

A JOURNEY THROUGH JAMES



Living Your Faith



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GEORGE



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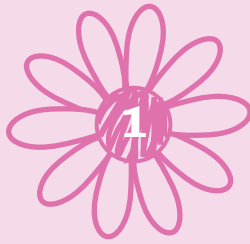
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Tough Times

JAMES 1:1-12

- 1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.
- 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,
- 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.
- 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
- 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.
- 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.
- 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

- 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.
- 9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position.
- 10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower.
- 11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.
- 12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

Don't you just love getting a letter or note in the mail? Sure, receiving text messages and emails is fun. But nothing is as personal and exciting as something written by hand on special note paper or a card in an envelope sent with love through the mail to you. Wow! That takes a lot of time, love, thought, and care...and even some money. That means someone *really* loves you and thinks about you a lot!

Well, my new friend, the book of James in the Bible was an actual letter. It was written by James to Jewish believers who were scattered in many countries. These folks needed LOTS of encouragement because they were suffering tough times.

Before you start reading James's letter, read verse 1 and meet the author. How does James, the writer of the book of James, describe himself?

“a _____ of _____ and of the
_____”

Just a note: Be sure to read Mark 6:3 in your Bible. There you will discover that James was Jesus’ half-brother. Can you imagine growing up with an older brother who was perfect? Who never sinned? Who possessed all the wisdom of the ages?

Now that you’ve met the author of the book of James, what about *your* trials and tests? I’m sure you have your share of tough times! In fact, tough times are a fact of life. Jesus told us, “In this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33). Do you ever wonder, “What am I supposed to do in tough times? What am I supposed to do with my problems?”

Well, you’ll be happy to hear that James has some lessons and great advice for dealing with your tough times and trials. Read on!

Learning to Count

In school you learned how to add up a column of numbers—and hopefully get the right answer! Well, as we read verse 2, James tells us, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds.” The New King James Version says “Count it all joy.” When you “count” or add up

your sufferings and problems and disappointments, what does James say is the correct answer in verse 2?

“Consider [or count] it _____ .”

Read verse 2 again and think about the word “many,” as in “trials of many kinds.” No one wants to face and deal with even one trial! And yet James speaks of many kinds of trials. Maybe you have already experienced several kinds of trials, like...

a tough decision to do the right thing
a tragedy in your family
a serious illness or accident
facing a mean girl every day at school
struggling with a difficult subject in school
(like math or English)

Well, here’s some very good news! God does not ask you or any of His people to understand our trials. But He does want us to trust Him and His wisdom and His plan for us. When you do this—when you trust God with your problems—you will find joy in Him, joy in His promises, and joy in His perfect will for your wonderful, special, unique life!

Count Your Blessings

One reason I love the book of James is that it has a lot of lists that help us with our daily trials and challenges. In James 1:3-12 you’ll see a list of benefits or blessings or lessons that come from going through trials.

Blessing #1 (verse 3) Perseverance

“...you know that the _____ of _____
_____ produces [or develops] _____.”

“Perseverance” is a long word that describes the strength God is building in you when you face tough times. God is right there with you to help you! Perseverance gives you what you need to hang in there until you make it through your problem, until you make it to the end.

Do you know the children’s story called *The Little Engine That Could*? You probably remember that the engine had a tough time pulling the train up steep hills. But he persevered. As he chugged along, he kept saying, “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can, I think I can.”

My friend, God gives you His power and grace so you can say, “I *know* I can make it through this problem”—because He is producing perseverance in you.

Blessing #2 (verse 4) Spiritual Growth

“Let perseverance _____ its _____
so that you may be _____ and _____,
not lacking _____.”

Has anyone—maybe a parent or older brother or sister—ever said to you, “Why don’t you just grow up?” Or asked, “When are you going to grow up?” Or maybe they just teased you by saying, “Grow up!” Well, James is telling us that when

we let perseverance finish its work in us, we grow up spiritually. When you do your work chores over and over, or when you finish your homework over and over, or when you practice your instrument or sport over and over, you are experiencing the blessing of becoming

“mature and
complete,
not lacking anything.”

Blessing #3 (verse 5) Wisdom

“If any of you lacks _____, you should ask _____, who gives generously to _____ without finding _____, and it will be _____ to _____.”

If you're like most people, you need wisdom just about every time you turn around! When someone says or does something that hurts you, you need wisdom to know what to do or say—or what *not* to do or say! When you are invited to go somewhere or do something that your parents would not approve of, or when you're not sure what to do, you need wisdom to know how to answer. You need wisdom for so many things—and you always will. And don't forget, you can always ask your parents what to do about your problems.

God knows you need help, and He enjoys giving it to you. As verse 5 tells you, all you have to do is

_____!



When you ask, your blessing will be wisdom that comes from God—which is always perfect.

Before you go on to Blessing #4, read the verses below and check when you are done.

___ verses 6-8, which tell you to **believe God** and trust Him.

___ verses 9-11, which explain that all Christians can **be thankful** that God loves them, no matter whether they are poor or rich.

Blessing #4 (verse 12)

Wow! We began with perseverance...and we are ending with perseverance. When you stand strong through your trials and tough times and don't give in when you are tempted, what happens (verse 12)?

“ _____ is the one who _____
under _____ because, having stood the _____,
that person will _____ the crown of _____
that the _____ has _____ to those
who _____ him.”

Just a note: When James says we will “receive the crown of life,” he is describing heaven.



A LOOK INSIDE YOUR HEART

Glance back through the advice James gives you in the 12 verses included in this lesson about tough times. Think about the epic promise in verse 12. Isn't it amazing to realize that as a child of God, you have a rich heritage? As a child of God, you—yes, you!—can look forward to being with Jesus in heaven, where there will be...

no tough times,
no more death,
no sorrow,
no crying, and
no more pain.

In fact, God Himself will be with you and be your God. And God will wipe away every tear from your eyes. (You can read about this in Revelation 21:3-4 in your Bible.)

No matter what tough times and trials you are struggling with, you are special and loved by God! I really like these words and hang on to them in tough times:

“What you have in your heart...
matters to God and
endures for eternity.”¹



A HEART CHECKUP

Read verse 1 again. Do you think of yourself as a servant?
(Circle one.)

Yes

No

Sometimes

Write down one thing you can do to be more like James as you serve God, serve Jesus, and serve those at home.

I can help... _____

Write a sentence or two that describes how you usually act when you have trials—when someone is mean and hurts your feelings, when you don't get what you want, or when you are sick.

What good advice do you learn in verse 5?

What exciting truth do you learn in verse 5 about God's response to your prayers?

After reading James 1:1-12, how can these verses help you live out your faith? Or put another way, how should you act when things don't go the way you want and you are tempted to act badly. Write them here.

I need to... _____



A PRAYER TO PRAY

Lord Jesus, You already know I've got problems! Help me to face them and to persevere through them. I want to grow up in my love for You and my family. Teach me how to find joy as I deal with my problems and bad attitudes. When I'm confused and worried about what to do, please remind me to pray—to just ASK You for wisdom! I love You, Jesus! Amen.



GEMS FROM JAMES

“Consider it pure joy...whenever you face trials.”

James 1:2

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God.”

James 1:5

“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial.”

James 1:12