

## Outline

### **The Promise of Trials (James 1:2-4)**

#### **Introduction:**

- Jesus promises us tribulation in the world. (John 16:33)
- God has a purpose for every trial we experience.
- We need to learn from trials, as they can be instrumental in conforming us to the image of Christ.
- Trials are a training ground for our spiritual growth.

#### **1. Expect Trials. (James 1:2-3)**

- We are to consider it all joy "when" (not if) we have trials.
- The Bible does not teach that if you are healthy or wealthy or successful, you are living by faith. Faith requires trials.
- Walking by faith requires trust in the faithfulness of our God. If we didn't have trials and we didn't have needs, we would not need to trust in God?
- Peter tells us not to be surprised by the presence of trials. They are not something strange. (1 Peter 4:12-13)
- Paul related that "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22)
- Consider the examples of OT saints who've experienced severe trials:
  - **Abraham**- man of faith, and his most severe trial was when asked to sacrifice his son of promise.
  - **Job**- the most righteous man on the earth, tempted to the utmost by Satan himself. Lost all of his possessions, his 10 children, his health. His wife and friends turned against him. But he learned the greatest lesson of his life from the trial... trusting God without question.
  - **Joseph**- hated by his brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused of rape, and thrown into the king's prison. Thirteen years passed before he was delivered. He learned the principle of Romans 8:28.
  - **Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego**- were tested about who they would worship. They trusted the Lord and they literally became "living" sacrifices by their deliverance from the burning fiery furnace.
  - **Daniel**- was tried with the edict not to pray to his God, but he considered a day without prayer was worse than a night spent with hungry lions.
  - **King Jehoshaphat**- When facing a vast army with nowhere to turn for help, he prayed: "For we are powerless before this vast number that comes to fight against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You." (2 Chronicles 20:10-12)

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### **2. Endure Trials.** (James 1:3)

- Trials are often for the purpose of testing our faith, to produce endurance. Trials help us cultivate endurance.
- Why do we have reason to rejoice and consider it all joy in our trials? Our character is becoming refined. Refined by endurance which brings hope because we experience the love of God in the most personal ways. (Romans 5:3-5)
- Our ultimate purpose of enduring trials from God's viewpoint is to be conformed to the image of Christ. (Romans 8:28-29)
- Our goal now is not to live according to the flesh to escape pain and enjoy pleasure, but to live for the will of God. (1 Peter 4:1-2)
- As we endure trials we do it with thankfulness and petitioning God in prayer and He rewards us with His peace. (Philippians 4:6-7)

### **3. Evaluate Trials.** (James 1:4)

- We evaluate trials for bringing us into completeness.
- Trials helps us complete our character and to grow as disciples.
- We evaluate trials in light of God's will for us.
- There are times God uses trials to enable us to evaluate our need for Him and bring us to salvation. (1 Peter 1:3-5)
- The gospel leads us to salvation and we're born again unto a living hope.
- Therefore we can rejoice and grow in our relationship with God through Jesus. (1 Peter 1:6-9)
- We can be distressed and at the same time rejoice because it's not about the absence of the trial, but it's about the relationship with the Lord that we cultivate through the trial.
- Paul could be sorrowful yet always rejoicing. (2 Corinthians 6:10 & 2 Corinthians 4:8-11)
- Paul gives us reasons to have an eternal perspective. (Romans 8:18) He and Silas exemplified this in Acts 16.
- Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. (1 Peter 5:10)
- We find our life, our joy, and our peace in Jesus. (John 16:33)