

Triumph Through Trouble - 1
James 1:2-3

1

Introduction

The world is filled with cheap imitations. One can buy imitation leather, artistic reprints and costume jewelry. Cubic Zirconia can be easily mistaken for being a real diamond. Despite how good it looks; it will never be a diamond. The question is how does one determine the genuine article? To test the genuineness of a diamonds, jewelers often place them in clear water. This causes a real diamond to sparkle with a special brilliance. An imitation stone will have almost no sparkle at all. When the two are placed side by side it is easy to tell the difference between the genuine and the imposter.

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Introduction

In the same way, even the world can tell the difference between genuine Christians and those who merely profess faith in Christ. The difference is seen in the radiance of people's lives as they go through difficult times. It is stated that the reality of a "living faith" is demonstrated by one's reaction under adversity.

3

James 1:2-8

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

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Perseverance

James 1:2

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials

It is a reality that the believer will face difficult circumstances in life. The question is not if one will face problems, but how will one respond. Our response will be an outward declaration to our inner faith and dependence upon God. James gives help and encouragement to the Christian facing trials in order that they will be able to stand fast and persevere to the glory of Christ.

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Perseverance – A Joyful Attitude

James 1:2

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials

James starts this verse with “My Brethren”. Although these tests of true faith have value for all people, James’ primary audience are true believers, his brethren in Christ.

These believers are encouraged to “count it all joy when you fall into various trials”.

The word “count” means to consider. It is important for the believer to develop this mental attitude, because it is not the natural human response to times of trouble. They are to count these problems as “all joy”. Notice that it does not say one has to be joyful, but to understand that God is working these things for good, and in this we can be “all joyful”. We can rejoice knowing that God will never allow anything into our lives which He does not intend for good. Even when Satan does his worst, God will turn it around for good. As believers, we must face our adversities through the eyes of faith and learn to rejoice in them.

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Perseverance – A Joyful Attitude

James 1:2

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Hebrews 12:2 notes that the Lord, “for the joy that was set before him endured the cross”. He was able to look beyond the trial to the joy that He would have after it was accomplished. He knew that the cross was divinely ordained for Him and He knew the glory that would follow. If our Lord who was holy and perfect could endure the agony of taking the world’s sin upon Himself, how can we not endure? We must learn to face the trials placed in our lives willingly and with thanksgiving trusting God’s purpose and work in our lives.

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Perseverance – A Joyful Attitude

James 1:2

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Paul stated that he had learned to be content in what circumstances he found himself (**Phil. 4:11-12**). These were not empty worlds for Paul and Silas were beaten and placed into prison in Philippi. Instead of complaining, they prayed and sang hymns of praise to God. They knew that God was in control and chose to rejoice. In the end God sent an earthquake and freed them and by their testimony an entire family came to know the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

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Perseverance – A Joyful Attitude

James 1:2

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials

Warren Wiersbe in *The Bible Exposition*

Commentary writes “Our values determine our evaluations. If we value comfort more than character, then trials will upset us. If we value the material and physical more than the spiritual, we will not be able to ‘count it all Joy!’ If we live only for the present and forget the future, the trials will make us bitter not better.”

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Perseverance – A Joyful Attitude

James 1:2

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials

Trials will enter into the lives of believers. James uses the term “when”. It carries the idea of not just possibility but inevitability. Trials are certain to come; it is just a matter of when. The word “fall” paints a picture that these trials will be encountered unexpectedly. They are like a hole in the road which one steps into.

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Perseverance – A Joyful Attitude

James 1:2

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials

“Various trials” is the counterpart of “all joy”. The word “various” suggests that there are multiple types of trials. The term “trials” speaks of the “testing”. The trials which we face can come in many forms from physical to emotional, but the end result is the same, they are meant to test the believer’s faith.

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Perseverance – An Understanding Mind

James 1:3

knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

The second way to persevere in trials is to have an understanding mind. “Knowing” carries the idea of full understanding of something that is beyond the mere factual and often comes from personal experience.

As Christians, you know that from your own experience, as well as from God’s Word, that “the testing of your faith produces patience”. You have learned that His promises are true. After you have endured suffering, affliction, or testing, you have discovered that your trust is in the Lord and is not only intact but is stronger due to the testing.

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Perseverance – An Understanding Mind

James 1:3

knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

The word “testing” was used to speak of determining the genuine article. It was used to speak of determining whether a coin was genuine and pure. In order to determine the genuineness of a coin’s metal it was put to the test. It was put under fire and the impurities would surface to the top. In our lives, testing brings to the surface the impurities where they can be discarded.

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Perseverance – An Understanding Mind

James 1:3

knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

The result of this faith is “patience”. This term in Greek, however, speaks more than just having patience, but speaks to the consequence of having patience. We might understand it as endurance. If one has patience, they will endure the trials placed before them by trusting God. As they trust God, He will continue to develop their endurance. The difference is that patience is needed only as long as the trial is present.

Endurance is a permanent inner quality that increases each time trials are encountered.

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Practical Helps

1. The Believer Should Understand God's Promises

To endure in the face of trials, believers should understand and patiently trust God promises. God provides these truths to give us security that makes it possible for the believer to endure.

- a. The Believer is secure because of the power of God – John 10:28
- b. The Believer is secure because of the promises and prayers of Christ – John 17:12, Luke 22:31-32, 1 John 2:1, Heb. 7:25
- c. The Believer is secure because of the presence of the Holy Spirit – John 14:16, Eph. 1:13-14

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Practical Helps

2. The Believer Should Understand the Purpose of Trials

God allows trials to enter into our lives for a purpose. Scripture mentions at least eight purposes why the Lord allows trials to come into the lives of His people.

a. God allows trials to test the strength of our faith.

Through trials, God is able to teach us our strengths and weaknesses. When one responds to trials in a resentful, bitter way, it exposes a weak faith to God in those areas.

b. God allows trials to humble us.

Trials remind us not to let our trust be mere presumption, but to remind us the importance of a moment by moment walk with our Savior. Trials have a way of teaching us our own inability and our need to depend upon God's power, wisdom, and sovereignty to see us through.

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Practical Helps

c. God allows trials to wean us from our dependence upon worldly things.

In the midst of trial, we learn that we cannot rely upon accumulated material possessions or upon worldly knowledge, and experience. We also learn that the things of this world are temporal (look at Job), but the things of God are eternal.

d. God allows trials to call us to an eternal and heavenly hope.

The harder the trial and the longer they last, the more we look forward to being with the Lord. See Philippians 1:23-24, Romans 8:18-25, and 2 Corinthians 4:14-18.

e. God allows trials to reveal what we really love.

Abraham was put to the test in having to offer up his son Isaac. This was not only a test of faith but proved that Abraham's love for the Lord was supreme. As believers we are told to love and serve God with all our heart and soul (Deut. 10:12). Trials force us to choose between God and the world.

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Practical Helps

f. God allows trials to teach us to value God's blessings.

Through trials, faith teaches us the value of the spiritual things of God that He has blessed us with.

g. God allows trials to develop enduring strength for greater usefulness.

The Puritan Thomas Manton stated, "While all things are quiet and comfortable, we live by sense rather than faith. But the worth of a soldier is never known in the times of peace."

h. God allows trials to enable us to better help others in their trials.

As believers we are encouraged to help others facing trials just as God comforts us (2 Cor. 1:3-6).

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So What ...

It was reported that a Christian martyr while being burned to death was smiling. This was beyond the ability those administering the punishment to understand. They cried out to this Christian, "Sir, why are you smiling?" For they could see nothing through their worldly eyes in which he could rejoice. The Christian simply replied back through the flames, "I saw the glory of God and was glad!"

God is good and everything that He allows into our lives is for good. Trials are like grains of sand. They can be a source of great irritation.

How we respond to that irritation is the test of our faith. Let the oyster be our example – He takes the source of irritation and uses it to produce a pearl. Testing will come! How you respond is up to you.