

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Turning Trials into Triumph James 1:2-12 Part 2

We have introduced this epistle by saying that the theme is “Tests of a Living Faith.” The first of those tests is the, RESPONSE TO TRIALS TEST. We find this test in **VV. 2-12**.

Let us open our Bibles to James and read **James 1:2-12**, “**Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, (3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. (4) And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (5) But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (6) But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. (7) For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, (8) being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (9) But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position; (10) and let the rich man glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. (11) For the sun rises with a scorching wind, and withers the grass; and its flower falls off, and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. (12) Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**” Obviously we will not cover the whole of this section today.

What is the proper response to trials? Perseverance. Those who persevere in the midst of trials, possess genuine, living, saving faith. And those who do not, most likely do not have a genuine, living, saving faith.

V. 12 is the key to this entire section. “**Blessed** (happy or fortunate) **is a man who perseveres** (endures) **under trial**. Why? “... **for once he has been approved** (or tested and found genuine) “... **he will receive the crown of life**” (or in other words he will enter into his eternal reward) “... **which the Lord has promised to those who...**” What? “**love him.**” The promise of eternal reward is not offered to those who endure or persevere in the sense of just simply gritting their teeth and getting through it. Even those who do not love the Lord can do this. But this promise of eternal reward is being extended to those who love the Lord and only to those who love the Lord.

When we are in a trial, do we find ourselves becoming more dependent on God or less? Do we come to the Lord to ask for grace, for strength, and for wisdom or do we fight our own battles in our own strength? When we are in a trial do we find ourselves vigorously pursuing holiness or do we get caught up in our own fleshly and earthly interests? The way we, as believers, go through trials should give us a clear indication as to whether our faith is living or if it is not. Hopefully, as we mature in Christ, the way we respond to our trials will stand in stark contrast to the world because of our very special and intimate loving relationship with God.

This morning we will be looking at a number of different elements that need to be present in our response to trials.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

First of all we need to have a JOYOUS ATTITUDE. Let us look at **V. 2 “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,...”** Certainly I think you can understand how this will very dramatically, as the followers of Christ, set us apart from the world. Most people count it all joy when they escape trials. James is telling us, who love the Lord, to **“consider it all joy... when we encounter various trials.”** What does James mean by this?

First of all, we need to look at the word **“count”** (HEGESESTHE). This is an aorist imperative. It means once and for all consider or evaluate your trials as “joy.” Whatever might happen in our lives James is commanding us in essence to say, “I will consider this difficulty in my life joy.”

Why do we need to once for all consider or evaluate our trials as joy. Why can't we make that decision each time a particular trial comes our way? Because trials don't announce themselves. Trials sneak up on us. The word “encounter” (PERIPIPTO) suggests an unwelcome and unanticipated experience. The word is used two times in the NT.

It was used by Jesus in the story of the good Samaritan. In **Luke 10:30** it says, **“Jesus replied and said, “A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went off leaving him half dead.”** It was not the fault of the Samaritan that he was robbed. This trial was just something that literally snuck up on him.

This word is also found in **Acts 27:41**, **“But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable.....”** The ship striking or encountering the reef was not something that they were anticipating. It was hidden from their sight until they hit it.

If we are going consider or count trials we encounter joy, we must have prepared ourselves ahead of time to respond in that way. If we do this then joy will most likely dominate our thinking rather than any other unprofitable or destructive thoughts that might characterize the world. And you might say, “Are you serious. Did I hear you say that in the midst of our trials if we do what this verse is telling us that joy will dominate our thinking?” Yes that is what I am telling you. I believe this is also clearly communicated to us in **V.2**.

Notice the word “all.” We are to **“consider it all joy.”** The NIV translates it **“consider it pure joy.”** Or in other words “joy unmixed with other reactions.” This purposed response of considering the trial “joy” should dominate all other thoughts and feelings. And we will have a much greater probability of actually doing this if we count our trials once and for all joy. This does not necessarily mean we will be hilarious and laughing about the trials we are experiencing. But it does mean that we have a deep seated confidence that God knows what He is doing and that the results will be for His glory and our good. And this confidence will be dominating our thinking and will produce a genuine joy.

BUT HOW CAN THIS BE? THIS LEADS US TO THE SECOND ELEMENT THAT MUST BE PRESENT IN OUR TRIALS IF WE ARE GOING TO RESPOND PROPERLY TO TRIALS.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

WE NEED TO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING MIND. Let us look at **V. 3 “knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”** It is what we know that allows us to count or consider our trials joy. How does knowing that the testing of our faith produces endurance allow us to count our trials all joy?

Let me ask you a question? What is the first test that this epistle gives to us in order to examine our faith to see if it is a living or dead faith? It is the way that we respond to trials..... If our faith is living or saving, our faith will endure..... This means that we will not, in the midst of trials, abandon the Lord and His word. But we will draw even closer to Him and continue to seek to live our lives in a way that would be pleasing to Him. And if we in fact do this in the midst of our trials we know that we are saved.

Oh the trial may threaten to take my marriage, my family, my health, my life but if the testing of my faith produces endurance I have every reason to believe that I am saved.

Trials are not a threat to those who value the certainty of glory. Rather they become the vehicle through which we can experience joy because we know that our life in Christ is secure. Listen to Paul in **Rom. 8:35-39, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword: (36) Just as it is written, “For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” (37) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. (38) For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** Did Paul see trials as a threat? Not to what he valued. He in way saw trials as a servant that ministered to meet his greatest human need. The certain knowledge of glory.

Warren Wiersbe said, “Our values determine our evaluations. If we value comfort more than character then trials will upset us. If we value the material and physical more than the spiritual we will not be able to count it all joy. If we live only for the present and forget the future then trials will make us bitter not better.” He is right.

HAVING OUR FAITH TESTED BY TRIALS GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO **KNOW** THAT WE IN FACT POSSESS SAVING FAITH AND THIS **KNOWLEDGE** SHOULD CAUSE US TO CONSIDER OUR TRIALS ALL JOY.

The word “knowing” (GINOSKONTES) speaks of knowledge that comes through personal experience. My faith has been tried. And the trying of my faith has produced endurance. I have lived this. I know this. And that is why I can count it all joy when I fall into various trials because my response to those trials continue to testify to my spirit that I am a child of God and heaven bound.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

So let us say that you are presently going through some very intense trials. And in the midst of these trials you are not fading away, but you are standing strong in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus and you are clearly manifesting to yourself and to others that you are in fact in love with Jesus in the midst of the pain. What are you then doing? You are enduring in the midst of trial. And because of this you also can be confident that the crown of life is awaiting you in glory.

How can we consider or count a trial “joy”? There must be some basis for it. And the basis for this joy is knowledge. Not a theoretical knowledge. But an experiential knowledge of one who has endured trial and is confidently looking to the future with hope. It is not the trial which is the source of our joy but the knowledge that we will gain because we endured the trial.”

We see a classic example of this in **Acts 16:25**. Paul and Silas had been beaten. After this beating the passage tells us that they were not led away to prison but “thrown” into prison, and not given a nice cot to lie on but rather put into “stocks.” You can imagine what agony they were in. And, in addition to all of this, their very lives were in jeopardy. Were they laughing? Of course not, there was nothing funny about their situation. They were in tremendous pain and their lives were in danger, but what were they doing? It says in **V. 25** **“But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them...”** How could this be? I believe that they were looking to the future and they knew that if they were to die that very night their spirits would be in the presence of God. They knew that if they were to die that very night that they would receive the crown of life and enter into their eternal reward. They therefore were counting their trial as joy. And because of this they were able to lift their voices in prayer, and praise; clearly, I believe, an expression of joy.

Is it possible for the born-again Christian to experience joy in its totality here on earth? Hardly. But even so, let us rejoice and let that joy of what will be ours in Christ once we endure this trial dominate our thoughts. Blessed be His name.

The future of the Christian should dispel the gloom of the present. The Psalmist wrote, **“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”** Let joy, pure joy, joy in every circumstance, lead the way, and then the circumstance will be easier to bear. Isn’t this the way of the faithful?

CONCLUSION

Let us not respond to trials as the world responds; but rather let us respond in a way totally different.

Let us, when we enter trials, count it all joy, knowing that the trying of our faith will produce endurance. It gives us the opportunity to manifest an abiding love for Jesus under the most difficult of circumstances.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

We are not certainly going to seek out trials, but let us not be afraid of it either. We certainly should not see trial as good in itself, but hopefully we will see beyond present pain to our future glory.

Walter Knight wrote:

Pressed out of measure and pressed to all length
Pressed so intensely it seems beyond strength.
Pressed in the body and pressed in the soul.
Pressed in the mind until the dark surges roll.
Pressure by foes and pressure by friends,
Pressure on pressure till life nearly ends.
Pressed into loving the staff and the rod.
Pressed into knowing no helper but God.

Pressed into liberty where nothing clings.
Pressed into faith for impossible things.
Pressed into living a life in the Lord.
Pressed into living a Christ life outpoured.

In the life of the believer, when we are placed in the crucible of fire, the one we will see is Jesus.