

Triumph Through Trouble - 1
James 1:2-3

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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, 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.

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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 1:2-3

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

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 1:2-3

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

Last time we saw that we need to be able to count it all joy when we face various trials.

This is not saying we have to be happy, but rather we can find joy knowing that God is at work in our lives and others.

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Perseverance – An Understanding Mind

James 1:2-3

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

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish;
neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

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Practical Helps

b. The Believer is secure because of the promises and prayers of Christ

1 John 2:1

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Hebrews 7:25

Therefore, He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

(John 17:12, Luke 22:31-32)

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Practical Helps

c. The Believer is secure because of the presence of the Holy Spirit

John 14:16

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever

Ephesians 1:13-14

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

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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.

1 Peter 1:6-9

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, 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, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

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Practical Helps

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.

Psalm 23:4

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

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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.

We see this in the feeding of the 5000 and the 4000. The disciples had seen the great miracle of the feeding of the 5000. When Jesus told the disciples to feed the 4000, their dependence was upon worldly things. Jesus taught them that the worldly was inadequate to accomplish the task He called them to and that they needed to depend upon Him.

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Practical Helps

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.

Romans 8:18-25

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

Also see Philippians 1:23-24, and 2 Corinthians 4:14-18.

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Practical Helps

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. The worldly things we cling to in this life will be lost, but the spiritual is eternal. Jim Elliot stated, "he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

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."

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Practical Helps

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 Corinthians. 1:3-6

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. ⁶ Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

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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.

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