

James: Steadfast, Unfiled Religion

James 1:26-27 (ESV) ²⁶If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

Outline of James

- (1:2-21) ... Endures Trials and Tribulations
- (1:22-2:26) ... Carefully Obeys God; Practices Purity, Service, Mercy
- (3:1-18) ... Speaks and Behaves with Wisdom from Above, Making Peace
- (4:1-17) ... Makes No Friendship with the World; In Humility Puts God's Will First
- (5:1-20) ... Endures to the End with Trust, Prayer, and Love

Questions We Might Ask In Times of Trial

- Why is God allowing these things to happen to me?
- Doesn't God care?
- Does God even hear my prayers?
- Is God punishing me? Is He done with me?
- Where is God?

We must not allow our walk with God to be hindered by doubt. God may allow trials in our lives for many scriptural and important reasons.

Why Is God Allowing This Trial?

1. I really don't know.
2. So that I may share in the sufferings of Christ.
3. God is strengthening my ability to persevere.
4. God is helping me develop character.
5. God is helping me to be more humble.
6. God wants me to become more dependent on Him.
7. God is disciplining me for my good.
8. I'm facing the consequence of my own mistakes or sins.
9. I have left my first love and God wants me back.
10. God is protecting me from a bigger problem I don't see coming.
11. God is helping me become more like Christ.
12. God is helping me build my faith in Him.
13. So that I can bring glory to God through perseverance.

14. So that I will be able to help and comfort others.
15. To help me focus on the greater reward in heaven.
16. To expose the weaknesses or sins in my life that I am blind to.
17. To increase my knowledge of God and his Word.
18. To help me stop pursuing the things of this world.
19. To remind me that God is the one in control.
20. To teach me to be more thankful.

How to Endure Trials (1:2-21)

- Count it all joy (1:2-4)
- Ask God for wisdom (1:5-8)
- Remember that Christ exalts the lowly and humbles the rich (1:9-11)
- Trust in the outcome (1:12)
- Don't blame God for your sins; take responsibility (1:13-15)
- Show reverent gratitude for the Father's amazing goodness **and grace (1:16-21)**

James 1:2-21 (ESV) ²Count it all joy, my brothers,[£] when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass[£] he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

¹²Blessed 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. ¹³Let 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. ¹⁴But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷Every 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.[£] ¹⁸Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

¹⁹Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires.[£] ²¹Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Trials Mature Us

James 1:2-8 (ESV) ²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

COUNT IT (1:2) – Joy Is A Calculated Choice. Testing works FOR us, not AGAINST us.

KNOW IT: (1:3) – Endurance Is Hugely Valuable.

Romans 5:1-5 (ESV) ¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we[£] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith[£] into this grace in which we stand, and we[£] rejoice[£] in hope of the glory of God. ³More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

LET IT: (1:4) - Be at Peace; go with the Lord – he knows what he's doing.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NASB) ⁷Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

ASK GOD FOR HELP: (1:5) – Trust With All Your Heart

Proverbs 3:5-8 (ESV) ⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. ⁷Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. ⁸It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

Hebrews 11:17-19 (NKJV) ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸of whom it was said, “*In Isaac your seed shall be called,*”[£] ¹⁹concluding that God was able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

The double-minded man doesn't trust God; he thinks his way is best.

CONCLUSION

James 1:12 (ESV) ¹²Blessed 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.

20 Reasons Why God Allows Trials And Tribulations

From <https://biblereasons.com/reasons-for-trials/> (I edited the order - jc)

Fritz Chery Mar 17, 2021

We always hear Christians say things like “I have been doing everything right. I have been fasting and praying, giving, loving my neighbor, obeying the Lord, reading Scripture daily, and walking faithfully with the Lord. What did I do wrong? Why has God allowed me to go through such hard times? Does He not care about me? Am I saved?” To be honest we have all felt a little something like this.

Here is what I have learned on my walk of faith. Be on guard because when you’re asking all these questions and questioning God, Satan will try to attack. He will say, “no he doesn’t love you. Look at those unbelievers who are not going through adversity, but you say Jesus Christ died for you, and yet you are going through the worst troubles of your life.” Don’t let the devil give you fear.

Trials can lead into atheism. When your faith is small the devil can rip it out. Don’t let him put you in despair and bitterness towards God. Don’t ever forget the other times God has delivered you because He will do it again. The devil will try to say it was a coincidence, but with God there is no coincidence. Cry out to God. Block Satan off and always remember that we have victory in Christ.

Trials and tribulations quotes

- “Trials teach us what we are; they dig up the soil, and let us see what we are made of.” – Charles Spurgeon
- “Prayer is the best armor against all trials.”
- “A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials.”
- “Being on a spiritual path does not prevent you from facing the darkness, but it teaches you how to use the darkness as a tool to grow.”

What does the Bible say about trials and tribulations?

Think of trials as training! God has to train His troops. Have you ever heard of any staff sergeant who got to where he was without going through tough situations? God has to prepare His children for the future.

My life.

I remember when I said, “why God, why this, and why that?” God told me to wait for His timing. God has delivered me in the past, but when you are going through bad times all you’re thinking about is right now. I’ve seen God use trials to build me up, answer different prayers, open doors, help others, and I’ve seen many miracles where I knew it was only God who could have done this.

While I was worrying, the Lord gave me comfort, encouragement, motivation, and He was working behind the scenes. If as believers we’re burdened by when our brothers and sisters suffer, imagine how God feels. Always remember that He loves you and He reminds us time after time in His Word that He will never forsake us.

1. I don’t know.

Sometimes we have to admit we just don’t know and instead of going crazy and trying to find out why, we must trust in the Lord that He knows best.

Isaiah 55:8-9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.”

2. So we can share in the sufferings of Christ.

1 Peter 4:12-16 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

2 Corinthians 1:5-7 “For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.”

3. Trials help our perseverance.

James 1:12 “God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”

Galatians 6:9 “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

Hebrews 10:35-36 “So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.”

4. It helps with developing character.

Romans 5:3-6 “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

5. God is making you more humble.

2 Corinthians 12:7 “even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.”

Proverbs 18:12 “Before destruction a man’s heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.”

1 Peter 5:6-8 “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

6. So you can become more dependent on the Lord.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

John 15:5 “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

7. God’s discipline.

Hebrews 12:5-11 “And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

Proverbs 3:11-13 “My child, do not reject the Lord’s discipline, and don’t get angry when he corrects you. The Lord corrects those he loves, just as parents correct the child they delight in. Happy is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gets understanding.”

8. Sometimes we suffer because of our own mistakes. Another thing is we should never test God.

In my life I’ve suffered because I followed the wrong voice. I did my will instead of God’s will. I can’t blame God for my mistakes, but what I can say is God brought me through it and made me stronger and smarter in the process.

Hosea 4:6 “My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. “Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.”

Proverbs 19:2-3 “Desire without knowledge is not good— how much more will hasty feet miss the way! A person’s own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the LORD.”

Galatians 6:5 “Assume your own responsibility.”

9. God wants to spend time with you, but you lost your first love. You’re doing all these things for Jesus, but you’re not spending quality quiet time with the Lord.

Revelation 2:2-5 “I know what you do, how you work hard and never give up. I know you do not put up with the false teachings of evil people. You have tested those who say they are apostles but really are not, and you found they are liars. You have patience and have suffered troubles for my name and

have not given up. But I have this against you: You have left the love you had in the beginning. So remember where you were before you fell. Change your hearts and do what you did at first. If you do not change, I will come to you and will take away your lampstand from its place.”

10. God could be protecting you from a bigger problem that you don't see coming.

Psalm 121:5-8 “The Lord guards you. The Lord is the shade that protects you from the sun. The sun cannot hurt you during the day, and the moon cannot hurt you at night. The Lord will protect you from all dangers; he will guard your life. The Lord will guard you as you come and go, both now and forever.”

Psalm 9:7-10 “But the Lord rules forever. He sits on his throne to judge, and he will judge the world in fairness; he will decide what is fair for the nations. The Lord defends those who suffer; he defends them in times of trouble. Those who know the Lord trust him, because he will not leave those who come to him.”

Psalm 37:5 “Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you.”

11. It helps us grow as believers and become more like Christ.

Romans 8:28-29 “We know that in everything God works for the good of those who love him. They are the people he called, because that was his plan. God knew them before he made the world, and he chose them to be like his Son so that Jesus would be the firstborn of many brothers and sisters.”

Philippians 1:6 “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.”

1 Corinthians 11:1 “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

12. Trials help to build our faith in the Lord.

James 1:2-6 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds. because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

Psalm 73:25-28 “Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.”

13. God's glory: The storm will not last forever and trials are an opportunity for a testimony. It gives God so much glory when everyone knows you're going through a tough trial and you stand strong, trusting in the Lord until He delivers you, without complaining.

Psalm 40:4-5 “Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. Many, LORD my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare.”

Psalm 71:14-17 “As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long— though I know not how to relate them

all. I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone.”

14. You can help someone because you have been in that situation. Throwing around Scriptures will be hard to understand for someone who is grieving, but you can comfort them because you have been through the same thing and through the pain you trusted in God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

Galatians 6:2 “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

15. Trials give us a greater reward in Heaven.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Mark 10:28-30 “Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!” “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.”

16. To show us sin in our lives. We should never deceive ourselves and try to hide our sins from God, which is impossible.

Psalms 38:1-11 “Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. Your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down on me. Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin. My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly. I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning. My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body. I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart. All my longings lie open before you, Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you. My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes. My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far away.”

Psalms 38:17-22 “For I am about to fall, and my pain is ever with me. I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin. Many have become my enemies without cause; those who hate me without reason are numerous. Those who repay my good with evil lodge accusations against me, though I seek only to do what is good. Lord, do not forsake me; do not be far from me, my God. Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my Savior.”

Psalms 40:12-13 “For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me. Be pleased to save me, LORD; come quickly, LORD, to help me.”

17. Trials increase our knowledge and they help us learn God’s Word.

Psalms 119:71-77 “It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. Your hands made me

and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands. May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word. I know, Lord, that your laws are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me. May your unfailing love be my comfort, according to your promise to your servant. Let your compassion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight.”

Psalm 94:11-15 “The Lord knows all human plans; he knows that they are futile. Blessed is the one you discipline, Lord, the one you teach from your law; you grant them relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked. For the Lord will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance. Judgment will again be founded on righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow it.”

Psalm 119:64-68 “The earth, O Lord, is full of thy steadfast love; teach me thy statutes! Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in thy commandments. Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I keep thy word. Thou art good and doest good; teach me thy statutes.”

18. Trials take our minds off of things of the world and put them back on the Lord.

Colossians 3:1-4 “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

Romans 12:1-2 “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

19. To remind us that it is God who is always in control.

Luke 8:22-25 “One day Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!” He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. “Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”

20. Trials teach us to be more thankful.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 “Always be joyful. Always keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 5:20 “Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Colossians 4:2 “Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.”

Stop saying, “I’m going to pray” and actually do it. Let this be a start to a new prayer life you never had. Stop thinking you can do things on your own and trust in God. Tell God “I can’t do it without you. I need you my Lord.” Come to Him with all your heart. “God help me; I will not let you go. I will not

listen to these lies.” You must stand strong and have faith God can bring you through it even if it seems impossible.

1 Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”