

# JAMES – PRACTICAL LESSONS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY

## JAMES 1:2-12 ANSWERS 3 QUESTIONS ABOUT TRIALS

### 1. OVERVIEW OF JAMES 1:2-12

#### A. JAMES ANSWERS 3 QUESTIONS ABOUT “TRIALS” IN JAMES 1:2-12.

1. WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT “TRIALS”?
2. HOW CAN WE TRANSCEND/RISE ABOVE “TRIALS”?
3. WHEN WE HAVE HANDLED “TRIALS” PROPERLY, WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?

### 2. QUESTION #1 WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT “TRIALS”?

#### A. FIRST, TRIALS ARE INEVITABLE!

1. James 1:2 (NASB) “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,...”
2. NOTE “WHEN”, NOT IF CHRISTIANS ENCOUNTER VARIOUS TRIALS!
  - a. BECAUSE WE ARE IN THE FAMILY OF GOD, TRIALS ARE INEVITABLE. THEY'RE INESCAPABLE. AND THEY'RE UNAVOIDABLE.
    - 1) INTERESTINGLY, ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN NATURE IS WE TRY TO AVOID “TRIALS” BY:
      - i. COMPLAINING ABOUT THEM
      - ii. GOING AROUND THEM,
      - iii. OR BY TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM THEM.
    - 2) BUT... THE TRUTH IS THAT WE CAN NOT AVOID THEM.

#### B. SECOND, TRIALS ARE “VARIOUS”.

1. James 1:2 (NASB) “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,...”
2. THE GREEK WORD FOR “VARIOUS” IS poikilos.
  - a. WE GET OUR WORD POLKA DOT FROM IT.

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- 1) JUST AS THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF DOTS... THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF TRIALS.
3. SOME ARE IRKSOME AND IRRITABLE AND THEY SORT OF COME AND GO AND THEN MORE COME IN THEIR PLACE.
  - a. SOME ARE DEEP AND LIFE-THREATENING.
  - b. SOME ARE OUTWARD TRIALS THAT HAVE HAPPENED TO US.
  - c. AND SOME ARE INWARD THAT HAPPENED WITHIN US.
4. OUTWARD TRIALS... HARDSHIP, GRIEF, DISAPPOINTMENTS, FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES, LOSS OF JOB, FLAT TIRES, DEAD BATTERIES, BROKEN WRISTS AND HIPS AND ANKLES.
5. INWARD TRIALS... UNRESOLVED CONFLICTS, FEELINGS OF REJECTION, BEING MISUNDERSTOOD, FEELING INSECURE, BATTLES OF THE FLESH (GREED, LUST, ANGER, PRIDE, JELOUSY, ARGUING, AND ENVY).
- C. THIRD, TRIALS COME WITH A PURPOSE.
  1. THEY CAN BE OPORTUNNITIES FOR US TO GROW SPIRITUALLY (SANCTIFICATION) IF WE HAVE POSITIVE ATTITUDE.
  2. WE WILL NOT MATURE (GROW SPIRITUALLY) IF WE LOOK FOR AN ESCAPE HATCH BY...
    - a. COMPLAINING
    - b. BLAMING/JUDGING OTHERS
    - c. LIVE IN DENIAL
    - d. BECOME ANGRY
    - e. LIVING IN FEAR

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3. **James 1:2-4** NLB When all kinds of **trials** and temptations crowd into your life, my brothers and sisters, don't **resent** them as intruders, but **welcome** them as friends. Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of **endurance**. Let the process go on until that endurance is **fully developed**. And you will find that you have **become men and women of mature character**.
4. IT IS **MUCH BETTER** TO ASK GOD **WHAT IS IN THIS TRIAL THAT I NEED TO LEARN...** THAN ASKING **WHY HAS THIS HAPPENED, AND WHY DID IT HAPPEN TO ME?**
3. **QUESTION #2 HOW CAN WE TRANSCEND/RISE ABOVE "TRIALS"?**
  - A. **NOW THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT TRIALS ARE INEVITABLE AND THAT THEY CAN BE PURPOSEFUL...**
    1. **...HOW CAN WE TRANSCEND/RISE ABOVE THEM AND STAY ON TOP OF THEM...**
      - a. **SO THAT WE ARE ABLE TO GO THROUGH THEM WITHOUT THEM DRAGGING US DOWN?**
  - B. **FOUR WORDS JAMES USES TO HELP US UNDERSTAND HOW WE CAN MATURE THROUGH TRIALS.**
    1. **"CONSIDER"**

**James 1:2 (NASB)** **Consider** it all **joy**, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

      - a. **THAT DOES NOT MEAN A LAUGHING "JOY"... THAT WOULD BE SILLY AND INAPPROPRIATE.**
      - b. **"JOY" IS USED HERE TO MEAN A STEADFAST POSITIVE SPIRIT.**
        - 1) **IT MEANS A DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING THAT SAYS, THERE IS A REASON FOR THIS.**

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- 2) ... AND IF I CAN KNOW MY GOD BETTER, I WILL UNDERSTAND BETTER WHAT HIS PURPOSE IS IN ALLOWING (NOT CAUSING) THIS TO HAPPEN!

#### 2. “KNOW”

- a. James 1:3 (NASB) knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
- b. “KNOWING” THAT THIS TRIAL IS DEEPENING YOUR FAITH, AND THAT IT IS INCREASING YOUR ENDURANCE, AND IT IS ENHANCING YOUR CHARACTER, AND THAT IT IS BUILDING YOUR MATURITY.
- 1) “KNOWING” THAT THE “TRIAL” CAN BE FOR MY GROWTH IF I APPROACH IT WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.
- 2) NOTE ALL OF THOSE VIRTUES COME ON THE PLATFORM OF A “TRIAL”.
- c. “I LOOK BACK ON EXPERIENCES THAT AT THE TIME SEEMED ESPECIALLY DESOLATING AND PAINFUL WITH PARTICULAR SATISFACTION. INDEED, I CAN SAY WITH COMPLETE TRUTHFULNESS THAT EVERYTHING I HAVE LEARNED IN MY 75 YEARS, EVERYTHING THAT HAS TRULY ENHANCED AND ENLIGHTENED MY EXISTENCE HAS BEEN THROUGH AFFLICTION AND NOT THROUGH HAPPINESS.”  
– MALCOM MUGGERIDGE
- d. “DON'T BE DEFINED BY WHAT LIFE THROWS AT YOU AND YOU CANNOT CONTROL. ACCEPT THE HAND YOU ARE DEALT WITH GRACE. AND THEN GO ON TO PLAY THAT HAND AS JOYOUSLY AND

INDUSTRIOUSLY AND VIGOROUSLY AS YOU CAN.”

DANIEL KRAUTHAMMER

#### 1. “ASK”

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- a. James 1:5 (NASB) But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
- b. **NOTE** "ASK" IS PRECEDED BY THE REASON YOU ARE "ASKING"...
  - 1) = "WISDOM" JAMES DEFINES "WISDOM" AS LOOKING AT OUR LIFE FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW.
  - 2) WISDOM IS SOMETHING YOU AND I WERE NOT BORN WITH.
  - 3) WE CANNOT INHERIT IT.
  - 4) WE CANNOT TAKE A COURSE AT SCHOOL, NOT EVEN A GRADUATE SCHOOL THAT TEACHES US WISDOM.
- c. THE WISDOM JAMES IS WRITING ABOUT ONLY COMES FROM THE MIND OF OUR GOD, AND HE IS WILLING TO SHARE IT WITH US AT THOSE TIMES WHEN WE NEED IT THE MOST... DURING TIMES OF "TRIALS".
- d. PRAYER (= "ASK") "LORD, I'M IN THE MIDST OF A MESS. IT'S A SITUATION PART OF WHICH I CAUSED AND PART OF WHICH I DIDN'T, BUT I'M HERE. AND IT HAS BROUGHT MAYBE LOSS OR HEARTACHE OR A FEELING OF FAILURE, DISAPPOINTMENT TO MYSELF AND TO OTHERS. SO I NEED YOU TO ENABLE ME TO SEE THROUGH YOUR PERSPECTIVE WHAT I CAN LEARN THROUGH THIS. HELP ME LORD TO LEARN FROM THIS EXPERIENCE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON THE SITUATION. HELP ME TO SEE WHAT'S OCCURRED AND PERHAPS BY YOUR GRACE WHY IT'S HAPPENED SO THAT I CAN GROW IN AN UNDERSTANDING OF IT. I NEED YOUR WISDOM BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE IT IN MYSELF."
- e. CHRISTIANS SHOULD NEVER ALLOW THE OPPORTUNNITY OF A TRIAL TO BE WASTED.
  - 1) THE SECRET TO ENDURING IS IN "ASKING" FOR THE WISDOM WE NEED TO GET US THROUGH THE EVENTS OF THE TRIAL.
2. "ENDURE"

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- a. **James 1:3-4 (NASB)** knowing that the testing of your faith produces **endurance**. And let **endurance** have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
  - b. **“ENDURE”** IS FROM THE **GREEK** TERM **“HUPOMENO”**.
    - 1) **HUPO** MEANS **UNDER** AND **MENO** MEANS **TO ABIDE** OR **TO REMAIN**.
    - 2) THE WORDS **TOGETHER** MEAN **TO REMAIN UNDER**.
  - c. IT WAS USED TO **DESCRIBE** A **BEAST OF BURDEN** **LOADED DOWN** FOR A **TRIP** AND THE ANIMAL WOULD **“HUPOMENO”** ... **ABIDE UNDER THE LOAD**.
  - d. THAT (**“HUPOMENO”**) IS WHAT **WE** ARE **CALLED TO DO** IN **TRIALS**.
  - e. **GOD WANTS TO CULTIVATE CHARACTER** AND **MATURITY** IN US **WHEN WE ENDURE THE TRIALS** AS THEY COME AND **RATHER THAN COMPLAIN** ABOUT THEM.
    - 1) **COMPLAINING** MAKES **US** AND **OTHER PEOPLE** **MISERABLE** **BECAUSE OF OUR TRIAL**.
- B. **James 1:9-11 (NASB)** But the **brother of humble circumstances** is to glory in his high position; and **the rich man** *is to glory* in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.
1. **NEXT JAMES SAYS A WORD TO THE POOR, AND A WORD TO THE RICH** REGARDING **“TRIALS”**.
    - a. **HIS POINT** IS THAT **REGARDLESS** OF OUR **FINANCIAL STATUS** **ALL CHRISTIANS** WILL FACE **“TRIALS”**.

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- b. ... AND WHEN WE **ENDURE** "**TRIALS**", WHETHER WE ARE **POOR** OR **RICH** OR **IN BETWEEN**, THERE **WILL** BE **OPPORTUNITIES** FOR **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**.
2. **CHRISTIANITY** GIVES THE **POOR** A NEW SENSE OF THEIR OWN **VALUE**.
  - a. IN THE **EARLY CHURCH**, THERE WERE **NO CLASS DISTINCTIONS**.
  - b. IN THE **CHURCH TODAY**, THE SOCIAL DISTINCTIONS OF THE WORLD **SHOULD BE OBLITERATED** SO THAT **NO INDIVIDUAL MATTERS MORE THAN ANY OTHER**.
3. **CHRISTIANITY** GIVES THE **RICH** A **NEW SENSE** OF **SELF**.
  - a. THE **GREAT PERIL OF RICHES** IS THAT THEY TEND TO GIVE PEOPLE **A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY**.
4. ONE OF THE **MOST DISAPPOINTING** THINGS ABOUT CHURCHES THAT ARE MORE **SOCIAL** THAN **SPIRITUAL** IS THAT THEY PLACE **LITTLE VALUE** ON PEOPLE WHO ARE FINANCIALLY "**POOR**"!
2. **QUESTION #3 WHEN** WE HAVE HANDLED "TRIALS" PROPERLY, **WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?**
  - A. THE **SECRET** IS IN **UNDERSTANDING JAMES 1:12**
  - B. **James 1:12 (NLT2)** 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**.
  - C. **James 1:12 (NASB)** **Blessed** is a man who **perseveres under trial**; for once he has been **approved**, he **will receive the crown of life** which *the Lord* has promised to those who **love Him**.

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D. THE **ANSWER** TO THE **FOURTH QUESTION...** (**WHEN** WE HAVE HANDLED “TRIALS” PROPERLY, **WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?**)... IS THAT **GOD BLESSES** THOSE WHO **PATIENTLY ENDURE “TRIALS”**.

1. **IF** WE **HANDLE “TRIALS” GOD’S WAY** RATHER THAN **IN THE FLESH**, THERE IS A **SENSE OF SATISFACTION** WHICH JAMES CALLS **BLESSINGS FROM GOD**.
2. **NOTE** THE **BENEFITS/BLESSINGS** WILL BE OURS IN THE **PRESENT** AS WELL AS IN **ETERNITY**, ALTHOUGH WE WILL **STILL** FACE **TRIALS** WHILE ON **EARTH**.
3. ARE YOU **AWARE** THAT WHEN WE **DIE** AND WE STAND BEFORE OUR LORD FOR THE TIME OF **REWARDS** BY HIS **GRACE**, THAT THERE ARE LITERAL “**CROWNS**” THAT HE HAS **SET ASIDE** FOR US?
  - a. THE “**CROWN**” IS THE **EMBLEM OF SPIRITUAL SUCCESS**, GIVEN BY **GOD** TO THOSE WHO **KEEP THEIR FAITH** IN THE **MIDST OF “TRIALS”**.
    - 1) “**LIFE**” SHOULD BE TAKEN AS **IDENTIFYING THE REWARD**.
    - 2) THIS “**LIFE**” IS **NOT PHYSICAL LIFE... BUT ETERNAL LIFE**.
      - i. THE ENJOYMENT OF **GOD’S PRESENCE ON INTO ETERNITY**.
  - b. **FIVE CROWNS** ARE NAMED IN THE **NEW TESTAMENT**.
    - 1) THE **IMPERRISHABLE CROWN**. (1 Corinthians 9:25)
    - 2) THE **CROWN OF EXAULTATION**. (1 Thessalonians 2:19)
    - 3) THE **CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**. (2 Timothy 4:8)
    - 4) THE **CROWN OF GLORY**. (1 Peter 5:4)
    - 5) THE **CROWN OF LIFE**. (James 1:12)

### 3. **CONCLUSION**

A. **TWO WAYS** THAT WE **SHOULD** HANDLE **ADVERSITY/TRIALS**:



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1. **WHEN TROUBLES COME, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE RESPOND WITH WISDOM.**
  - a. **REMEMBER THIS INSIGHT INTO TRIALS DOES NOT COME NATURALLY... WISDOM FOR HANDLING TRIALS CAN COME ONLY FROM GOD,**
    - 1) **AND THE PRIMARY MEANS HE USES TO GIVE US WISDOM IS HIS WORD.**
2. **WHEN TROUBLES COME, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE RESPOND IN FAITH.**
  - a. **IN THE CONTEXT OF TRIALS, FAITH MEANS HAVING ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S PROMISES DESPITE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT APPEAR TO CONTRADICT THOSE PROMISES.**
    - 1) **TO THOSE WHO LACK THE WISDOM AND FAITH TO SEE BEYOND THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES, IT MAY APPEAR THAT OUR LIVES ARE IN A TAILSPIN, HEADING FOR CATASTROPHE.**
    - 2) **BUT SINGLE-MINDED, FOCUSED FAITH MEANS MAKING A CONSCIOUS DECISION, WITH GOD'S HELP, TO CHOOSE OUR ATTITUDE.**
      - i. **IT MEANS SURRENDERING FULLY TO GOD BECAUSE WE TRUST HIM, AND RESIST OUR NATURAL TENDENCY TO ABANDON HOPE.**