

Discuss

James starts his letter with a challenge to view trials with joy and endurance. Even though that’s not natural, most people would say that our pain is often what has developed us, strengthened us, and allowed us the ability to grow. This is especially true with our faith, because in a trial, you’ll either turn to God or away from God.

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” ([James 1:1-4. NLT](#))

- How do you tend to view trials?

We don’t have to go through trials alone. We can and should go to God during them. But when we come we should ask for wisdom, and lead with a determined faith in Him.

“If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.” ([James 1:5-8. NLT](#))

- Do you turn to God during trials? If not, where do you turn?
- What do you tend to ask God for when going through a trial? Do you start with wisdom?

Our tendency is not to see trials through the lens of endurance, deepening faith, and the joy of a life made complete; but in reality, this is the time when enormous life change can happen. So James encourages us to maintain this perspective and let it give us joy.

“Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements.” ([James 1:9-11. NLT](#))

- What matters most to you in life?
- Do you tend to evaluate things more through the lens of eternity, or by what is in front of you right now?

The Bible tells us that we’re going to be tempted in life to go against God’s path for us - that’s what sin is. The choice to sin is ours. God allows things in our life to challenge our faith, but does not tempt us to sin. You’re going to sin, but we can at least try to resist and fight against it to honor God with our lives and our relationship with Him.

“And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, ‘God is tempting me.’ God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.” ([James 1:13-15. NLT](#))

- What do you use to resist the temptation to sin in your life?

Next Steps

When we’re presented with the difficulties of life it can be a God moment - a time to become who we were meant to be and created to be. Choosing to endure in faith, praying for God’s wisdom, being all in with our relationship with God, working to keep up our fight against sin taking over our lives and trust in Him and His character. Spend some time reflecting on the Scripture from this week and pray for the right perspective in trials.

“So don’t be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.” ([James 1:16-18. NLT](#))

July 14: [Online Book Club: Improve Your Serve](#)

July 18 & 21: [TeamLife \(In-Person or Online\)](#)

Continued Reading

Read [James 1:1-18](#); [Acts 8:1](#).

Prayer

God, thank you for the wisdom you have given us through your Word to help us when we go through trials. Help us to hold fast to your truth and let it shape our perspective and approach to the trials we go through. Amen.