

Passage: James 1:2-12

Title: The Test of Perseverance and Suffering

Summary: In order to endure a trial and suffering, we must understand trials from God's perspective, and what He says about them. He says count them all joy, which is a way different perspective that we have on them. In our study we will see four things the Lord wants us to know in and from trials:

- The Perspective of Trials – 1:2
- The Purpose of Trials – 1:3-4
- The Power in Trials – 1:5-11
- The Promise from Trials – 1:12

James 1:2–12 (NKJV) ² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. ⁹ Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. ¹¹ For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits. ¹² Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on firsthand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, every day. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James's style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses, and ships to name a few). It is obvious who James's favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So, the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we must ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2022, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book:

3 Key Verses

Here are three key verses to get us going:

James 2:20 (NKJV)²⁰ *But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?*

James 1:22 (NKJV)²² *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

James 1:4–5 (NKJV)⁴ *But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* ⁵ *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

- Introduction (1:1)
- The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)
- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

- The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)
- The Test of the Law (2:10-13)
- The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)
- The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

- The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)
- The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)

Chapter 5

- The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
- The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

So, let's see how we are doing? The first test is the Test of Perseverance and Suffering.

Outline:

The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)

- The Perspective of Trials – 1:2
- The Purpose of Trials – 1:3-4
- The Power in Trials – 1:5-11
- The Promise from Trials – 1:12

Prayer

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)¹² *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*

The Perspective of Trials – 1:2

In order to endure a trial and suffering, we have to understand trials from God's perspective, and what He says about them. He says count them all joy, which is a way different perspective that we have on them.

(James 1:1 NKJV) James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

(James 1:2 NKJV) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:10 NKJV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:11 NKJV) "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

(Matthew 5:12 NKJV) "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

15 Times / Camel Knees / Miss You Brother

My brethren - 15 times he will call his fellow believers' "brethren". James is saying I'm with you, I know where you are at. I love this, James is calling them his flesh and blood in a sense. Tradition of early church writings say that James was called "camel knees" for he was such a man of prayer. Imagine, his prayer time, was communion with his brother. I can only imagine what that was like, like anybody who has lost a loved one, James prayer would be a wanton prayer, "I wish you were here Jesus, I miss you my brother, I feel scattered, you were always there for me, I need you today, I need to hear your big brother advice." I see James calling the fellow believers' brethren, because he knows the pain of a separated family, and he longs for the time of family reunion.

Count it Joy

count it all joy when you fall into various trials - First thing he starts with is count it all joy. But not what for what we consider joyful things – Trials! Give me a commentary any day, I'd rather read about trials than have to go into one, but James who watched his own Brother endure the Cross, says count it all joy.

Sins of Fallen World / Not Sowing - Reaping

various trials - These trials are the result of sin in the world, not sin in you. Do you see the difference? Sin in you, your willful sin will bring repercussions upon you, it is the law of reaping and sowing. But the trials spoken of here are the result of sin in the world, of living in a fallen world, a world that is steadily deteriorating - daily I might add. The fallen world has brought cancer, hurricanes, earthquakes, unemployment, and car wrecks. Sin in other people is what has brought wars, religious persecution, and wrongful and unjustified attacks. As Christians we are subject to these things because we live in this world, salvation does not make us immune to them.

When – Not If / Golgotha / Why Me

when you fall into various trials - notice here brethren, that it says "when", not "if". Let me dispel an ancient Christian myth, the one of "don't pray for patience because then God will give you trials to produce your patience". It says when, you will get them because you live in this fallen world. Again, the difference here is that they have come upon you by no fault of your own. Don't think that God is mad at you, or that He is punishing you. Your Father in Heaven loves you more than you will ever know, and He did not leave the throne of heaven 2000 years ago, be mocked, beaten, whipped, spit upon, and then nailed to a cross to make your life miserable. He took our misery so that we might have His love. When I am faced with things I do not understand, I always go back to what I do understand, God loves me and came and died for me. I do not know why some people get cancer, and others live their whole life in perfect health. I don't know why, my ways are not His ways, but I do know He loves me and will be with me through them all.

Weight Room

His loves us and always does what is best for us. And just as curls are the best exercise to build up the biceps, trials are the perfect work to produce Christ-likeness in us. Trials are Christian bodybuilding. That brings us to the purpose of trials in our life.

The Purpose of Trials – 1:3-4

(James 1:3 NKJV) knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

Bear-up Under Pressure

produces patience - Trials produce patience. It is ever so important to know what this word patience means. It means "the ability to bear-up while under pressure." Like a Lighthouse continues to in spite of the constant pounding of the waves. Patience is endurance under pressure. It means that the patience we get from trials, that we build-up in us, will let us react differently to future trials and pressures.

Today's Trials

It is amazing to me today, but there are trials today in my life that I am currently living through right now, that I really don't even realize are trials, but just accept as daily life. The same trial today that I thought was going to break me 10 years ago, is today, just an annoyance.

(James 1:4 NKJV) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:48 NKJV) "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:33 NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

(Matthew 6:34 NKJV) "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Airplane Testing

I am so thankful that the Boeing Corporation puts every airplane it produces through test flights before they turn it over to the airlines to fly you and I. After they design and build it, they test it. They see how fast it can go before the engines could overheat, how high before the engines could flame out, how far it can fly before it could run out of fuel, how sharp a turn it could make before the wings break off, how it responds to foul weather, how often it needs repaired, multiple of tests to make sure it is ready to be used for what it was designed for and to be used to its fullest potential. They are proving out the design. I am glad that they do that, and so are you. I am glad that they don't buck the last rivet and say, tell Southwest Airlines to come get it. We expect it to be tested.

That's What God is Doing in Us / Comfort Zone

That is what God does with trials in our life, He allows these things to prove out the design. You see we really do not know how high and how fast we can soar. We get in a comfort zone, and we cease to grow. God will bring, or allow a trial to come to get us off the couch, and into the weight room. I notice how much better my prayer life and study life is when things aren't in autopilot. God wants us to soar with the eagles, and not peck seeds with the chickens waiting to be Satan's dinner.

Trials produce Christ-likeness / That's the Joy / Firsthand Account / I Watched My Brother

God say I have a life for you so abundant that you have no idea. Trials produce Christ-likeness in us. James is speaking from a first-hand account. I watched my brother Jesus react when hard times came upon Him, and never once did He react in the flesh, never once did he lose it. And now it is my turn to be

like Him. What can we be thankful for, why can we count it all joy, because I am becoming more like the God I seek to draw nearer to:

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Take the trial and use to grow and become more like Christ!

What Changes is the Heart / Perseverance is Hanging on To

What changes in a trial is not the trial, but the heart, the attitude; *Perseverance is not getting on through, but hanging on to - hanging on to Jesus Christ.*

Don't Bail Out Until Completed

But let patience have its perfect work – Notice the word “let”. Here the author asks us to let patience have its perfect work; he is saying don't bail out of your trial, don't try to find a shortcut, don't quit on God, or the work that is being perfected in you, will not complete. How many times have we bailed out of a trial before God has completed what He wanted to-do in us. We bail out by complaining the whole time, attacking back, yelling at God, or bailing out at the bar or works of the flesh. How often we have bailed out before He brings us to a place where in this area of your life, you will be complete, lacking nothing. God will let you try to work your way out of a trial, so that you will run out of steam, reach the bottom, because at the bottom you will be ready to listen.

Football Practice / Day to Day Battle / Just Make it One More Day

The worst part of football practice was when we had to lay on our backs and hold our legs six inches in the air, which seemed like forever. Your abs would be burning, the pain was grueling, but the coach knew it was going to make our abs solid and enable us to endure the blows in the game. He would say 30 more seconds, and you could always make 30 more seconds. I remember my most intense trial, 9 months of unemployment, God would ask me every day, can you make one more day, and I'd say yes, because I could always make one more day. Our trial is a day-to-day battle, once you start looking at it from a distance it makes it so much harder. Take your trial day by day, and I'll you'll ever have to do, is make it one more day.

God Won't Let a Trial Go to Waste / So Don't You

God will not let a trial go to waste, hang in there, He will use it to draw you closer to Him, for a time of fellowship with Him. The worse thing to do is to let a trial go to waste. If you are in it, then get something out of it. A precious saint always said, Lord don't let this suffering go to waste.

Toothpaste / Perfection – Lacking Nothing

If you squeeze a tube of toothpaste, yes toothpaste comes out because you squeezed it, but truly toothpaste comes out because toothpaste was in the tube. The things that come out of us during trials are the things God wants to bring to the surface, bring to our attention so we can deal with them. You will never know what is in the tube until you squeeze. Next time you are going through a trial, every time you brush your teeth may it remind you of what God is doing, He is bringing you into perfection, so that you may be lacking nothing. So that you may become like your Jesus – and becoming like Him is something to count it all joy!

The Power in Trials – 1:5-8

Sometimes it feels as if God has abandoned us, but know that He is right there with you, I never leave you:

(Hebrews 13:5 NKJV) Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

The one thing the Lord promises to us in a trial, is Himself. You will never have to go through a trial alone, for He is always right there with you.

And He gives us power to endure, for He gives us His word to apply to the situation.

(James 1:5 NKJV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Ask & He will Show

We are to ask, "Lord how am I to handle this pressure upon me." This verse says ask and the Lord will show you. Wisdom is "knowledge applied". The things I know, the things I have learned, wisdom is putting that knowledge in motion, into action, it is getting the knowledge from our minds into our walk. Wisdom doesn't just apply to trials, but to every area of our lives. We are given some 50 things we should be doing in this short 5-chapter book.

Lord how do I hang on in the storm, and He says come and I will tell you.

Moses Numbers 9

A great example of this is in the Old Testament. The children of Israel have been delivered from Egypt and they are now in their wilderness journey. One of the things the Lord commands them to do is to observe the Passover on the 14th day of the 1st month every year. Now everyone who did not keep the Passover were to be cut-off, which meant to be killed (Remember Hebrews the whole meaning of Passover). Well there is a problem, for it said also that if anyone had touched a dead body the week of the Passover, they were "ceremonially unclean". So these men come to Moses and say we have a problem, we touched a dead body and can't keep the Passover. Do you see the problem, by the Law, they were to be killed if they didn't keep the Passover, but by the Law they weren't allowed to keep the Passover either. Now what does Moses do, in this dilemma, in this trial? He says, be still (be quiet), let me hear what the Lord says to do:

Numbers 9:6-11 (NKJV) ⁶ Now there were certain men who were defiled by a human corpse, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day; and they came before Moses and Aaron that day. ⁷ And those men said to him, "We became defiled by a human corpse. Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the children of Israel?" ⁸ And Moses said to them, "Stand still, that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you." ⁹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or is far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD's Passover. ¹¹ On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

When We Enter Be Still / The Written Word

When we enter a trial, are in a trial, we need to be still, be quiet, and say Lord how do I handle this. So, so many times you will hear the Lord bring a Scripture to your mind and will answer you through His written Word. That is why it is so important that we study and stay in this word.

A Place of Tarrying

There is a place of tarrying and waiting upon the Lord for a Word of Wisdom. How often when we don't hear from the Lord within the first moments of our asking that we get up and move on. There is a time to sit, ask, and be totally silent. It is a most wonderful thing to be still before the Lord (even if you're not in a trial) and just wait to hear from Him. You just sit, for it takes time for your mind to stop racing, for the world to fade away, and then the Lord starts to speak.

Habakkuk 2:1-3 (NKJV) ¹ I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected. ² Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. ³ For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.

Psalms 46:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

(James 1:6 NKJV) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

(James 1:7 NKJV) For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

(James 1:8 NKJV) he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Believe He Answers / Sermon Mount

Now if we go to God, asking for wisdom, then we must go believing that He will give us what we ask for. He will answer us and direct us.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:7 NKJV) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

(Matthew 7:8 NKJV) "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

(Matthew 7:9 NKJV) "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

(Matthew 7:10 NKJV) "Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

(Matthew 7:11 NKJV) "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Waves of Sea

like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. - When you ask the Lord for wisdom, believe that you will receive it, and once you receive it, keep it. Peter was walking on water, until what, until he took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at the waves.

Matthew 14:28–31 (NKJV) ²⁸ And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." ²⁹ So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

God Allows It / Pierced Ear / His Problem

Anything that is going on in my life God is allowing it, therefore I need not panic, I know my problem is His problem, for I am His bondservant, my ear has been pierced through at the door, making me His responsibility. Therefore, I keep my eyes fixed upon Him, waiting for Him, He will work in my trial. Since it is His problem, I now have unlimited power working for me.

double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. - Patience is consistency. A double-minded person is unstable. Instability and immaturity go hand in hand.

(James 1:9 NKJV) Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

(James 1:10 NKJV) but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

(James 1:11 NKJV) For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Money Answers Some / Causes Others

Ohh if only I had more money, then this wouldn't be a trial. We think money can solve so many problems. It may solve some problems, but these verses tell us that it brings on a whole new set of problems that us not so rich people have no idea about.

The Promise from Trials – 1:12

Each trial, every suffering, must be put into its proper perspective, there is a precious promise of the "Crown of Life" for all those that endure.

(James 1:12 NKJV) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:14 NKJV) "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

The word used here in NKJV is temptation, but it is the same Greek word, and it can mean both temptation and trial. Next study we will look at the test of temptation.

Crown of Life - Twice in Bible

crown of life – this phrase is only used one other place in the Bible, and it used for a group of people who are suffering and being persecuted:

Revelation 2:8–10 (NKJV) ⁸ "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: ⁹ "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Zoe / Life Intensive / Vines

This Greek word for "life" (Crown of Life) is "zoe", It has a very wordy definition in the Greek dictionary, it sums up to "life intensive, life vigorous"

Vines Dictionary describes it like this: **Life as God has it, that which the Father has in Himself, and which He gave to the Incarnate Son to have in Himself, which He gives to us to have in Ourselves.**

Zoe Early Church / That is the Crown of Life

I like that, but I like how it has been summed up from the early Christian Church; "**Life emanating from God, manifested by Christ**". We can only have this life through Jesus Christ. And Jesus is making you more like Him, as He manifest's (makes clear) Himself in you. That is the Crown of Life, it is the Life of Christ in me, in you, coming to the surface, emanating from us. And it takes trials to bring that about.

Trials & Perspective of Crown

Beloved, put your "trials in life", in perspective with your "crown of life".

The Tube Squeezed

There will come a day that when the tube is squeezed, all that will come out is Jesus!

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