



James 1: Finding Joy in Trouble

*Gathering all generations
to pray for all nations
ASKing God to do what only He can do
and doing whatever He ASKs of us.*

*ASK that the Church understands
the purpose of trials and tests*

If you have not already worked through the Basic Lessons, also found under Teaching Resources, it is recommended you do so, in order to get the most out of this and the other teaching lessons.

Suggestion: Read the lesson first then meditate, study the Word, take it in sections, dialogue with God about it and respond. **Group:** A brief sharing of what each received will help you pray together.

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.” **Patience** is endurance.

v4 “But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” Perfect is mature and complete is whole.

Trials and tests — First understand trials and testing. They are in context of the testing of your faith, testing for trustworthiness.

A good general rule is that trials are to find the truth. Just as in the court system, the truth is meant to come out in the trial. Often there is deception, even about how you see yourself.

The root of the word for **trial** gives several helpful synonyms: **prove** — God’s trials are positive, to approve you, to build you up, not disapprove you.

Another synonym for trial is **assay**, to test the quantity of gold in a sampling. The assay always **measures the positive**, as 65% gold, never negative emphasizing the dross.

A good general rule is that tests are to be passed.

What teacher would want you to fail, much less God? Testing may show your weak points so you can do something about it. The problem is you may find yourself in the same test until you learn to pass it.

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally (in abundance) and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” Whether the difficulty is set up by Satan to sift you as he did Peter, or through personal consequences where you need to repent, or just because you live in a fallen world, you need God’s wisdom on how to pass the trial, the test and not try to walk through it double minded, unsure and unstable.

v6 “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.”

v7 “For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; v8 He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” **Double-minded** means you vacillate, cannot make a decision and stay with it. **Unstable** means you are not constant, not steadfast. This is talking about a lack of character development.

Context: v9-11: Look at being rich or poor in the context of tests and trials. Each is its own trial and test to show what is in your heart and how you handle poverty and money.

v9-10 “Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, If he is recognized, honored or gains wealth, thank God and be wise in the use of the gift. **v10 but (let) the rich (glory) in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.”** This is a reminder that things of this world do not last. Be wise with riches, lifestyle, the influence money brings, because you will be accountable.

v11 “For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.”

Benefit: There is a reward for passing trials and tests.

v12 “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” **Temptation** is trial, the same word in v1. To endure temptation or trial is to go through it. Approved is to pass the test, to be approved. The crown of life is the reward for the overcomer.

Trust God to prove you, build you up, grow your faith and endurance in trials and testings. God will prove Himself faithful to His Word and prove to you what He can do through you. The perseverance, the ability to finish what you start and finish well will make life easier here plus there is a future reward of the crown of life.

v13 “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.” **Tempted** is tested, assayed as testing gold. Gold is measured by purity, never the dross, so it is with God, He deals in encouragements. He never breaks a bruised reed or puts out a smoking flax, Isaiah 42:3.

v14 “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.” We are drawn away by lust and trapped.

v15 “Then when desire (lust) has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full grown, brings forth death.” Sin is conceived in the mind first, acted on later. Guard your your mind. Learn to bring your thoughts captive, 2 Corinthians 10:5.

v16-17 “Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. v17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” Ask the Father of lights to show any darkness in our souls.

v18 “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.” Growth in spiritual character, maturity come through passing tests and trials.

Response: This crown of life can only be won in this life, v12. Does that change your thinking about tests and trials? Learn to pass the trials and test with the joy set before you of the eternal reward and because it will make this life easier.

Response: If the cost of the Crown of Life was tribulation, what would you do? If the fruits of the Spirit would grow best in the valleys of trials and testings, would that help you to see it from God's perspective?

Paul learned a lesson that many of us have yet to learn. From Paul's perspective, could you not "count it all joy" in the trials and tests and walk through it with God's wisdom and grace as he did?

Or to look at it another way; if you are fruitless, how can you represent Christ on earth? And do you want to go to heaven fruitless? The fruits are spiritual in nature so you probably have them in heaven.

Application: This is a good personal meditation and prayer for yourself and the Church to learn to come in line with the God's Word on spiritual maturity.