

**How Trials Make Believers Stronger in Faith**  
*Counting it joy when various trials befall the believer*

**Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.**

- Let's begin with our own observations. What is one thing that stood out to you from the message that you would share with the group? Was there a moment where God spoke to you personally through His Word?

**Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.**

- How a Christian interfaces with a trial has a tremendous impact on whether we crush it in times of trials, or whether trials crush us. James instructed us to consider it all joy when we encounter various life trials. Instead of complaining, falling into depression or despair, or feeling sorry for ourselves, James taught us to think differently about our trials. What are some specific ways that our walk with Christ empowers us to have a different frame of mind in troubles than perhaps a person who doesn't know Christ?
- James says that trials are like a refiner's fire that purifies our faith, burning away impurities. In our Sunday teaching, we used the illustration of trials being the spiritual equivalent of lifting weights at the gym. Has there been a time in your life when a trial challenged you, but after which, you came out stronger for it on the other side? Have you seen this principle in your life, or the life of another Christian?
- Maturing in Christ through trials requires us to cooperate with Jesus when trials come. To see any benefits from our seasons of hardship or suffering, we've got to give ourselves over by faith to the growth process that He brings in trials. If we rebel against God in trials, we'll most certainly miss the lesson! What are some principles, or practical words of wisdom that you can share to encourage others to participate in spiritual maturity when trials come?
- When we're in seasons of trials and tribulations, James reminds us that we should make prayer our first priority and not our last resort. He said that God wants to help us through our trials, gives us wisdom liberally, and doesn't get angry with us when we ask Him for help...but James also says that we have to ask in faith. Why do you think so many people turn to God last, instead of looking to God first? At its core, does this reveal something deeper about one's faith and walk with Christ?

**Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:**

- Acts 20:17-24

*Focal Text: James 1:1-8*

- 1 Peter 1:6-9
- 2 Corinthians 4:7-10

**Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?**

- Are you currently in a season of trial, and if you are, are you looking at your trial like James has taught us? Are you considering your trial with joy in the lord? Why or why not? What adjustment should you make?
- Have you seen God bring maturation into your life through time of trial like James describes? Have you accepted that some kinds of spiritual maturity only come through the trials and hardships of life?