

A STUDY OF JAMES (2)

Concerning Trials (1)

The Book of James – **1:1-8 (1)**

- In our last lesson, we introduced this book.
 - A “general letter”
 - Likely written by James, the brother of Jesus, or James, brother of John (if so, very early)
 - Written to Jewish Christians scattered from Judea (**cf. Acts 8:4**)
 - A practical letter about how to live as a Christian, even in a world resistant or hostile to Jesus & truth.
- Today, we begin with dealing with trials.

Introductory observations (1-2a).

- James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ
- He is the only one to use this phrase.
Others spoke of being bondservants of Jesus (Paul, Peter, Jude), but only James includes God (Father)
- Being a bondservant means you belong to the one you are serving!

Introductory observations (1-2a).

- **Greetings**, (χαίρω, chairō)
- Means to greet wishing happiness and health .
- Associated with rejoicing and gladness
74x (46 – *rejoice*; 15 – *glad*)
- The only epistle with this greeting.
Cf. Acts 15:23 – a point to consider if this is James, the brother of Jesus.

Introductory observations (1-2a).

- **My brethren**
- The bond that NT writers had with their audience. A reminder that we are family (relationship).
- This term is used 15 times in this letter (plus 6x as “brother”)
- As we read we are reminded to treat each other as family.

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- **Count it all joy when you fall into various trials**
- What are trials? To examine something closely, or to put to the test.
It is the same Greek word as “temptation”, but context clearly makes distinction.
NKJV, 21X (13x – temptation(s), 8x – trial(s))
- Trials typically associated with troubles other than temptations.

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Count it all joy when you fall into various trials
- As Christians, we need to prepare to face trials.
- **2 Timothy 3:12, Mathew 16:24** – “take up his cross”
- **1 Thessalonians 3:1-4** – suffering tribulations
- Trials are not limited to persecutions - health, struggles, disappointments, loneliness, doubts, grief, etc.

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Count it all joy when you fall into various trials
- How can we be joyful as we suffer?
- This does not mean we deliberately want to suffer. It is a willingness. Attitude WHEN we face trials
- **Hebrews 12:2** – Jesus “for the joy” endured the cross
- **Philippians 4:4, 3:7-9** – Paul suffered greatly for the gospel

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- **Knowing the testing of your faith produces patience**
- We need to “know”. Knowledge is the key to dealing with the testing of our faith. Faith, by definition includes, believing and trusting God. That requires knowledge
- **Hebrews 11:6,**
Proverbs 2:10-12, *When wisdom enters your heart, And knowledge is pleasant to your soul, Discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you, To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things.*

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces patience
- We need patience. Steadfast endurance.
- **Hebrews 10:35-36, Galatians 6:9**
- Let that patience lead to maturity – *perfect and complete, lacking nothing*. These are words that are complementary – *perfect* meaning complete and without flaw, while *complete* means lacking nothing (entire – KJV) as James defines it. This second word is appealing to full maturity.
- James notes that as we are tested AND overcome, it leads to a more complete Christian.

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces patience
- James mentions patience as a product of trials. What are some other
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Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :
- James mentions patience as a product of trials.
What are some other things that trials can produce in our lives as Christians?

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :
- Discipline – self-control.
Hebrews 12:5-11 – the chastening of the Lord makes us better.
1 Corinthians 9:27 – Paul, disciplined his body...
- Trials may be the product of sinful and poor choices. We are “punished” with difficulties. But still, to overcome can make us better.

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :
- Humility
2 Corinthians 12:7-10 – Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” kept him humble
James 4:10 – *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :
- A focused need for God
 - **2 Peter 2:9** – He knows how to deliver
 - **1 Corinthians 10:13** – He makes the way of escape.
- When facing trials, we can learn to turn to God as He desires – **Cf. Hebrews 5:7ff.** Jesus was heard by God as He offered prayers to Him.
 - **1 Peter 5:7** – cast all your cares on Him

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :
- Reliance on one another as brethren
Galatians 6:2, James 5:13-16 – when suffering we need to turn to one another for strength.
- **Proverbs 17:17**, A friend loves at all times...
In so many ways, learning to rely on each other will build us up in the Lord.
Think of the body analogy – **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**. We NEED each other!

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :
- Sharing in the sufferings of Christ
1 Peter 4:12-16 – it is a “badge of honor”
Acts 5:41, as the apostles left the council having been beaten...

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :

- A deeper faith

The godly will search for answers and rather than being crushed, their faith will mature as we have noted.

With every victory, we become stronger.

E.g., 2 Timothy 4:16-18, 3:10-11 - Paul learned this. **Matthew 28:20**

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :
- Greater character
Your integrity, who you are within. Strengthened in our spiritual identity.
Romans 5:3-6, Paul takes the admonition of further, adding to perseverance – character and hope.

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :

- Wisdom

As you face and overcome trials, you will learn from the experience. IF you do learn, you will be wiser – more prepared the next time you face troubles (possibly avoiding them without compromise).

James 1:5-8 will further address this (in our next lesson).

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :

- Hope in what lies beyond

As Christians we must learn to be other worldly.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 – what we endure here is “our light affliction”

2 Cor. 5:1-8 – We have a building from God, so we walk by faith and not by sight.

- **Philippians 3:20** – our citizenship is in heaven.

Dealing with trials (2-8).

- Knowing the testing of your faith produces... :
- We may not know all the reasons we are facing various trials, BUT we still trust God.
- And when we fully appreciate what trials can produce within us, we can see properly understood “joy” even in those troubling times.

In life, we will ALL face trials. What matters is HOW we respond!

What do *your* trials say about you?

Let us pray!