

**Subject: *When Trials Come***

**Scripture: *James 1:1-8***

James was writing to Christians who were being tested. This letter was sent to Jewish believers who were scattered abroad. They had been scattered like seed due to persecution, and so in the midst of their suffering and trouble, God had a message for them through His servant James. I feel like this message is needed by a lot of people. One of three things is true: either you have recently been through a trial or you are now in a trial or you will soon have a trial in your life. Billy Graham said: “God has not called His children to a playground, but to a battleground.”

### **WE SHOULD EXPECT TRIALS IN LIFE**

The letter begins with a reminder that believers can expect trials to come. This is for all believers, *My brethren*. There is no exception clause in the contract. One new Christian testified: “When I got saved it was the end of my troubles—the front end!” Notice three things about trials in verse 1:

- Trials are sure to come – *when*, not if
- Trials come suddenly and unexpectedly – *ye fall* (not intentional, but accidental) Trials are usually out of our control. Remember the story of Job.
- Trials come in different forms – *divers temptations* = various kinds of trials  
Our trials may be physical, spiritual, emotional, financial, family, or a combination.

### **WE KNOW TRIALS ARE FOR OUR BENEFIT**

What does it mean to “count” it joy? The word count means “consider,” and it is an act of our will, not an emotional thing. It is an accounting term that means to evaluate trials and see the benefits. Trials are the only way we can grow in our faith and become mature believers. It’s been said that “a smooth sea never made a skillful sailor.” In the same way, God uses trials to make us what He wants us to be. *Worketh*” (vs. 3) means it produces something good. There are many good by-products when we undergo trials. One of the greatest things is patience or endurance, which is a Christian virtue. And the process continues so we can be mature Christians. There is no maturity without adversity. We are a lot like tea bags. We’re worth more when we get in some hot water. God is able to take even the bad things and make something good come out of them. ***Romans 8:28*** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

- Trials reveal our faith

We’ll never know our faith in God is real until it’s tested. In the parable of the sower and the seed, do you remember the seed that fell on shallow or rocky ground. It sprung up, but it didn’t have enough depth or root system and the sun scorched it and it died. Jesus said that was a picture of people who make a superficial response of faith and then when trouble comes they fall away.

- Trials refine our faith

**Job 23:10** *But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. **1 Peter 1:6-7**<sup>6</sup> Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:<sup>7</sup> That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

God's children are like precious jewels shaped with the hammer and chisel in the master's hand. God uses a hammer to chip off the rough edges, and if that doesn't work, He will use a sledghammer. If we're really stubborn, He uses a jackhammer. He'll use whatever it takes.

We are like silver in the refiner's fire. Trials in our life are like the fire. When we realize that we can pray different. We pray less "Comfort me" prayers, and we pray more "Change me" prayers. We are less concerned about feeling better and more concerned about becoming better. Someone asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is pure enough?" He said, "When I can see my reflection."

### **WE CAN ASK GOD FOR HELP IN OUR TRIALS**

All of us need wisdom to face our trials successfully. When a trial comes we can either receive it or resent it. Our trials can either make us better or make us bitter. The one thing that makes the difference is seeing our trials from God's point of view. Wisdom is the ability to see life from God's point of view.

**Proverbs 9:10** *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*

Joni Eareckson Tada was paralyzed from the neck down in a swimming accident. At first, Joni struggled to accept her condition and reconcile that with her faith in a loving God. The turning point was gradual. Over time she came to see God's hand in it all. Now she calls her accident a "glorious intruder" and claims it was the best thing that ever happened to her. She testifies how God used it to get her attention and to refocus her priorities.

**2 Corinthians 1:8-9**<sup>8</sup> *For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:<sup>9</sup> But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:*

We need God's wisdom in our trials so we won't overlook God's blessings and miss the spiritual growth that should come. The bad news is there will be trials. The good news is trials work for our benefit. The best news is God is more than willing to give us His wisdom so we can see it from His perspective.

### **WE CAN ENDURE TRIALS WITH ASSURANCE**

For those who endure the trials of life, Jesus has promised to give the crown of life. "When he is tried" means that he has been tried and passed the test. He is "approved."

**Romans 8:18** *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

**2 Corinthians 4:17** *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

Over the years I have seen many people suffer and die from cancer. Jim Moffatt was a precious brother who had these words written on the inside cover of his Bible:

*God has brought me here. It is by His will I am in this difficult place: in that I will rest. He will keep me here in His love and give me grace in this trial to behave as His child. He will make the testing a blessing, teaching in me the lessons He intends for me to learn, and working in me the grace He intends to give. In His good time He can bring me out again—how and when He knows. I am here by God's appointment, in His care, under His training, and for His time.*

That is the testimony of a man who knew the benefits of trials, asked God for wisdom so he would become a better person instead of a bitter person, and who realized that one day he would leave his suffering behind.