

The Testing of Your Faith Produces Endurance

Fuel Your Faith 16

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This week we're talking about storms. Not specifically thunderstorms, tornados, or hurricanes, although they certainly could fit in the testing and trials of life that come. Times of difficulty will come. And when they do, it is much better to have someone that stands with you helping you through than to go at it alone.

Today on Fuel your Faith we'll dive into a familiar passage about trials. Some of those trials we bring on ourselves through unwise and sinful behavior ... we might call these storms of correction. Others come on by no fault of our own ... but nevertheless, we are called to endure them. These we might call storms of perfection. The promise found in [James 1.2-4](#) explains the purpose behind all of this ... and gives us a sense of direction as we work things through.

[James 1.2](#) says, "Consider it a great joy my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials." At first glance, this verse seems irrational. How can a person experience great joy as wave upon wave of trial beats down upon us? I think the best approach in trying to understand begins by knowing what he does *not* mean. He certainly isn't calling for us to enjoy our trials ... or that trials somehow are joy. Trials can be, however, very painful ... as the Hebrew writer said ([Hebrews 12.11](#)).

And the fact of the matter is that for many of us large problems loom ... and discouragement can assault our feelings. It is in these moments where the Spirit helps us remember we are loved and that no matter what we face we will not be separated from Him. It is during these times that the Spirit reminds us that we operate on God's timetable, not our own. God is in charge, and He gives us the courage we need for each day. Joy is always the result of that. You see, Joy is a state of being ... not an emotion. It is "an unnatural reaction of deep, steady and unadulterated thankful trust in God." Settled contentment in every situation.

And to experience it, James says I have to engage my mind. "Consider," he says at the beginning of the verse. The command is not how one should *feel*, but rather how one should *think* about one's circumstances. Thought ... not emotion. Move with a settled conviction that trials are part of God's plan for us.

Now, let's look at [James 1.3](#) as we seek the rationale behind the command of verse 2. James says, "the testing of your faith produces endurance." In other words, trials make us tough. Think of some words that are associated with endurance at the end of this verse. Some describe it as staying power. Others call it fortitude. You can't develop toughness without testing! The more tests we pass .. *and prevail* ... the tougher we become. Paul wrote, "affliction produces endurance."

Now [James 1.4](#). The rationale of the command of v. 2 becomes even clearer now. "Let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing."

Endurance produces *maturity*. It is commonly taught that trials bring maturity ... but that is not so. Rather our fortitude and endurance during difficult times produce maturity. And so when the difficulties come we must practice spiritual toughness. This will have the effect of rounding us out ... into a wholeness where a thousand parts of us are being honed, shaped, tempered, and brought together. Our maturity is dynamic in nature. Full maturity is characterized by constancy, tenacity, and perseverance. It has been said that spiritual toughness is the key to saintliness!

Now as we think about loving others through the storm, how can we use this passage we seek to encourage others while they endure a storm of life? I think one way is to be there for them always offering an encouraging word. Last week as one of our brothers lay dying in hospice care more people than I could count came by to share their love and appreciation. Over 60 of you gathered in the hall and sang songs of hope that filled the room of our brother and throughout that wing of the care facility. Some came for private moments with Scripture and read from the Psalms and other passages. Others came with song lyrics that speak of meeting Jesus and being at home in heaven, reunited with those gone on before. Still others came and offered prayer ... prayers of thanks and appreciation ... and prayers for comfort. The flow of love and care started early in the morning and went into the evening. Nonstop. Through your efforts Cornerstone family, the light of Christ shone brightly as hospice staff and others glorified God by the good works you did in loving people through the storm.

There will be dark days ahead ... for all of us. The blessing is that we face none of these alone. God is with us ... and so are His people. Today, let us praise Him for that.

Thank you for listening to Fuel Your Faith. Join us again next tomorrow as we continue to talk about loving others through the storm.