

I. Introduction: In what areas of your life would you like to change?

II. Your trials should be the occasion of joy. v. 2 Mt. 5:11-12 Rom. 5:3-5 I Pe. 1:6-7

A. *When you encounter various trials* – You will experience trials. Mt. 6:34

1. *When* – Trials are the ordinary experience of believers living in a fallen world. Jo. 16:33,2 I Pe. 4:12-13 Job 5:7 Phil. 3:10 Col. 1:24 II Co. 4:8 Ps. 34
2. Contrary to the ‘health and prosperity’ false teachers of our day, James does not say that we can, through faith and prayer, eliminate trials. Job 5:7 Heb. 11:1ff
3. *Encounter* – Trials typically fall upon you unexpectedly. Luke 10:30 I Pe. 4:15
4. *Various* – The Greek word for trial can refer either to:
 - a. A difficult external circumstance. I Pe. 1:6 Mt. 26:41 Luke 22:28 Acts 20:19 Rev. 3:10 John 15:20 II Tim. 3:12
 - b. Or an inward temptation to evil. 1:12-14 I Ti. 6:9 Luke 22:40,46 Mt. 6:13
 - c. An external circumstance can become a point of inward temptation. Lu. 4:13
5. What kinds of trials were James’ readers experiencing? 1:1 2:6-7 4:1-2,11 5:4-6
6. What kind of trials are we experiencing?

B. *Consider it all joy* – It is vital for you think correctly about your trials. I Pe. 1:6

1. We are deeply in love with our own comfort.
2. James is not telling you to enjoy your suffering. Heb. 12:11
3. You can rejoice because God is in the picture. Think beyond your pain to the good our sovereign God is doing. Heb. 12:11 Ro. 8:28 Gen. 50:20
4. Because such thoughts do not naturally occur, you need to force yourself to think properly about your trials. Prov. 14:12 3:5-6
5. Much of the Christian life is about thinking biblically. Phil. 2:3,5 4:8-9 Ro. 6:11
6. What are some wrong responses people have to trials? Anger, bitterness, grumbling, self-pity, fear, unbelief, sinful escape, etc.
7. We must learn to live by faith, not sight. II Co. 5:7 Hab. 3:17-18
8. What are some positive examples of those who had joy in their trials?
Acts 5:40-41 16:25 Co. 1:24 Heb. 12:1ff 11:26 II Co. 6:10 7:4 12:9ff Mt. 5:10-12

III. God uses trials to help you to grow. v. 3 Ro. 5:3-5 I Pe. 1:6-7 Ps. 40:1-2 II Th. 1:3-4

A. *Knowing* – You need to understand God’s purpose in your trials. Pr. 3:11-12 I Pe. 1:14

B. *The testing of your faith* – Your trials prove and refine your faith. I Pe. 1:7 Ps. 12:6

1. Faith is central for James – good works spring from a living faith. 1:18 2:1,14ff
2. The one testing your faith is God, whose intention for you is only good. v. 13
3. Your response to trials demonstrates that your faith is genuine. Mt. 24
4. Trials can also reveal that professed faith is not genuine. Mark 4:16-19
5. Affliction also purifies your faith – removing weaknesses and impurities. I Pe. 1:7 Mal. 3:3 Zech. 11:13

C. *Produces endurance* – Your trials produce needed steadfastness. Ro. 5:3 Heb. 12:11

1. Trials are God’s tools to produce perseverance in His people. 5:11 Luke 8:15 II Thess. 1:4 Rev. 2:2 13:10 II Pe. 1:6
2. Endurance is not accomplished quickly, but is an ongoing lifelong process.

D. God has often strengthened those who endured trials. Heb. 12:1ff 5:8 11:37-39 10:34 Mt. 26:36ff John 12:27 II Co. 12:9f Gen. 22:1ff

IV. The end result of your trials is that you will be mature. v. 4 Mt. 5:48

- A. *Let endurance have its perfect result.* -- Trials do not always and automatically produce endurance. You must respond -- to testing in joy and faith.**
- B. In what sense can you become *perfect and complete*? v. 4,12 3:2 Mt. 5:48 19:21 Co. 1:28 4:12 I Th. 5:23 Phil. 3:15**
 - 1. We will not achieve spiritual perfection in this life.**
 - 2. God wants us to grow in spiritual maturity. 3:2 Mt. 5:48**
 - 3. We can all grow in areas where we were weak -- *complete, lacking in nothing.***
 - 4. God will design various trials according to your need for growth.**
 - 5. In what areas is God working in your life? II Cor. 12:7ff**

V. Conclusion.

- A. James points us to Christ.**
 - 1. Jesus Himself was tried and perfected. Mt. 4:1ff Heb. 4:8-9**
 - 2. He is the object of our faith by which His imputed righteousness gives us the perfection God requires. Phil. 3:9 II Co. 5:21**
 - 3. He taught us to rejoice in our trials. Mt. 5:11-12 Luke 6:22-23**
 - 4. God is working daily to make us more like Christ. Ro. 8:29 Phil. 3:10-11 Ga. 4:19**
 - 5. You will never be called to suffer as much for Him as He has suffered for you.**
 - 6. In the end we will be perfected in Christlikeness. I Jo. 3:2 Ro. 8:29 I Co. 13:9-10**
- B. We rejoice in God's sovereign purposes in our trials. Ps. 119:67,71**
 - 1. God will not allow you to suffer beyond what you can endure. I Co. 10:13**
 - 2. God will not waste your suffering. Rom. 8:28 Gen. 50:20**
 - 3. God preserves you. I Pet. 1:5 Ps. 37:28 John 10:29 Rom. 8:31ff II Pet. 2:9**
 - 4. Jesus sympathizes with you and prays for your endurance. John 17:12 18:9 Luke 22:31-32 Heb 7:25 4:15**
 - 5. The Holy Spirit protects and seals you. Eph. 1:13-14 4:30 John 14:16**
 - 6. God is glorified. I Pe. 1:7**
- C. When trials come -- stop, think, and rejoice.**
- D. Even if you are an unbeliever, don't waste your suffering. Turn to God! Ps. 119:67,71**

Discussion questions

- 1. What would you say to someone who says that Christians should just pray in faith and then their trials will immediately go away? Js. 1:5 Mt. 7:7**
- 2. What kinds of trials were James' original readers facing?**
- 3. What troubles are we facing?**
- 4. How can we rejoice in the midst of suffering?**
- 5. What are some examples of people who have been able to rejoice in harsh trials?**
- 6. What is God's purpose in our trials?**
- 7. What would you say to someone who thinks that he can become more mature apart from trials, simply by God's work in his soul?**
- 8. In what sense can we become perfect and complete?**
- 9. How can we be sure that we won't be tested beyond our ability to endure?**
- 10. What good, if any, does hardship do for unbelievers?**
- 11. In what areas is God working, through trials, in your life?**