

November 20th – The Joy of Trials

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”
(James 1:2-4)

Everybody loves to experience hardship and trials, right? Of course, not – it is not human nature to embrace any kind of pain. In fact, we try to avoid it at all costs. That’s why today’s verses are so different than anything the world can teach us. God actually commands us to “count it all joy” when you experience the hardships of life. Lost your job? Count it all joy! Your child is making some poor decisions? Count it all joy! You’ve been diagnosed with an illness? Count it all joy!

To be clear, Scripture is not saying we need to be excited about losing a job, hurting for a child, or dealing with an illness. But the Scripture is saying that even in the midst of our suffering there is cause for joy. Why? Because “the testing of your faith produces patience.” I’ve often heard people say, “I prayed for patience once and I’ll never do that again.” What they mean is that they don’t want the adversity that comes with developing patience, but without trials there can be no perseverance.

James says we need to “let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” James isn’t saying that it’s possible for human beings to be perfect on this side of heaven. There was only one perfect human being and His name is Jesus Christ. What James means is that we can be mature. Trials equip us with perseverance that covers the “gaps” of our lives. So then, we don’t go looking for trials, but when they come, we rejoice because we know God is at work.