Neighbourhood Baptist Church; Emmaus Fellowship Dr. Rick Griffith

24 January 1993; 14 October 2001 Single Message

NIV 30 Minutes

**When Troubles Won’t Go Away**

Title

***James 1:2-18***

**Topic:** Trials

**Subject:** We can accept trials with joy

**Complement:** only by trusting God—not circumstances

**Purpose:** The listeners will identify a specific character trait of Christ that they sense God developing in them through their trials.

# Introduction

### [Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 162-63 quoting Swindoll, *For Those Who Hurt*]

El Tablazo looked so close. Too close. It happened so fast. Exploding into the jagged 5,000-meter peak, the DC-4 disintegrated with a metallic scream.

Fire

Mountain

What was left of the Avianca Airline flight bound for Quito, Ecuador, flamed crazily down the mountainside into a deep ravine. One awful moment in night, then the darkness returned. And the silence.

Black

Before leaving the airport earlier that day, a young New Yorker named Glen Chambers needed stationary and had none. But then he found a piece of paper on the floor of the terminal. The scrap was part of a white printed advertisement with a single word, “Why?” sprawled across the center.

Avianca

Why?

Since he had no other paper, Chambers scrawled a note to his mother around the word in the middle. Quickly folding this last-minute thought, he stuffed it in an envelope and dropped it a post box. There would be more to come, of course. More about the budding of a lifelong dream to begin a ministry with the *Voice of the Andes* radio ministry in Ecuador.

Chambers

Wreckage

But there was no more to come. Between the mailing and the delivery of Chamber’s note, El Tablazo snagged his flight and his dreams from the night sky. The envelope arrived later than the news of his death. When his mother received it, the question burned up at her from the page—why?

Why?

It’s the question that hits first and lingers longest. Why? Why me? Why now? Why this? Is a young missionary’s death en route to his country just? It doesn’t seem so!

### My Trials: I haven't been in a plane crash or World Trade Center Disaster or faced ISIS or faced ISIS but difficult times haven't escaped me:

My Trials

#### I grew up in a non-Christian family and can identify with many of you who struggle with what your family thinks of you being a Christian. Sometimes my parents prevented me from going to church and my parents ridiculed my faith.

#### When I decided to become a missionary my home church opposed this decision.

#### My seminary studies also were plagued with problems—Just in the financial area alone I recall having less than $10 probably 50 times during my studies.

### Your Need: I wonder if you are going through some tough times yourself.

Your Trials

#### Marriage or family: Last year's Chinese New Year’s celebrations were strained?

#### Perhaps your problems are financial—you just can't seen to make ends meet.

#### Is there someone with whom your relationship is difficult here at church?

#### Maybe you can relate to job discrimination from being a Christian.

### We all have trials. One definition of a shin: a device for finding furniture in the dark!

Shin.

### And during difficult times we know as Christians that we should rejoice:

#### “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice” (Phil. 4:4)

Phil 4:4

#### “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt. 5:11-12).

Matt 5:11-12

### Subject: The question you're probably asking is, *“*OK, I know I'm supposed to rejoice. But *how* can I persevere with joy during trials? Do I just grit my teeth and sing, 'Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice?' You're probably asking, 'When things aren’t going too smoothly in my life, how can I hang in there with a joyful persistence?'" *How can you handle trials with joy?*

Subject

### Text: James 1 is our text to reveal *five ways how we can handle trials with joy*.

• 5 ways

### Transition: So let's look at the first thing to remember from James to help us endure with joy. It is to…

# I. Realize that God’s purpose is to build Christ in you (James 1:2-4).

MP

[The end that God has in mind is that you be perfect like Jesus.]

## Rejoice because God allows trials to make us strong (2-3).

2

3

### “Testing” here is a craftsman term used in reference to gold being refined in the fire. When a craftsman wants to make a piece of gold jewelry, he melts a piece of unformed gold and turns up the heat to get the impurities up to the top. The higher the heat, the more pure and refined the precious metal becomes. Do you know how he knows when it is pure? He knows that it is ready when he can see his face in the liquid gold as if looking in a mirror. In the same way, the scorching heat of trials burns the impurities out of our lives until Christ's image is reflected in us (TRIALS purpose of [refining]).

• Smelting

### The first verse of the book says James was writing Jews spread throughout the Roman Empire. And the heat was turned up on the Jewish church at this time (AD 40s).

1:1

#### Acts 11 notes that there was a famine in Jerusalem.

#### Acts 12 says Herod killed James (the brother of John) and imprisoned Peter.

#### Acts 18 says Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome. He also persecuted Jews throughout the Empire—and that certainly included Jewish Christians.

(What was James’ consolation during all this trouble? Trials develop perseverance…)

## Patience handled properly makes a person more like Jesus (4).

4

### The Living Bible puts verses 2-4 very clearly:

TLB

“Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don’t try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete.”

MPs
(2 slides)

### TRIALS purpose of (strengthen us—bees)

### TRIALS benefits of (makes us useful for important ministry—logs)

### James doesn’t note a *specific* virtue that perseverance builds in us through trials. So he’s talking about perfect character.

Which trait?

### But I think God seeks to develop a *specific* trait in us in each trial. During difficulty I try to consider *which particular attribute of Christ* that God is seeking to build into me. I ask, “What attribute of Jesus does God want to instill in my life now?”

Gal 5

#### When I struggle with getting along with a difficult person I conclude that God wants to build into me Christ’s unconditional *love*.

#### When I have to forgive someone who’s hurt me, I learn about God’s *forgiveness.*

#### In financial difficulty I need to imitate God's *contentment* despite the fact that everything doesn't go God's way either.

#### When perplexed about a situation I seek to learn some of God's *wisdom*.

(So what should you do when you have a tough time persevering with joy during trials? Verses 2-4 say that you need to remember that God’s *purpose* for trials is to develop Christ’s character in you. Verses 5-8 provide the second pointer in persevering with joy. Remember to…)

MPI

# II. Pray for wisdom in faith (James 1:5-8).

MP

[Trust God in prayer during your perplexing times.]

5-8

## Have you ever wondered why prayer is often our last resort?

### We say, “Well, we’ve done all that we can. Now let’s pray.” I wonder whether we’ve really done *anything at all* until we’ve prayed!

### Why pray? Verse 5 says because God loves to answer sincere prayer. This alone should motivate us to make prayer our first priority in perplexing times.

## What should we pray for? Wisdom—that means seeing situations from God’s viewpoint. The “gaze-glance” principle is helpful here…(explain)

Gaze-Glance
(2 slides)

(So far we’ve seen James exhorting us to joy in trial through “two Ps”: seeing their *purpose* and making sure we *pray.* A third way to persevere with joy during trials is noted in verses 9-11…)

# III. See your financial *position* as irrelevant (James 1:9-11).

MP

[Perseverance in difficulty is easier when we see God’s view of our social status.]

10-11

9

## Did you know that God honors poor Christians more than He does rich Christians? That’s what these verses say! Think of the implications of this truth…

Boy

Giving to hand

### It means the world has got the whole thing turned around.

Shoes

#### The highest form of greeting now is gong ztai fa chai: “May money come your way!” You would think that money is the most important thing in life!

#### Money and position go together. We have the wrong idea that certain positions make people important. We say, “He or she is a very important person!”

• VIP

#### But what does God think of VIP buttons? A man once wrote an account about his father, who was a high-ranking commander in the US Navy. "My Father, a US Navy commander, was shopping in the [Navy grocery store] and overheard a man mutter, 'Here I am, a lieutenant commander in the US Navy, and I'm grocery shopping with my wife.' Dad pulled alongside the couple's cart, 'With further training and your next promotion,' he piped up, 'she might send you out on your own'" (PRIDE over position). God is like that—when we think we are big stuff, He lets us know that He isn't impressed by our position.

 Commander

• Arrow Lt. Commander

### Sad to say, the church (like the world) hasn’t adopted God’s value system either:

Poor Old Man

#### Why aren’t there maids serving in the church alongside with professionals?

#### Why do we fill the highest positions in the church with wealthy people?

#### Chapter 2 will soon address these kinds of questions.

(So how does all this relate to trials?)

## Our social position during trials will either elevate or lower us before others and God.

### When a poor person undergoes persecution for Christ, this makes him highly esteemed by God! This more than offsets the poverty.

### However, if you are rich, watch out!

#### The rich have a low position because of the humbling experience of suffering persecution for Christ’s sake.

#### Suffering shows us life is short. See your low position before God and humble yourself. If you don’t humble yourself then God will have to humble you!

### The passage also says that wealth is meaningless in the face of death—which we all know. But when are we going to realize that it can’t make us happy *while alive* either? Have you ever noticed any correlation between money and happiness? Even Rockefeller said, “Millionaires seldom smile.”

(How can I persevere with joy during trials? Remember that they have a wonderful purpose, remember to pray, remember your position, and also…)

MPs
(3)

# IV. Remember that God promises reward (James 1:12).

MP

[Knowing that heavenly blessings await those who handle trials well helps us endure now.]

12

MLK

## So what’s this “crown of life” that's given to believers who successfully stand the tests?

### The word for crown here can refer to different types of crowns.

### However, the word is most often used of a perishable wreath given to victorious athletes, so I think James is referring to a heavenly reward for the believer who’s successful in his struggle against trials. (*EBC*, 12:171).

Wreath

## It’s amazing how many difficulties you can endure if you know they end in reward.

Heb 11

### This is the point of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. They weren’t so much heroes in faith as they were heroes in endurance as they saw their reward ahead of them.

### Martin Luther King said, “If what you’re living for isn’t worth dying for, then it isn’t worth living for.” What are *you* living for? If it's Christ then there great reward which is worth enduring pain in this life.

MLK

(So how can we persevere with joy during trials? Remember that they have a wonderful purpose, remember to pray, remember your position, and remember that He will reward you. Finally…)

# V. Praise God for His gifts since temptations come from us—not Him (James 1:13-18).

MP

 [Thank God that he doesn't try to trip us up because failure is our fault.]

## So don 't blame God when you yield to temptation since this is your own fault (13-15).

13-15

### One interesting thing that appears in the Greek text here is that the noun translated "trials" in verses 2 and 12 is in verb form in verse 13 where it's translated "tempted." In other words, the sharp distinction we make between trials (being from God) and temptations (being from Satan) is not biblically justified.

### I find it interesting that often two people can be in the same challenging situation but have completely different responses. To one it is a temptation that Satan uses for him or her to fail but to the other it is a trial that God uses to succeed.

Furtick Quote

### So what makes the difference whether your difficulty will be a trial that benefits you or a temptation that hurts you? It's not God and it's not Satan—it's you!

#### You can allow the difficulty to draw you away into sin in the downward process noted in verses 14-15.

#### Or that difficulty can draw you toward God in the upward process in verses 2-4.

(But how can we make that happen? It starts with our view of God noted in verses 16-18.)

## Accept trials without blaming God because God gives only good gifts (16-18).

16-17

### What a wonderful thing to realize that God gives only good gifts—never junk! Every single thing He allows into your life can be used to strengthen and help you.

### He's not changing His mind like shadows constantly change during the day as the sun moves across the sky. He knows what He wants to do in each of our lives.

### And verse 18 reminds us that one wonderful way that He's provided stability to us is through His Word. This is in the following verses that I encourage you to study, but today’s text says to thank God for the blessing of having truth in this age of lies.

18

Subj

(So how can we summarize this whole passage up? *How can you handle trials with joy?*)

# Conclusion

### Greet trials with joy by trusting God—not circumstances (Main Idea).

MI

[We can respond to trials with joy only when we respond to them in faith].

[Genuine faith joyfully accepts whatever God sends our way.].

### James has given us five tips on persevering in trials with joy:

Subject

#### God’s purpose is to build Christ in you (2-4).

5 Ps

#### Pray for wisdom in faith (5-8).

#### Your financial position is irrelevant (9-11).

#### God promises reward (12).

#### Praise God for His gifts (13-18).

### Let’s bow together. Allow me to ask a few questions:

Say Yes

#### What trial are you now enduring? Will you thank God for this by faith now?

#### What character trait does God want to build in you in this trial? Is He succeeding?

#### Which do you really want more—smooth sailing or being like Jesus?

#### Which do you really want more—physical comforts or spiritual growth?

#### Which do you really want more—wealth or godliness?

### “The Fire”

The Fire

I've been through a fire that has deepened my desire

Fire 2

to know the living God more and more.

It hasn't been much fun but the work that it has done

in my life has made it worth the hurt.

You see, sometimes we need the hard times

Fire 3

to bring us to our knees.

Otherwise, we do as we please

and never heed him.

But He always knows what's best

And it's when we are distressed

that we really come

to know God as He is.

**Preliminary Questions**

Fire 5

Fire 4

**Verses Questions**

Context The church about 10 years after Christ is a young, Jewish church plagued with unknown trials and behavioral problems

1 Who was James? To who was he writing?

2 What does it mean to “consider it pure joy” (cf. Voltaire’s *Candide*)?

 What kind of trials was the church experiencing?

3 How does the testing of faith produce perseverance?

 Does it always?

 Gaither: “Through it All”

 Financial troubles throughout seminary

 Taking Kurt’s bike away

4 What is lacking if trials are not handled properly?

 Which do you really want more: smooth sailing or being like Jesus?

 Which do you really want more: physical comforts or spiritual growth?

 Ask, “What attribute of God am I not believing now?”

5 Wisdom in what? trials?

 What kind of fault-finding do people think God does?

 You either have faith and wisdom or neither.

 When you don’t receive a request from God, it is not God’s fault. The person doubting is at fault.

6 Why is it important to ask in faith?

9 What is the connection between vv. 2-8 and 9-11? Is there any?

 How is it that a poorer person has a high position?

 PRIDE over position

 Chinese New Year greeting: “money to you”

 Have you noticed any correlation between money and happiness?

“The Fire”

**Tentative Subject/Complement Statements**

What are the characteristics of genuine faith in God? (subject of the entire book)

Genuine faith shows itself in works (complement of the entire book)

Faith tested in trials produces perseverance when it is received joyfully and humbly (NTS notes)

Endure testing with joy and humility.

Mature believers exhibit joy, faith, and humility during trials.

Peter Davids (NIGTC):

I. Testing produces joy (2-4)

II. Wisdom comes through prayer (5-8)

III. Poverty excels wealth (9-11)

(David’s outline considers each section as representative of the three main themes in James’ epistle and therefore does not tie them together very well.)

David’s second outline (p. 65):

I. The genuineness of faith will be tested (2-4)

II. Wisdom needed to discern the test and stand fast under pressure is God’s gift (5-8)

III. One major situation in which belief is tested is the use of wealth (9-11)

II. God gives wisdom to those undergoing trials who ask Him in faith (5-8)

II. Wisdom during trials is given only to those who ask God in faith (5-8)

**What are the qualities of mature believers?**

I. Mature believers joyfully accept trials because they know trials can lead to Christ-likeness (2-4).

II. Mature believers trust God for wisdom during trials (5-8)

III. Mature believers believe that the poor are more important than the rich (9-11)

III. Mature believers adopt God’s view of wealth (9-11)

A. They know that wealth does not impress God (9-10a)

B. They know that wealth is temporary (10b-11)

**How can I develop the qualities of a mature Christian?**

I. Welcome trials with joy so they can develop Christ-likeness in you (2-4).

II. Trust God for wisdom during trials (5-8)

III. Believe that the poor are more important than the rich (9-11)

**How can I persevere with joy during trials?**

I. Remember God’s *purpose* for trials is to develop Christ’s character in you (2-4).

II. Remember to *pray* for wisdom in faith (5-8).

III. Remember your *position* before God (9-11).

IV. Remember God’s *promise* of reward (12).

MI—We can accept trials with joy only by placing our trust in God—not in circumstances.

Which do you really want more: smooth sailing or being like Jesus?

Which do you really want more: physical comforts or spiritual growth?

Which do you really want more: wealth or godliness?

Which do you really want more: physical comforts or spiritual growth?

When Troubles Won’t Go Away

*James 1:1-12*

**Exegetical Outline: Note that the idea and MPs don’t match (not enough time!)**

Exegetical Idea: The manner by which James exhorted his listeners to accept trials with joy was by placing their ultimate trust in God rather than in circumstances.

I. (1) The salutation identifies James as author and Jewish believers in the Diaspora as recipients.

II. (2-4) The reason genuine faith accepts trials with joy is because it believes that God allows testing to develop perseverance and maturity (Christ-likeness).

III. (5-8) The reason genuine faith accepts trials with prayer for wisdom from God is because He delights in giving wisdom to believers who ask Him in faith.

IV. (9-11) The reason genuine faith accepts trials with humility is because God’s approval is superior to wealth during difficulty.

V. (12-18) The reason genuine faith accepts trials without blaming God is because God gives only good gifts.

**Homiletical Exposition** (cyclical inductive form)

Introduce Subject: What does genuine faith look like during trials? When the going gets tough, how can you tell if you have *real* faith?

I. Real faith accepts trials with joy.

A.

II. Real faith accepts trials with prayer.

A.

III. Real faith accepts trials with humility.

A.

Main Idea: We can accept trials with joy only by placing our trust in God—not in circumstances.

When Troubles Won’t Go Away (old)

*James 1:1-11*

**Exegetical Outline**

Exegetical Idea: The reason genuine faith accepts trials properly is because its ultimate trust is in God rather than circumstances.

I. (1) The salutation identifies James as author and Jewish believers in the Diaspora as recipients.

II. (2-4) The reason genuine faith accepts trials with joy is because it realizes that God allows testing to develop perseverance and maturity (Christ-likeness).

III. (5-8) The reason genuine faith accepts trials with prayer for wisdom from God is because He delights in giving wisdom to believers who ask Him in faith.

IV. (9-11) The reason genuine faith accepts trials with humility is because God’s approval is superior to wealth during difficulty.

A. (

**Homiletical Exposition** (cyclical inductive form)

Introduce Subject: What does genuine faith look like during trials? When the going gets tough, how can you tell if you have *real* faith?

I. Real faith accepts trials with joy.

A.

II. Real faith accepts trials with prayer.

A.

III. Real faith accepts trials with humility.

A.

Main Idea: Mature believers exhibit joy, faith, and humility during trials.

Neighbourhood Baptist Church Dr. Rick Griffith

January 24, 1993 Single Message

NIV 30 Minutes

When Troubles Won’t Go Away

*James 1:2-12*

**Topic:** Trials

**Subject:** We can respond to trials with joy

**Complement:** only when we respond to them in faith.

**Purpose:** The listeners will

**Introduction**

1. El Tables seemed so close… (TRIALS unexplainable).

2. This past week I have wrestled with some “big” issues:

a. Early Friday morning a former employer of a friend at my church was murdered.

b. Last night a fellow Christian worker came over to my home to tell me he’s leaving the pastoral ministry. How do I help him?

c. My children are not functioning well in the Singapore school system so my wife and I are seriously considering taking them out in the next few weeks.

d. ICS has seen some great setbacks: 50 locations investigated

3. Difficulties don’t by-pass any of us.

a. Children: schooling, friends, fast pace

b. Marital/family: Chinese New Year’s celebrations are a bit strained

c. Perhaps your problems are financial

d. Church relationships

e. Job: persecution

4. We know as Christians that we should rejoice:

a. “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice” (Phil. 4:4)

b. “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt. 5:11-12).

5. The question we ask is, *“How* can I persevere with joy during trials?” When things aren’t going too smoothly in my life, how can I hang in there with a joyful persistence?

6. This morning’s passage will give us four handles on this issue—four things to remember which will help us endure with joy. James 1…

I. Remember God’s *purpose* for trials is to develop Christ’s character in you (2-4).

 The end that God has in mind is that you be perfect like Jesus.

A. Trials are allowed to make us strong (3).

1. “Testing” here is a blacksmith term used in reference to gold being refined in the fire. The higher the heat, the more pure and refined the precious metal becomes.

2. The heat was turned up on the first century church at this time (AD 40s).

a. Acts 8 records how a persecution began in Jerusalem.

b. Acts 11 notes that there was a famine there too.

c. Acts 12 says Herod killed James (the brother of John) and imprisoned Peter.

d. Acts 18 says the Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. He also persecuted Jews throughout the Empire—and nearly all Christians at this time were Jewish.

(What was James’ consolation during all this trouble? Trials develop perseverance…)

B. Patience handled properly makes a person closer to being like Jesus (4).

1. The Living Bible puts verses 2-4 very clearly:

 “Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don’t try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete.”

2. Songwriter André Crouch put it this way:

I’ve had many tears and sorrows.

I’ve had questions for tomorrow,

There’ve been times I didn’t know right from wrong.

But in ev’ry situation

God gave blessed consolation,

that my trials came to only make me strong.

Through it all, through it all,

I’ve learned to trust in Jesus, I’ve learned to trust in God.

Through it all, through it all,

I’ve learned to depend upon His Word.

I thank God for the mountains

And I thank Him for the valleys

I thank Him for the storms He brought me through

For if I never had a problem

I wouldn’t know that He could solve them

I wouldn’t know what faith in God could do.

3. James doesn’t mention a specific virtue that is built into the believer through trials. So he’s talking about perfect character—in fact, the Christian *himself* is the perfect work.

 Davids, 69

4. However, I do think God wants to develop in us a different trait in each trial. During difficulty I’ve found it helpful to consider which particular attribute of Christ God was seeking to build into me. I ask, “What attribute of Jesus do I not want to be part of my life now?”

a. When I had to get along with someone difficult I concluded that God wanted to build into me Christ’s unconditional *love*.

b. When I have to forgive someone who’s hurt me, I learn about God’s *forgiveness.*

c. In financial difficulty I needed to realize *trust* in the fact that God is all powerful.

c. When perplexed about a situation and needing wisdom I need to *rest* in His omniscience and wisdom.

(So what should you do when you have a tough time persevering with joy during trials? Verses 2-4 say that you need to remember that God’s *purpose* for trials is to develop Christ’s character in you. Verses 5-8 provide the second pointer in persevering with joy…)

II. Remember to *pray* for wisdom in faith (5-8).

 Trust God in prayer during your perplexing times.

A. Have you ever wondered why prayer is often a last resort?

1. We say, “Well, we’ve done all that we can. Now let’s pray.” I wonder whether we’ve really done *anything at all* until we’ve prayed!

2. Why pray? Verse 5 says because God loves to answer sincere prayer. This alone should motivate us to make prayer our first priority in perplexing times.

B. What should we pray for? Wisdom—that means seeing situations from God’s viewpoint. The “gaze-glance” principle is helpful here…(explain)

C. How should we pray? In faith!

1. (Hungry ghost story)

2. You either have faith and wisdom or neither.

3. When you don’t receive a request from God, it is not God’s fault. The person doubting is at fault.

(So far we’ve seen James exhorting us to joy in trial through “two Ps”: seeing their *purpose* and making sure we *pray.* A third way to persevere with joy during trials is noted in verses 9-11…)

III. Remember your *position* before God (9-11).

 Perseverance in difficulty is made easier when we understand God’s view of our social status.

A. Did you know that God honors poor Christians more than He does rich Christians? That’s what these verses say! Think of the implications of this truth…

1. It means the world has got the whole thing turned around.

a. My wife and I had an interesting time reading yesterday’s Chinese New Year greetings in the *Straits Times* (share some).

b. The highest form of greeting now is gong ztai fa chai: “May money come your way!” You would think that money is the most important thing in life!

c. Money and position go together too. Somehow we’ve got the idea that certain positions make people important. We say, “He or she is a very important person!” But what does God think of VIP buttons? (PRIDE over position)

2. Sad to say, the church also hasn’t adopted God’s value system either:

a. Why aren’t there maids serving in the church alongside with professionals?

b. Why are the highest positions in the church filled by wealthy people?

c. We’ll develop these kinds of questions next month when I preach from chapter 2.

(So how does all this relate to trials?)

B. Our poor or rich social position during trials will either elevate or lower us before others and God. It seems that “James has in mind the privilege of ‘suffering disgrace for the Name [Jesus]’ (Acts 5:41).” *EBC*, 12:170.

1. When as a poor person you undergo persecution for Christ, this lifts you up so that you are highly esteemed by God! This more than offsets your poverty.

2. However, if you are rich, watch out!

a. The rich have a low position because of the humbling experience of suffering persecution for Christ’s sake.

b. Suffering will show you how short life really is. Realize your low position before God and humble yourself. If you don’t humble yourself then God will have to humble you!

3. Note what one commentary says: “The very same treatment that exalts a poor man and gives him a sense of worth also humbles the rich man.” *EBC*, 12:170

4. The passage also says that wealth is meaningless in the face of death—which we all know. But when are we going to realize that it can’t make us happy *while alive* either? Have you noticed any correlation between money and happiness? Even Rockefeller said, “Millionaires seldom smile.”

(How can I persevere with joy during trials? Remember that they have a wonderful purpose, remember to pray, remember your position, and finally…)

IV. Remember God’s *promise* of reward (12).

 Knowing that heavenly blessings await those who handle trials well helps us endure now.

A. So what’s this “crown of life” which is given to believers who successfully stand the tests?

1. The word for crown here can refer to different types of crowns:

a. It refers to a victor’s crown in athletics in 2 Timothy 4:8.

b. But it also is a royal crown like in Revelation 4:4 where it says that the heavenly elders cast their crowns down at Christ’s feet.

2. There’s differing views on what is meant by “the crown of life”:

a. Some scholars say it is salvation, but eternal life doesn’t come from successfully resisting trials. (e.g., Davids, 80; *NBC*, 1225; *WBC*)

b. I used to be taught that this was a literal crown given to us in heaven. Since other crowns are talked about in the NT and you can only wear one at a time, we’ll throw these down at Christ’s feet in heaven (so we are the elders)!

c. More often the word is used of a perishable wreath given to victorious athletes, so I think James is referring to a heavenly reward for the believer who’s successful in his struggle against trials.(*EBC*, 12:171).

B. It’s amazing how much trouble or persecution you can endure if you know it is for a good cause.

1. This is the whole point of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. They weren’t so much heroes in faith as they were heroes in endurance.

2. Martin Luther King said, “If what you’re living for isn’t worth dying for, then it isn’t worth living for.” What are *you* living for? Another way to say it might be, “Who are you living for?”

**Conclusion**

M.I.1. We can accept trials with joy only by placing our trust in God—not in circumstances.

 We can respond to trials with joy only when we respond to them in faith [restatement].

2. James has given us four tips on persevering in trials with joy:

a. Remember God’s *purpose* for trials is to develop Christ’s character in you (2-4).

b. Remember to *pray* for wisdom in faith (5-8).

c. Remember your *position* before God (9-11).

d. Remember God’s *promise* of reward (12).

3. Let’s bow together. Allow me to ask a few questions:

a. What trial are you now enduring?

b. What character trait is God trying to build into you through this trial? Is He successful?

c Which do you really want more: smooth sailing or being like Jesus?

d. Which do you really want more: physical comforts or spiritual growth?

e. Which do you really want more: wealth or godliness?

4. “The Fire”

Emmaus Fellowship Dr. Rick Griffith

14 October 2001 Single Message

NIV 30 Minutes

**When Troubles Won’t Go Away**

***James 1:2-18***

**Topic:** Trials

**Subject:** We can accept trials with joy

**Complement:** only by trusting God—not circumstances

**Purpose:** The listeners will identify a specific character trait of Christ that they sense God developing in them through their trials.

**Introduction**

1. We all experience trials.
2. During difficult times we know as Christians that we should rejoice.
3. Question: *How* can I persevere with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ during trials?

**I. Remember God’s** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **for trials is to develop Christ’s character in you (2-4).**

**II. Remember to** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **for wisdom in faith (5-8).**

**III. Remember your** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **before God (9-11).**

**IV. Remember God’s** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **of reward (12).**

**V. Remember to** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **God for His gifts since temptations come from us rather than Him (13-18).**

**Conclusion**

1. We can accept trials with joy only by trusting God—not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Main Idea).

2. Some pertinent questions:

* What trial are you now enduring?
* Will you thank God for this by faith now?
* What character trait is God trying to build into you through this trial?
* Is He successful?

**This outline has the blanks filled in…**

**Introduction**

1. We all experience trials.
2. During difficult times we know as Christians that we should rejoice.

3. Question: *How* can I persevere with joy during trials?

**I. Remember God’s *purpose* for trials is to develop Christ’s character in you (2-4).**

**II. Remember to *pray* for wisdom in faith (5-8).**

**III. Remember your *position* before God (9-11).**

**IV. Remember God’s *promise* of reward (12).**

**V. Remember to *praise* God for His gifts since temptations come from us rather than Him (13-18).**

**Conclusion**

1. We can accept trials with joy only by trusting God—not circumstances (Main Idea).

2. Some pertinent questions:

* What trial are you now enduring?
* Will you thank God for this by faith now?
* What character trait is God trying to build into you through this trial?
* Is He successful?