

Joy in Trials

James 1:1-12

Author: James

- ▶ James, brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:19).
- ▶ Prominent leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Galatians 2:9).
- ▶ James the Just.
- ▶ Stoned by the scribes and Pharisees for refusing to renounce his commitment to Jesus.



Recipients

- ▶ **‘Twelve tribes in the Dispersion’**
- ▶ Twelve tribes: the regathered and spiritually renewed Israel.
- ▶ Dispersion (Diaspora): as a result of the persecution, many Jewish Christians were ‘scattered’ and travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, where they preached the gospel ‘to none except Jews’ (see Acts 11:19).



Purpose of the writing

- ▶ To address the **spiritual maturity** of his readers.
- ▶ Concerned with the world getting into the church (**worldliness** in the church).



James 1:1-12

- ▶ 1:2-4 (Joy in Trials)
- ▶ 1:5-8 (Wisdom and Faith)
- ▶ 1:9-11 (Poor and Rich)



(1) Joy in Trials

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



Trials of various kinds

▶ ***'Peirasmos'***

- Temptation to sin (1 Timothy 6:9)
- Trial/Affliction (1 Peter 4:12)
- Both trial and temptation (Matthew 26:41)

▶ ***Various kinds***

- Anything that makes life harder and causes you to be shaken in your relationship with God and faith in Him.
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Perspective of Joy

- ▶ Trials are *means* by which faith, tested in the fires of adversity, can be purified and strengthened (see Psalm 12:6 and Proverbs 27:21).
- ▶ The idea is not that trials determine whether a person has faith or not.
- ▶ Rather **they strengthen the faith that is already present.**



Outcome – Steadfastness

- ▶ Virtue required by Christians as they face adversity, persecution and temptation
- ▶ Fortitude, holding fast to God, heroic endurance, perseverance and patience.



“Imagine your life like a house.

Faith is what happens when you look out of the window, away from yourself, to the God who is so much greater than you.

Patience is what happens inside the house when you do that.”

– N. T. Wright



Steadfastness–Perfection & Reward

- ▶ **Perfection – spiritual maturity** (Christ-likeness) which Paul describes as “Christ being formed in you.” (Galatians 4:9)

- ▶ **Reward**
“Blessed 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.” (1:12)



(2) Wisdom and Faith

If any of you lacks **wisdom**, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But 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. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a **double-minded** man, unstable in all his ways. (1:5-8)



Wisdom

- ▶ **Gift of God** that enables one to possess the perspectives of God and apply them in life.
- ▶ The manner in which God gives:
“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask **God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.**” (1:5)



Faith versus Double-mindedness

- ▶ The manner in which we ask:

“But 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. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a **double-minded** man, unstable in all his ways.” (1:6-8)



The Double-minded

- ▶ **“The one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.”**
(1:6b)
- ▶ Always shifting and moving according to their circumstances – in the same way their loyalty to God shift.
- ▶ Do not trust and pursue God whole-heartedly – divided heart!



(3) Poor and Rich

Let the **lowly brother boast in his exaltation**, and the **rich in his humiliation**, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For 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. (1:9-11)



Isaiah 40:6-8

A voice says, “Cry!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but **the word of our God will stand forever.**



Heavenly (Eternal) Perspective

The basis of our confidence is not in our wealth, our possessions or our status, but **our identification with Jesus Christ.**

