

JAMES – LESSONS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY

TURNING TRIALS INTO TRIUMPS

1. REVIEW

A. **James 1:2-4 (NASB)** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 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. GOD DOES **NOT** ALLOW “**TRIALS**” TO MAKE US **FALL**, THEY **ARE** MEANT TO MAKE US **SOAR**,

1. GOD DOES **NOT** ALLOW “**TRIALS**” TO **DEFEAT** US, THEY **ARE** MEANT TO **BE DEFEATED**,

2. GOD DOES **NOT** ALLOW “**TRIALS**” TO MAKE US **WEAKER**, THEY **ARE** MEANT TO MAKE US **STRONGER**,

3. **THEREFORE**, JAMES SAYS... WE SHOULD **NOT COMPLAIN** ABOUT “**TRIALS**” ... WE SHOULD “**REJOICE**” **THROUGH THEM**.

1. **THREE ESSENTIALS FOR VICTORY IN TRIALS**:

A. THE **FIRST ESSENTIAL** ELEMENT FOR **VICTORY IN TRIALS** IS: A **JOYFUL ATTITUDE** ... “**CONSIDER IT ALL JOY** WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER **VARIOUS TRIALS**” ...

1. **NOTE OUTLOOK DETERMINES OUTCOME** AND **ATTITUDE DETERMINES ACTION**.

a. **REMEMBER** THAT WHEN WE **CHANGE** THE WAY WE **LOOK AT THINGS** (“**TRIALS**”) ... THE **THINGS WE LOOK AT** (“**TRIALS**”) **CHANGE!!**

2. **JAMES TELLS US TO EXPECT TRIALS**.

a. IT IS **NOT** A MATTER OF “**IF**” WE WILL “**ENCOUNTER VARIOUS TRIALS**”, **BUT** ... “**WHEN**” WE WILL “**ENCOUNTER VARIOUS TRIALS**”.

b. THE **BELIEVER WHO EXPECTS** THEIR **CHRISTIAN LIFE** TO BE “**TRIAL**” **FREE** IS IN FOR A **SHOCK**.

1) **DISCUSS WHERE** DID WE GET THE **IDEA** THAT WHEN WE BECAME **CHRISTIANS** OUR **LIVES** WOULD BE **TROUBLE FREE**?

3. **IF** CHRISTIANS **LEARN** TO **ACCEPT** THAT “**TRIALS**” ARE A PART OF LIFE AND THAT GOD WILL **USE** “**TRIALS**” TO **MATURE** US ... WE WILL **NOT** BE SO **SURPRIZED** WHEN THEY COME ... AND THEN WE CAN **RESPOND** **INSTEAD OF REACTING**.

4. A LOOK AT SOME **REASONS** **WHY** “**TRIALS**” **COME** IN CHRISTIANS LIVES:

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- a. **"TRIALS" COME BECAUSE OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.**
 - 1) **Ephesians 2:1-3 (NASB)** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of **this world (WORLD)**, according to the **prince of the power of the air (SATAN)**, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the **lusts of our flesh (FLESH)**, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
 - 2) **THE WORLD WE LIVE IN OPPOSES CHRISTIANS AND THAT MAKES FOR A LIFE OF TRIALS.**
 - b. **"TRIALS" COME BECAUSE WE ARE HUMAN (FLESH).**
 - 1) **SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE FACTS OF OUR HUMANITY.**
 - 2) **PRIDE CAUSES US TO MAKE BAD DECISIONS.**
 - 3) **FOOLISHNESS CAUSES US TO MAKE BAD DECISIONS.**
 - 4) **ANGER CAUSES US TO MAKE BAD DECISIONS.**
 - 5) **REMEMBER THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR BAD DECISIONS!**
 - i. **THOSE CONSEQUENCES ARE OFTEN IN THE FORM OF "TRIALS".**
 - c. **"TRIALS" COME BECAUSE OF SATAN AND HIS DEMONS.**
 - 1) **SATAN AND HIS DEMONS OPPOSE OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH BY PERSONAL ATTACKS AS WELL AS USING OUR FLESH AND THE WORLD AGAINST US.**
 - i. **REMEMBER TO SPEAK ALOUD..."I GIVE NO CONSENT TO THAT THOUGHT IN THE NAME OF MY SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST."**
5. **JAMES SAYS ALL TRIALS ARE NOT ALIKE... THEY ARE "VARIOUS".**
- a. **"... WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER VARIOUS TRIALS".**
 - b. **WIERSBE SAYS OUR TRIALS ARE LIKE VARIGATED (MULTI-COLORED, NOT THE SAME) YARN THAT A WEAVER USES TO MAKE A RUG.**
 - c. **CORRIE ten BOOM WROTE:**

My life is but a weaving
Between my God and me.
I cannot choose the colors
He weaveth steadily.

Oft' times He weaveth sorrow;

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And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I the underside.

Not 'til the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas
And reveal the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful
In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned

He knows, He loves, He cares;
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.

6. **"CONSIDER" IS A KEY WORD IN THIS PASSAGE.**

a. IT MEANS "TO **EVALUATE**", "TO **THINK ABOUT**", "BE AWARE OF".

- 1) JAMES SAYS THAT WE SHOULD EXPECT "**VARIOUS TRIALS**" AND "**WHEN**" WE DO, WE SHOULD "**EVALUATE/BE AWARE OF**" THOSE "**TRIALS**" IN LIGHT OF **WHAT GOD IS DOING FOR AND IN US**.

b. **NOTE OUR VALUES DETERMINE OUR EVALUATIONS:**

- 1) IF WE "**VALUE**" **COMFORT** **MORE** THAN **CHARACTER**, THEN "**TRIALS**" **WILL** **SURPRISE** AND **UPSET** US.
- 2) IF WE "**VALUE**" THE **MATERIAL** AND **PHYSICAL** **MORE** THAN THE **SPIRITUAL**, THEN WE WILL **NOT** BE ABLE TO "**COUNT IT ALL JOY**" **WHEN** WE ENCOUNTER **VARIOUS** "**TRIALS**".
- 3) IF WE LIVE **ONLY** FOR THE **PRESENT**, THEN "**TRIALS**" **WILL** MAKE US **BITTER** INSTEAD OF **BETTER**.

c. **REMEMBER OUTLOOK DETERMINES OUTCOME.**

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1) **THEREFORE** TO **END** WITH “**JOY**”... WE NEED TO **BEGIN** WITH “**JOY**”.

d. **QUESTION?**... DOES THIS HELP YOU TO **UNDERSTAND** **HOW** IS IT **POSSIBLE** TO “**REJOICE**” IN THE **MIDST** OF “**TRIALS**”?

e. THE **SECOND** **ESSENTIAL** FOR **VICTORY** IN “**TRIALS**” **HELPS** TO **EXPLAIN** THIS.

B. THE **SECOND** **ESSENTIAL** ELEMENT FOR **VICTORY** IN **TRIALS** IS: “**AN** **UNDERSTANDING** **MIND**... “**KNOWING** THAT THE **TESTING** OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES **INDURANCE**.”

1. BY “**KNOWING**” THAT GOD HAS A **GREATER** **PURPOSE** IN THE “**TRIAL**” BELIEVERS CAN **ULTIMATELY** “**CONSIDER IT ALL JOY**”.

a. FOR MOST OF US “**JOY**” IS **NOT** OUR **FIRST** **RESPONSE** TO “**TRIALS**”.

2. **WHAT** SHOULD **CHRISTIANS** “**KNOW**” THAT MAKES IT **EASIER** TO **TURN** **TRIALS** **INTO** **TRIUMPHS**?...

a. WE SHOULD “**KNOW**” THAT **FAITH** IS **ALWAYS** **TESTED**.

1) GOD **ALLOWS** “**TRIALS**” TO **INCREASE** **OUR** **FAITH**.

2) GOD **ALLOWS** “**TRIALS**” TO BRING OUT THE **BEST**... **SATAN** **TEMPTS** US TO BRING OUT THE **WORST**.

3) WE SHOULD “**KNOW**” THAT THE “**TESTING** OF **OUR** **FAITH**” **ACTUALLY** **PROVES** THAT WE ARE **BORN** **AGAIN**.

b. WE SHOULD “**KNOW**” THAT “**TRIALS**” WORK **FOR** **US**, **NOT** **AGAINST** **US** BECAUSE OF **SCRIPTURE**:

1) **Romans 8:28** (NASB) And we **know** that God causes all things to **work together for good** to **those** who **love God**, to **those** who are **called according to His purpose**.

2) **2 Corinthians 4:17-18** (NASB) For **momentary, light affliction** is producing for us an **eternal weight of glory** far beyond all comparison, while we **look not at the things which are seen**, but

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at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

i. MOMENTARY... LIGHT AFFLICTION. VERSUS...

1. ETERNAL... WEIGHT OF GLORY.

ii. THINGS SEEN... TEMPORAL. VERSUS...

1. THINGS NOT SEEN... ETERNAL.

c. CHRISTIANS SHOULD “KNOW” THAT “TRIALS” RIGHTLY USED HELP US TO MATURE.

- 1) Romans 5:3-5 (NASB) And not only this, but we also **exult** (= “JOY”) in our tribulations (“TRIALS”), knowing that tribulation (“TRIALS”) brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

3. THE “TESTING OF FAITH” HERE IS NOT INTENDED TO DETERMINE WHETHER A PERSON HAS “FAITH” OR NOT... IT IS INTENDED TO PURIFY AND STRENGTHEN THE “FAITH” THAT ALREADY EXISTS.

4. ANOTHER WORD FOR “ENDURANCE” (NASB) IS “PATIENCE” (KJV, NKJV)

a. THE GREEK WORD FOR “ENDURANCE/PATIENCE” PAINTS A WORD PICTURE OF THE QUALITY THAT IT TAKES FOR A RUNNER TO FINISH A MARATHON.

- 1) NOTE THE GOAL OF “TRIALS” IS NOT TO SNAP OUR FAITH MUSCLES... BUT, TO STRETCH AND STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH MUSCLES PRODUCING “ENDURANCE” TO FINISH THE RACE.

i. THE ABILITY TO “HANG IN THERE”.

2. James 1:2-4 (NASB) Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And

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let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (SPIRITUALLY MATURE).

3. **THREE ESSENTIALS FOR VICTORY IN TRIALS:**

- A. THE **FIRST ESSENTIAL** ELEMENT FOR **VICTORY IN TRIALS** IS: **A JOYFUL ATTITUDE** ... **“CONSIDER IT ALL JOY** WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER **VARIOUS TRIALS”** ...
- B. THE **SECOND ESSENTIAL** ELEMENT FOR **VICTORY IN TRIALS** IS: **“AN UNDERSTANDING MIND... “KNOWING** THAT THE **TESTING** OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES **INDURANCE**.
- C. THE **THIRD ESSENTIAL** ELEMENT FOR **VICTORY IN TRIALS** IS: **A SURRENDERED WILL... “LET** ENDURANCE HAVE IT’S PERFECT RESULT SO THAT YOU MAY BE PERFECT AND COMPLETE LACKING IN NOTHING”... **A SURRENDERED WILL**.