

LESSON 2



FAITH IN ACTION ENDURES TRIALS

Greetings: Jesus states in the Sermon on the Mount that we *are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*. **Matthew 5:48** A major premise of the book of James is that through trials, *you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing*.

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, so 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 generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But he must 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 that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. ⁹ But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; ¹⁰ and the rich man is to 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.

Use these verses as foundational building blocks for the many trials that James will present throughout his letter. Consider every trial as an opportunity to bring one closer to God. These various trials come in big and small packages, sometimes for a long season and sometimes in the moment. Trials may be from God but whatever the source, we strive to honor Him by putting our **faith into action**.

God may continue to allow trials to come into one's life for refinement until He sees His reflection. So...

COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU GO THROUGH TRIALS...

- This is not a suggestion, but the first of many directions and leaves no room for readers to misunderstand. The term is imperative. "JUST DO IT!" It's the first of dozens of imperatives in this epistle.
- Count/Consider is an accounting term similar to the scripture: *Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness*.
 - The sentence structure in **James 1:2** uses an implied subject: (You) count (consider) it all joy.
 - James is reminding all Christians to evaluate our reason for joy in all circumstances.
 - Our Lord Jesus was able to endure the cross *for the joy that was set before Him*. **Hebrews 12:2**

- Why then joy in trials?
 - It can be an endorsement from God. *Be joyful...*
 - It can bring us closer to God.
 - It can teach us wisdom.
 - It can perfect us.
 - It can _____.

THE TESTING OF OUR FAITH (TRIALS) PRODUCES PERFECTION...

Consider a metaphor from the art of metal working.

- Metallurgy is the art and science of extracting metals, then refining and reshaping these metals until the desired result is accomplished. (Example would be from the History Channel's *Forged in Fire* series.)
- The idea of of this “forged in fire” is found in both **James 1:3** and **1 Peter 1:7** by the usage of the Greek word *dokimion*, which is the testing of your faith, or proof of your faith.
 - God finds in us (as we do ourselves) what is found approved/genuine after the testing.
 - A master craftsman knows the perfect conditions necessary for precious metals to reach their potential. They must first be heated in the crucible, then the slag rises to the surface to be scraped off.
 - This metaphor used by James depicts the Lord as the perfect craftsman in refining and reshaping the beloved.
- The smelting process is hot sweaty business, but it improves the quality of the metal. Imagine football practices, military boot camp, physical fitness training, dissertation work reviews, etc.

Consider the message of perfect throughout the book of James.

- The Greek word *telion* (perfect) is an important theme throughout this epistle.
 - **1:4, 1:17, 1:25, 2:8, 2:22, 3:2, 5:11**
 - *Telion* can be translated as perfect, complete, mature, fulfilled, end.
 - **James 1:3-4** are significant verses in knowing the reasons for trials.
 - Paul's statement in **Colossians 1:28-29** expresses this same sentiment.
- The book of James encourages and sustains the hearers *in Christ* as they are transformed more and more into the image of Jesus educed by life's **pressures**.

GOD WILL GIVE US WISDOM WHEN WE ASK...

- God is happy to give us wisdom.
 - Solomon is an example of how a request pleases God. **1 Kings 3:6-14**
 - Jesus tells his disciples to *ask and it shall be given*. **Matthew 7:7**
- This requested wisdom is what gives insight on how to get through the trials.



- Wisdom is the proper use of knowledge.
- Heavenly wisdom comes from above, different than earthly wisdom. **3:15**
- Godly wisdom is a blessing of being a child of God.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHO PERSEVERE AND PASS THE TEST...

- The Beatitudes lesson describes being blessed as one placed in a position for receiving God's favor, or provisions: "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
- **James 1:12** echoes the Beatitudes, particularly **Matthew 5:10-12**.
 - Jesus indicates that when persecuted, *Rejoice, and be glad for your reward in heaven is great.*
 - James indicates that reward is the crown of life. What a Just Do It type of victory!
- Again, the idea of "forged in fire" is used in this verse as those who have *been approved* {dokimion} which means *passed the test*.
- **James 1:10-11** suggests that many of the rich may not pass the test of being forged in the fire. Why is that? A literal reading of *a scorching wind* means *burning heat*.

Discussion Questions:

- ❖ How does "counting it all joy" in trials differ from the world's reaction? Is the way one responds during storms even noticed?
- ❖ What is God's goal for us as Christians?
- ❖ What definition would you use for perfect in accordance with the book of James?
- ❖ How does the wisdom given from God look different than the wisdom the world gives?
- ❖ According to James 1:6-8, why does doubting hinder God's answers?
- ❖ How might poverty and wealth act as trials for Christians?
- ❖ Give an example when you have persevered under a trial and came out better for it.
- ❖ What is the crown of life?



