

How to face life's frustrations in godly ways, according to God's Word.



What does James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ and the first elected leader of the early church in Jerusalem, have to say about attitude and choice when going through the various trials of life?

- [James 1:2-8](#) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James was a man who did not mince words. He barely opened his letter with his greeting, “James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings,” and right away, he stated his first point.

James said, “Count it all joy when you fall into various trials”...

This is a pretty strong statement. James did not say to “count it all joy” if we fall into various trials but “when” we fall into various trials.

The NLT version puts it like this: “Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.” [James 1:2](#) (NLT)

So - would this mean like, my A/C just went out at home and my vehicle's engine light is still causing the vehicle to not pass inspection and no one seems to be able to figure out the cause, even after large amounts of money have been spent, and I am supposed to rejoice?

Or - I just missed a whole day of pay, because my child was sick again and had to be picked up from school and go to the doctor... again...

Or - someone else just got promoted at work, the very guy who manipulated the boss for personal gain but the boss did not realize it. Meanwhile I was “passed over” and have even been with the company for many years longer than the “tricky one” that got the promotion.

So we are to count events like these, all joy? Or an opportunity for great joy?

Thankfully, James explains why.

He continued with, “knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” The Good News Version Bible puts it like this: “My friends, consider yourselves fortunate when all kinds of trials come your way, for you know that when your faith succeeds in facing such trials, the result is the ability to endure.”

So in considering this, troubles are an opportunity and when our “faith succeeds” in facing such trials, the result (obviously when handling them “the right” way) is the ability to endure. What is the relationship between endurance and patience? The dictionary says patience is “the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset.” Truly when a person handles trouble without getting angry or upset, it certainly helps them endure.

So: “when” troubles come, not “if but when they come” - we are to choose to see the bigger picture, the godly picture, and count it as an opportunity to make us stronger and increase our ability to endure.

James was saying that the trials, the heartaches, the calamities, the rough circumstances of life; not only do not have to be our demise but can be turned for good.

We, with God's help, can rejoice anyhow. We can have peace knowing that “God will see us through.” We can take heart, knowing that when we allow the Holy Spirit His place, that He will lead us through it all. Each hardship is an opportunity for God (and good) to shine through... or not.

The carnal nature and our old ways of handling stress and trials cannot continue.

The old carnal nature, the flesh, wants to be impatient, ungodly and in control. Additionally, the devil seems to just wait to accompany the carnal nature. Life happens; the good, the bad and the ugly. If the devil can get us to fall, he is empowered. If the Lord can help us win, both we and the Lord are empowered and His light will shine through. The carnal nature path is so wrong and only empowers evil while the right way brings godly solution and goodness. The choice is up to us.

The Lord uses the pressures of this world for His purposes.

Here in the real world, things break and wear out, disappointments come, accidents happen, some caused by us and some caused by others, sickness, death, divorce, financial struggles happen and much more. As trials arise, many of them are a surprise to us, but they are never a surprise to the Lord. And He wants to help and guide us through these rough times; if we will but choose rightly and let Him help us. He sent us an instruction manual and the power and direction of His presence to guide us through.

The pressures of life expose our true character and sometimes problem areas we still have.

We really are, all like tea bags. Put us in hot water, and whatever is in us, is exactly what will come out.

While most Christians would not normally go out and commit adultery or rob a bank, the pressures of life have a way of “bringing to the surface” issues that we often times we're clueless to even being in us. As long as things are “going right” - we really do not know for sure what we will do when things go wrong.

And we know, beyond the shadow of any doubt, that God is using the “various trials” to help us make corrections in our trouble areas.

Most of the time, we have no idea that something erroneous is still inside us until it surfaces. Job was doing great until the circumstances got rough. Do you remember when Satan said to God, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" ([Job 1:9-11](#)) Plain English to this author would be something like: “Remove Your hedge and blessing and let some hard times come upon him and see how wonderful he will say You are then.”

Interestingly enough though, it was the Lord who brought the “subject of Job” up to the devil. The Lord knew what the devil would say. And we know that the Lord was pleased with Job but the Lord also knew that circumstances would bring to the surface a struggle with self-righteousness that Job did not even know was inside him. But God allowed the trials because He knew that Job, when confronted with his new dilemma would make the right choices and come out like gold (as Job said it would be also, [Job 23:10](#)). And when it was all said and done, the Lord blessed Job even more than He had in the first place.

Until Job hit rough times, he could not truly know what would surface under pressure. He believed in God and he believed he would stay true to the Lord but until he lived through it, he could not truly know. And so it goes. The Lord oversees our lives and works to bring out the best in us.

The Lord wants us to live and walk in victory.

If we will follow the “direction of the Lord” through life's frustrations, aggravations, hurts and disappointments, it really does purify our faith, fortifies our patience and sanctifies our character. Our faith is made stronger each and every time we pray and trust the Lord and He comes through. As we hold fast under pressure, our patience really does develop. And we learn to endure with the help and strength of the Lord. The more we submit to the Lord, the more our character develops and we really do become more and more Christlike. This truly is sanctification.

Or the alternative. If we lose our patience and give in to the carnal nature and the evil one; then we wind up having to repent and have to “re-take” the tests over and over until we finally get it.

The Lord has all we need to handle life's pressures; but how do we actually get the victory?

How can we keep calm under pressure, pass the test, please God and not give the devil even an inch? We must see the bigger picture. We must realize that by keeping our chins up, praying and then listening to the Lord for direction and then being obedient, that we can do it. We can make it without exploding, cursing or allowing frustration to overtake us. We can keep calm and persevere. We can pass the test and have a testimony. We can pass the test and God will even shine through it and be glorified drawing people unto Him.

And the more we learn to do this, the easier it gets. Each time we pass through the fire with a good attitude and making better choices, we make new pathways in our brains of how to do it right. Eventually, the old ways, the sinful ways will become almost extinct. The potential to err and sin is always there, but handling things right is so sweet as we learn God's ways, that we don't want to go back.

Prayer and seeking the Lord through difficulties, makes all the difference.

We are to be “online” with the Lord all day, every day and especially in adverse situations! The Lord in no way ever forces His children to do right. Did the Lord ever say to anyone, “Here are your Bible instructions, now go forth and good luck.” No!

The Lord has given us His Presence, the Holy Spirit, to fill us (if we can empty our selves and make Him room and exalt Him), to guide us, to strengthen us and work through us. But this can only be done through “cooperation on our part.”

We take confidence in [Romans 8:28](#) which says;

- And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

But the “working together for good” being referenced here means what kind of good? The good of our bank accounts, our reputation, health or comfort? Our “good” that God is using “all the circumstances of our life” for “our good” is:

To help us become more Christlike!

We are not here to just quietly grow old, but to “grow up in God” - We are the planting of the Lord and He is using “the trials of this life” to fertilize us; making us strong. Our Father cares for us. He prunes us with wisdom, He waters us with living water and He even helps us bear the fruit (of Himself) through us but we have to be connected and obedient to Him!

So is the directive of James possible to accomplish?

- [James 1:2-3](#) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

It sure is. Knowing that “God's strength to do right” is helping us and that He will be glorified and our faith increased as we see Him work in and through the storms and trials, we learn to trust Him and this truly does bring patience. Being anxious and rushing are not God's ways. He is calm and on time. And when speed is needed, it is there but never haste-fully.

- [James 1:4](#) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

We must cooperate with God's instructions and direction. Obedience pays; disobedience is expensive. This should be said twice! Obedience pays and disobedience is expensive! When we are obedient, this is success and there is great reward. And all the promises are for the obedient, those in the vine, that remain in Him, those who keep His commandments.

- [James 1:5](#) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

What if we start out right, but start to sink like Peter when he got out of the boat? We get our eyes back on the Lord, off the waves, the rain, lightning and thunder and ask the Lord for help. We pray more. We seek the Lord for wisdom in all matters, especially hard ones. The Lord is waiting, lovingly and glad to help us with all the wisdom (and direction and strength) that we need.

- [James 1:6-8](#) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Without faith, we cannot please God. The Lord asked a man once, “Do you believe?” And the man said, “Yes Lord, but help my unbelief.” And the Lord did. Let us choose to believe. God does not let down those who believe in Him. Can the Lord help anyone who's faith just blows in the wind? That person is double-minded and unstable and will reap accordingly.

We know our God.

His heart is pure and His word is true. He is not a man that He should lie. He is not like an earthly father who is human and but a man. He is God almighty, Creator and keeper of the whole universe. Nothing escapes His eyes whether done in the light of day or the dark of night. He knows all and He is all-powerful. And this God, this amazing God cares about us. He designed us each uniquely, called us out from this world, loved us before we ever knew it, even when we were in sin and disobedience. And He wants us to make it. This God is for us, not against us.

So “when” the next trial comes, the next traffic jam or rude driver does what they do, the next appliance breaks or mishap happens, the next disagreement with someone, the next unfair part of life that happens at work or anywhere else, the next tragedy even; let's be ready. And in so doing:

We will: defy the carnal nature & count it joy for the opportunity to be victorious.

We will: seize the opportunity and keep our peace.

We will: pray and ask the Lord, “what to do now?”

We will: listen for direction and be obedient.

We will: keep a thankful heart.

We will: praise the Lord despite it all.

We will: not give an ear to the devil.

We will: watch and see the Lord work.

We will: have a testimony instead of a gripe or complaint.

We will: please our heavenly Father and may have Him smiling over us, thinking or saying something to Himself such as; that's My child!

And we will: be better prepared for next time, because each time we do it right, it gets easier and easier!

When we live obedient lives, Jesus is lifted up. And people can see the Lord's glory and the difference He makes. Thank You Lord that You equip those You call out of the world and that as You spoke through Isaiah: “Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save” ([Isaiah 59:1](#)) Thank You Lord for You take people such as us as Your children; and with You, all things really are possible!

Scriptures verses in the book of James, that are intrinsic to this message:

- [James 1:19-27](#) Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.
- [James 4:7-8](#) So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you.

- [James 5:13-16](#) Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.