

The Christian's Response to Trials

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Introduction:

1. James 1:1-8
2. We all will face trials and difficulties in this life... how we respond will have eternal consequences
3. Consider some practical points James tells us of how to respond to trials – will differ drastically with the world.

Discussion:

I. Count it all Joy

- A. James 1:2
- B. Count it – (consider it) – our response begins with the proper perspective, POV, ATTITUDE!
- C. Count it all joy – (calm delight)
 1. Note how joy differs b/w the world and Christians... (not just an emotion with superficial characteristics... much deeper, contentment) – Consider the ‘beatitudes’ Matt. 5
 2. It is not the other extreme either – asceticism [monks, nuns, ...]
- D. When you fall into – not a matter of if, but when we fall into (are encompassed by or surrounded with). It is foolish to suppose that because we are Christians we will be spared from trials – the opposite is so! (2 Tim. 3:12; 2:3; John 16:33)
- E. Various trials – all trials are not equal, there are different ‘types of trials’
 1. ‘common’ to all mankind: sickness, pain, death, disappointment
 2. ‘Christian’ trials: persecution (2 Tim. 3:12; Ac. 8:1; 11:19; 13:50), suffering as a Christian (1 Pt. 4:12-19)
 3. Temptation to sin – 1 Cor. 10:13; James 1:13-14
- F. Some who exemplify this attitude toward trials: The apostles (Ac. 5:41); Paul (Phil. 2:17-18; Col. 1:24); early church (1 Pt. 1:6-9)

II. Know the Testing of our Faith Produces Patience

- A. James 1:3
- B. This knowledge is the source of our joy:
 1. Knowing that trials are tests of faith, an opportunity to prove our faith (like the refining process of gold) (1 Peter. 1:6-7)
 2. This testing of our faith is to our benefit (2 Cor. 4:16-18) – it gives us the opportunity to develop a needed quality.
- C. The ‘byproduct’ of trials (when handled correctly) is patience
 1. Patience = endurance/perseverance “*in the NT the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings*”
 2. We need endurance to finish the race (Heb. 10:35-36; 12:1)

III. Let Patience have its Perfect Work

- A. **James 1:4**
- B. Patience (endurance) isn't the only benefit of trials!
- C. We are to "let it have its perfect (complete) work" – we should not cut it short by complaining or growing weary/discouraged.
- D. It works in us something far greater
 - 1. Makes us perfect (spiritually mature) ... patience leads to an approved (proven) character and hope (**Rom. 5:1-5**)
 - 2. Makes us complete, lacking nothing – equips us to face trials in the future
- E. Trials allow us to prove ourselves to God – show that we are faithful and willing to go through whatever is required to make it to heaven.

IV. Ask God for Wisdom

- A. **James 1:5-8**
- B. If any of you lacks wisdom – we won't always have the wisdom to endure and develop the character – that's okay!
- C. The trials can make us perfect, but we need the wisdom to endure
- D. Two types of wisdom... must seek the right one... (**Js. 3:13-18**)
- E. If we diligently seek God's wisdom, He will give it!
 - 1. He will give us liberally (the amount needed + more – **Eph. 3:20**)
 - 2. Without reproach (to defame, taunt, belittle... God is pleased)
 - 3. It will be given (He will not withhold it so long as we seek it diligently – **Prov. 2:1-9; Prov. 5:5-8; Matt. 7:7-8**)
- F. We must ask properly! 1) in faith; 2) without doubting (**Js. 1:6**)
 - 1. In faith – offered in the interest of our faith, i.e. asking for what God thinks is necessary and beneficial for our growth!
 - 2. Without doubting – 'to separate thoroughly, to discriminate', don't go to God with our own idea of what to do beforehand, when we search God's word with this mindset, we will only see what we want – separating ourselves
- G. If we doubt (unsure if we want to follow God's wisdom or follow our own/worldly wisdom) we are like a wave of the sea (cf. **Is. 57:20**)
- H. If truly interested in God's wisdom – we will humbly search the Scriptures and pray! – otherwise God won't give us anything! (**:7-8**)