



“When the Pop Quiz Reveals What’s Lacking”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): James/Jacob 1:2-8; Luke 6:22-23; Matt. 7:7; Luke 10:30

Life has a way of handing us tests we did not study for. We are walking along, trying to be faithful, trying to keep our eyes on the Lord, and then suddenly we “fall into” something unexpected. It might be a small frustration, like plans falling apart or something not working the way it should. Or it might be something far heavier: conflict, pressure, loss, pain, rejection, or circumstances that put us under the heat and reveal what is really going on inside of us.

Jacob does not begin by pretending trials are enjoyable. He is not telling us to fake a smile, act spiritual, or say, “This is great,” when something hard or painful happens. He is calling us to a different perspective. He says, *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials”* (Jacob 1:2). In other words, when the test comes, let total joy lead the way—not because the trial feels good, but because God is doing something good in us through it. He’s using difficult circumstances to form our character into the likeness of Yeshua.

1. THE POP QUIZ REVEALS WHAT IS REALLY IN US

Jacob says, *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials”* (Jacob 1:2). These trials are not always the big, dramatic moments we see coming. Often, they are the unexpected things we fall into—the interruptions, frustrations, pressures, conflicts, disappointments, and difficulties that suddenly put us under the heat. They are the pop quizzes of life, and they reveal what is really going on inside of us.

That is why Jacob is not telling us to fake happiness. He is calling us to let total joy lead the way because these moments show us where we actually are. Not where we think we are. Not where we say we are. Not even where we hope we are becoming. The test reveals the truth. And while that can be uncomfortable, it can also become a gift, because the Lord uses those moments to reveal what still needs to be formed in us.

2. WHAT IS LACKING BECOMES THE PLACE WHERE ENDURANCE CAN WORK

Jacob continues, *“Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance”* (Jacob 1:3). The pop quiz is not meant to destroy us. It is meant to produce something in us. When our faith is tested, endurance begins to do its work. It teaches us to remain, to stay under, to not run from the pressure, and to allow God to strengthen what is weak and mature what is unfinished.

Then Jacob says, *“And let endurance have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing”* (Jacob 1:4). The lack he is talking about is not material lack.

This is not about possessions, comfort, or outward success. This is about character. The trial reveals where we are lacking patience, wisdom, trust, humility, self-control, faith, or love. But once that lack is revealed, endurance can keep doing its completing work in us, bringing us toward maturity and wholeness.

3. WHAT IS LACKING MUST BE BROUGHT TO THE GENEROUS GOD

Jacob says, *“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all without hesitation and without reproach; and it will be given to him”* (Jacob 1:5). This is the beauty of the passage: when the pop quiz reveals what is lacking, we are not left alone with the results. We are invited to bring that lack to the Lord. If we lack wisdom—if we do not know how to see the situation rightly, how to endure faithfully, or how to respond in a way that honors Him—we can ask.

And we are asking the giving God. He is not mocking us for needing help. He is not insulted that we came to Him again. He is not playing games with us or forcing us to find the perfect formula. He gives simply, sincerely, and without reproach. So when the trial reveals what is lacking, the answer is not shame, hiding, or self-protection. The answer is to come to the Father with a single-minded heart and say, “Lord, give me wisdom. Show me how to walk through this in Your way.”

CONCLUSION

Jacob warns us not to ask with a divided soul, tossed back and forth like a wave of the sea. He says, *“But let him ask in faith, without any doubting—for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind”* (Jacob 1:6). The issue is not that we never feel weak or never have questions. The issue is whether we have made up our minds that we want God’s wisdom, God’s way, and God’s perspective. When the pop quiz comes, that is not the moment to start deciding whether we will trust Him. That decision needs to be settled in advance.

So when the pop quiz reveals what is lacking, do not run from the Lord. Bring the lack to Him. If it revealed anger, bring Him the anger. If it revealed fear, bring Him the fear. If it revealed selfishness, pride, unbelief, impatience, or instability, bring that to Him too. The Father is not looking to shame you; He is forming you. Let total joy lead the way, let endurance do its completing work, and ask the giving God for wisdom. Today, surrender the exposed places to Him and ask Him to make you whole, mature, and steady in all your ways.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the difference between “feeling happy” about a trial and letting “total joy lead the way” in the middle of a trial?
2. Jacob says trials test our faith and produce endurance. What has a recent “pop quiz” revealed about where you are spiritually or emotionally?
3. Why is it important to understand that “lacking in nothing” is about character and maturity, not material prosperity?
4. In modern life, what are some common situations that cause us to become like “a wave of the sea,” tossed back and forth instead of standing firm?
5. Where do you currently need to ask God for wisdom—not just information, but His perspective for how to walk faithfully?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our King, we come before You and ask that Your Word would not merely touch our minds, but pierce the deepest places of our hearts. Teach us to let total joy lead the way when we fall into trials of many kinds. Help us to see our difficulties through Your perspective and to trust that You are producing endurance in us.

Lord, when the test reveals what we lack, give us the humility to bring that lack to You. We ask You for wisdom, knowing that You are the giving God, and that You give without hesitation and without reproach. Make us whole. Make us mature. Make us single-minded in our trust and faithful in all our ways

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.