

Joy In Trials

JAMES 1:2-3

James 1:2-4

- ▶² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness

1. Trials Provide Opportunities For Joy

▶ *2a Count it all joy,*

▶ “**count**” – an accounting term – count, evaluate

▶ “**all joy**”

The greatest trial ever faced was endured because of future joy!!

- ▶ **Hebrews 12:2** looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the **joy** that was set before him **endured** the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁷And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2. Trials Are To Be Expected For Believers As A Call To Discipleship

▶ ^{2b}*my brothers,*

Vocational Suffering

- ▶ **1 Peter 2:21-23** ²¹For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²²“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; ²³who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

Robert Murray McCheyne:

- ▶ “Some believers are very surprised when they are called to suffer. They thought they would do some great thing for God, but all God permits them to do is to suffer. Just suppose you could speak with those who have gone to be with the Lord; everyone has a different story, yet everyone has a tale of suffering. One was persecuted by family and friends...another was inflicted with pain and disease, neglected by the world...another was bereaved of children...another had all these afflictions. But you will notice that though the water was deep, they all have reached the other side. Not one of them blames God for the road He led them; ‘Salvation’ is their only cry. Are there any of you, dear children, murmuring at your lot? Do not sin against God. This is the way God leads all His redeemed ones.”

Suffering Is The Extreme Call Of Discipleship: To Follow Christ In Suffering

- ▶ **Mark 8:34-35** ³⁴When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ³⁵For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.
- ▶ **2 Timothy 3:12** Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

3. Trials Seem Overwhelming But Serve God's Purpose

- ▶ ^{2c} *when you meet trials*
- ▶ “meet,” “fall” = to fall among something
- ▶ “trials” = test of fidelity and integrity

4. Trials Come In Various Ways To Round Us Out

- ▶ *2d of various kinds,*
- ▶ “various” = diverse

Ecclesiastes 7:2-4

- ▶ ²Better to go to the house of mourning Than to go to the house of feasting, For that is the end of all men; And the living will take it to heart. ³Sorrow is better than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made better. ⁴The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

Job 23:10

- ▶ But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.

5. Trials Will Test The Resolve Of Our Faith

- ▶ *3a for you know that the testing of your faith*
- ▶ “testing” = = approved through testing

2 Corinthians 1:9-10

- ▶ ⁹Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, ¹⁰who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,

6. Trials Produce Toughness And Endurance

- ▶ ^{3b} *produces steadfastness.*
- ▶ “steadfastness” = *Hypomonē* = endurance, fortitude, toughness

Philippians 1:19-20

- ▶ 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

Suffering Strengthens Our Faith By Providing The Fire That Tempers Us Through Affliction

- ▶ **1 Peter 1:6-8** ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

Hebrews 12:2

- ▶ looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the **joy** that was set before him **endured** the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Romans 5:3

- ▶ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

Conclusion:

- ▶ Find joy that God will make something beautiful out of our messy trial – count on it!
- ▶ Seek the lessons God wants us to learn through hardships about Him, our salvation and ourselves.
- ▶ Build the muscles and thick skin of an enduring faith through being forged by fire.

Discussion:

- ▶ What joyful realities have you experienced with the Lord as a result of your past trials and sufferings?
- ▶ What could a current or recent trial teach you about the character of God, the grace of our salvation and our own weaknesses/strengths?
- ▶ Read Hebrews 12:2 and Romans 5:3. What do you need from God to enable you to **endure** your trial/suffering?
- ▶ How does our personal suffering connect us to the suffering of Christ? (Phil 3:10)