



Trials and Endurance JAMES 1:2-4 Message Reflection Guide

The Bible tells us to respond to difficult circumstances in a way that is directly opposed to our natural tendency. One of the most challenging of those commands is this: "Count it all joy when you fall into various trials" (James 1:2). Other translations speak of viewing our difficulties with pure joy, considering ourselves happy—not resisting trials and temptations as intruders but welcoming them as friends. I don't know about you, but that's not the first thing that pops into my mind.

This outlook would seem absurd and unattainable if not for the reason behind it: "knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (v.3). An attitude of joy is not based on what we feel but on what we know of God and His work in our lives. Therefore, a painful process that yields a desired goal can be welcomed as a friend. It's not the testing of our strength but the trying of our faith in Almighty God that develops our endurance. Through it all, the Lord promises wisdom for today (v.5) and a crown of life for those who persevere (v.12).

My natural response to difficult circumstances is "Oh, no!" The Lord wants me to see what He can accomplish through them and say, "Oh, yes!"

Conversation Starter

What lesson did you learn from a past trial or challenge in life?

Getting Into The Scriptures Read James 1:2-4

Pastor Jason said: "God uses trials to perfect our faith and make us enduring followers of Jesus." What do you believe is God's motivation in using trials to perfect our faith? How would you encourage a person who feels like a trial is God's way of punishing them?

Trials produce joy. When you begin to face a trial or challenge what is your first emotional response? How do you move from that response to a place of joy?

Trials produce maturity. In what ways are you comforted by the fact that Jesus lived like us and suffered as we do? How do you become more like Jesus as you endure difficulties and suffer well?

Does the reality of your salvation and what is awaiting you in heaven give you strength during difficult times in your life? How does this truth affect the way you live your life each day?

Making It Real

If you have gone through a trial in the past, how can God use that to help someone else who may be going through the same trial? Find a way to use the trials and difficulties that you have endured in the past to bless others. Pray that God would give you opportunity this week to connect with someone who is going through a trial so that you can be a source of encouragement and strength to them.