

TRIUMPH THROUGH TRIAL

(James 1:2-4)

- A. **Ever notice** that two people can go through a similar crisis, & the outcomes be very different?
1. The reason for that is “perspective”, or how that person viewed the crisis.
 - a. One may have seen it as a failure on God’s part, or as evidence that there is no God.
 - b. But the other saw it as an opportunity to draw closer to God & to understand His ways.
- B. **Christians** ought to face every crisis with faith in God & with trust in His power & love for them.
1. The first thing James wrote about was how a Christian’s faith can triumph through trial.

[To be a TRUE faith OUR faith in God & His word must be tried, tested & proven. Text: 1:2-4.

James began his letter by telling us two things that are true about trials.]

I. TRIALS ARE INEVITABLE (UNAVOIDABLE)

- A. **Notice that James** did not say, “My brethren, count it all joy IF you fall into various trials, but WHEN...” (2).
1. Facing trials is not an elective for those who follow Christ; it is a required course.
 2. But unlike some of the courses we had in school, where we were unsure of the outcome, the great thing about this “course” is that we can pass it ... (1 Cor 10:13) – God is faithful!
 3. So there’s no reason to fall into “deep dark depression & excessive misery” (Hee-Haw) – when you have a trial.

B. **But even though** we know trials are inevitable, we can't always see them coming.

1. The Good Samaritan helped a Jewish man who "fell among thieves" (Lk 10:30); he wasn't looking for trouble.
 - a. The word "fell" is the same word James used when he wrote "fall into various trials."
 - b. It means "to light among or upon, be surrounded with" (Thayer).
 - c. For example, you're going along minding your own business, & all of a sudden you're in the thick of something very distasteful.

[But the blessing in all of this is that just as "one like the Son of God" (Dan 3:25) stood in the furnace with Hananiah, Shadrach, Mishael, Meshach & Azariah, Abed-Nego to protect them from the flames, likewise we have that same faithful God with us WHEN we face the fiery trials.]

II. TRIALS ARE INDISPENSABLE (NECESSARY)

A. **Trials are like servants** directed by a wise & loving Master.

Psa 26:1-3 – Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in the Lord; I shall not slip [How can this be proven?]. 2 **Examine me, O Lord, & prove me; try my mind & my heart.** 3 For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, & I have walked in Your truth.

1. Trials are indispensable if our faith is to be examined & proven to be what we say it is.
 - a. God already knows the depth or shallowness of our faith, but we certainly need to know.
- B. **The word** "testing" is used in verse 3 (dokimion: dok-im'-ee-on), & "approved" in verse 12 (dokimos: dock-e-moss) – both had some connection to pottery making.

1. A potter would form the clay & place it into an oven or furnace, if the item came out cracked he would write “a (not) dokimos” – not proven, acceptable, accepted, pleasing.
2. But if the piece came out solid & strong he would write “dokimos” – proven, tested, accepted, acceptable, pleasing.
3. The Potter didn’t put the clay into the furnace to break it, only to prove it & to make it stronger, more valuable & useful.
4. Similarly, God allows us to face various trials for the same purpose; we cannot reach our full potential until our faith is proven.

A little boy picked up a cocoon that had fallen out of a tree. **The** top of the cocoon was off & the boy could see a moth inside struggling to get out. **So** he took a pair of scissors & cut the cocoon open. **A** few hours later he took his father outside to show him what he had done, but the moth was dead. **The** boy was upset & asked his father what had happened. **His** dad explained, “The moth’s struggle to get out of the cocoon was God’s way to develop the skeletal & muscle structure of the moth. **It** needed the struggle in order to build up enough strength to fly.”

[Trials to our faith are inevitable & indispensable; we cannot grow to our full spiritual strength without them.

Next, James gives us three examples of that very point.]

III. TRIALS BURN AWAY IMPURITIES

Jas 1:3 – knowing that the **testing** [proving] **of your faith produces patience**

1 Pet 1:6-7 – ...you have been grieved by various trials, **7 that 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, & glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

A. **James & Peter** both stated that our faith has to be tested.

1. Peter said that our faith has to be tested by fire in order to burn away all the impurities:
 - a. What impurities? All those bad or evil habits, thoughts & plans that interfere with our obedience to God.

b. Christians are like tea bags, you have to put them in hot water to find out what's inside.

[Our faith has to be tested by trials not only to prove whether it is genuine or not, but to make it genuine by burning away the sinful impurities.

Next, our faith has to be tested in order to produce something necessary to our spiritual growth.]

IV. TRIALS PRODUCE PATIENCE

Jas 1:3 – knowing that the *testing of your faith produces patience*

NIV – the testing of your faith develops perseverance. **NASU** – the testing of your faith produces endurance.

Strong – hupomone (hoop-om-on-ay'); cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy **Thayer** – steadfastness, constancy, endurance James 5:11; a patient, steadfast waiting for; a patient enduring, sustaining: 2 Cor 1:6

A. **Patience** may be the most important virtue that God would have us add to our faith (2 Pet 1:5-7), because until we develop patience our faith will not persevere in hope nor endure to the end.

Heb 10:36 – For *you have need of endurance*, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

Heb 12:1 – Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, & the sin which so easily ensnares us, & *let us run with endurance* the race that is set before us,

{Patience is what it takes to get the batteries out of the plastic packaging}

1. Patience IS the courageous refusal to give up doing the will of God.
2. Patience IS when you refuse to break your marriage vows when the relationship is not perfect.
3. Patience IS when you refuse to lash out in anger toward someone who is mistreating you.
4. Patience IS when you refuse to give up on saving someone who is very weak in faith.
5. Patience IS NOT “passive resignation” – just IGNORING a bad situation.

6. Patience IS DOING the right thing in a bad situation – an excellent example of that....

1 Cor 10:13 – No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, **that you may be able to bear it.**

a. “Bear” – hupophero (hoop-of-er'-o); **to bear from underneath**, i.e. to undergo hardship.

[God’s way of helping us through a trial is not to take it away from us, NOR does He want to just give us an easy way out.

His way of helping us through a trial is to give us the strength to stand underneath the load. (It’s up to us not to get bitter, give up & run away from Him.)

God knows what He is doing, & He doesn’t do anything to harm us; everything He does is in our best interest.

James helps us to realize what God is doing on our behalf so that we can work with Him in the process of our spiritual growth.

The third thing that trials of faith do for us is they help us build a godly character.

V. TRIALS BUILD GODLY CHARACTER

Jas 1:4 – But **let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect & complete, lacking nothing.**

Rom 5:3-5 – And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that **tribulation produces perseverance; 4 & perseverance, character; & character, hope.** 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

A. **God’s goal** for each of us is to help us develop the character of His Son in us.

Rom 8:28-29 – And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 **For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

[When God finishes with us – if we’ll work with Him – we’re going to look just like His Son.

James said that we can “count it all joy” knowing that our trials will work for our benefit – to make us like the One who loves us all the same (Mark 2:17; Matt 11:28-30).]

CLOSING

- A. **As you face trials** to your faith, it's best to respond in these three ways.
1. Rejoice in the fact that you know what God is doing.
 - a. He is allowing your faith to be tested to make it stronger, & He is by your side to help you bear it.
 2. Keep in mind God's goal for you:
 - a. To make you perfect (mature), complete, lacking nothing.
 - b. I have looked into the eyes of many old soldiers of the cross at their death, & what I saw was not weak, sick frail people, but perfect men or women in Christ.
 3. Cooperate with God:
 - a. Don't resist His will; work with Him, not against Him.

In Indiana a train was going down the tracks at 24 mph. **The** conductor's name was Robert Moore, the engineer was Rod Lindley. **They** looked ahead on the track & saw what they thought was a dog. **As** they got closer Robert Moore screamed, “It's a baby!” **Nineteen** month old Emily Marshall had wandered out of the backyard & on to the track. **Lindley** hit the brakes but knew there was no way to stop the train in time. **Moore** knew he didn't have time to jump out & race ahead of the train, so he worked his way out on to the grill. **As** the train approached he kicked her off the track. **Once** she was safely to the side, he jumped off the train & ran to her. **She** was crying & her face was cut, her lip was bleeding, but otherwise she was okay.

Moral: what happened to that little girl hurt her very much, but at least now she has a chance to grow.

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