

FULL LIFE ESSENTIALS

Trials & Temptations: Keys to Growth

One of the best tests of Christian maturity is trouble.

Trials not only reveal our faith; they also develop our faith and Christ's character in us.

James 1:2-4 (NIV)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

It's up to us whether trials will work for us or against us.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD

One of the ways we can experience joy and growth during trials is by knowing that the experiences that come to the children of God are not by accident.

Romans 8:28 (NLT)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (NIV)

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

What is God's main purpose in trials? It is the perfection of Christ's character in His children.

Romans 5:3 (NIV)

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance.

James 1:4

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

God has a twofold purpose for every believer: to become more and more like Jesus and to fulfill a specific calling while on earth.

It takes faith on our part as believers to trust God during trials. Knowing that God has a divine purpose in mind helps us to yield to Him.

James 5:10-11 (NIV)

10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

THE HELP OF GOD

James 1:5-8 (NIV)

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

In this context, wisdom is the ability to view life from **God's** perspective.

1 Peter 5:10 (NIV)

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Faith in **God** during trials will always lead to stability and blessing.

James 1:12 (NIV)

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

We can trust our **good** God in the midst of **bad** days!

THE GOODNESS OF GOD

James 1:13-17 (NIV)

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

James makes a careful distinction between trials and temptations.

- God sends trials to bring out the **best** in us.
- Satan sends temptations to bring out the **worst** in us.

Being tempted is not a **sin**. Giving in to temptation is **sin**.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

God, in His goodness, has given us the ability to **overcome** temptation and sin.

THE ARMOR OF GOD

Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, ***so that when the day of evil comes***, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of ***truth*** buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of ***righteousness*** in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of ***peace***.

16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of ***faith***, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of ***salvation*** and the sword of the Spirit, which is the ***word of God***.

18 And ***pray*** in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, ***be alert*** and ***always keep on praying*** for all the Lord's people.

Trials and temptations will always be part of our lives while we are in this world. How we respond to them will determine whether we will be **victims** or **victors**.