpected sources, what can we do about them?

Attitude is everything. What does James say to do? "Count it all joy" (Jam. 1:2). How does Peter tell us to respond? "Keep on rejoicing" (1 Pet. 4:12). Jesus Himself preached in the Sermon on the Mount that when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you, "rejoice and be glad" (Matt. 5:11-12). Do you see a pattern developing here? If you want to end with joy, you have to begin with joy.

Yet, we would much rather "count it all misery" or "keep on complaining" or "pout and be angry." We want people to know when we're suffering and how much we're suffering. We find greater comfort in feeling sorry for ourselves than in finding ways to rebound and rejoice.

We must start seeing things from God's perspective instead of our own limited, selfish view. Only then, will our eyes be opened to a whole new world. Only then, can we see Him on His throne, watching over us and causing us to rejoice. In prosperity and in adversity.

Remember the result. The testing of our faith "produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (Jam. 1:3-4). An athlete endures the rigors of training because he knows it will make him a stronger for the contest. We must persevere through our fiery trials knowing that we will emerge sharper and more durable on the other side.

God is interested in making His people better. Trials and tests are just one way He can accomplish that. He knows that they give us confidence and boldness for future trials. He knows that they help us become mature, "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." He knows that a faith tested becomes a faith perfected.

Bad things may happen to good people. But with the right attitude and proper perspective, they can make good people even better people.

Ask for wisdom. "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God" (Jam. 1:5). There are times to pray for the trial to be removed. But there are also times to pray for wisdom

to endure it. Wisdom will help us see the end result, even when it's still far way. Wisdom will help us make good choices in the midst of adversity. Wisdom will help us maintain our faith in God though we be in the most desperate of circumstances.

God gives to all generously. He will not only fill your cup. He will cause it to overflow. Pray for wisdom. Then use it.

“Cheer up, my brother. Live in the sunshine. We’ll understand it all by-and- by.”