

How Can We Remain Steadfast Under Trial?

[James 1:12-18](#)

James, Day 6

"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

- James 1:12-18, ESV

I must admit that, as a father, I have not always been patient and clear in explaining to my kids *how* to do what I'm asking them to do. I'm usually very clear on *what* I expect them to do and even on *why* I want them to do it (which is not always "Because I said so"). Unfortunately for them, knowing *what* to do without knowing *how* to do it can lead to a lot of frustration.

Many Christians feel this way about their Christian lives, about living faithfully for the Lord according to the Bible. Many of us often know better what we're supposed to be doing than exactly how we can go about doing it.

Today's passage has a great example of this: *"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial."* So we know what we're supposed to do: remain steadfast under trial. We're even given some incentive, some motivation: *"for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life."* That sounds wonderful, but how are we supposed to remain steadfast under trial? Well, the rest of the passage tells us how, if we read it carefully and thoughtfully.

One thing that helps is to know that the Greek words for trial and tempted here in this passage are the same. So, to stand under trial means to stand in the face of temptation. When the time of trial or temptation comes, the first thing we need to make sure we don't do is blame God. We may not do so openly, but if we're grumbling in our hearts against the Lord for His providence, we're essentially blaming Him for putting us in a situation where we've been tempted. And if we're blaming God, that means we won't be looking to Him for help and deliverance in our trial.

So, once we stop blaming God, we need to take a good look at ourselves and see which desires within us are being triggered by the temptation. What longing in our hearts is responding in the time of trial to make it a temptation and draw us away from remaining steadfast? Once we can identify this desire, we can confess it to the Lord and ask Him to help us look to Him to meet that longing.

Next, we need to give thanks to God for His goodness. In the midst of every trial, God provides good resources for us, things to help us or strengthen us. Sometimes intentionally giving thanks for our blessings opens our eyes to the good things God has given us.

So, we don't blame God, we identify and confess our desires, we give thanks for our blessings, and we look for God-given resources. Then, we remember that it is God's power that has saved us and His power which will keep us. We remember and we openly confess, *"Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."* We didn't save ourselves through our words; God saved us through His word. He who saved us will keep us, so we can bear fruit for His glory.

So often, in the hour of trial, I am tempted to be self-pitying and complaining. I feel sorry for myself and I quietly accuse God of wrongdoing in His providence. If I am going to stand strong, I must learn to reverse this sinful reaction to trials and instead give thanks, seek help, remember the goodness of God, and accept responsibility for my own sinful foolishness. When I look to the Lord in these specific, practical, honest ways, then I stand strong and remain steadfast under trial, in His strength and never in my own.