

## Joy through Trials

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

### Reflection

I was making the bed. It was oh so hard to do. It took me 25 minutes. Before MS it would have taken me 2 minutes and about 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the energy it took me now. I was very frustrated. Then the Lord spoke to me in that still small voice. "Instead of being frustrated about what you can't do or how long it takes you, be thankful that you can do it. Live in the present. Don't wish for the past or long for the day when things will be better. Live in the present. That is a big part to finding joy in trials." Boy, this is a stretch for me. I so need to work on this.

### Biblical Evidence

As we saw in a previous lesson, trials are a guarantee in life. Look at James 1:2.. This verse tells us to consider our trials \_\_\_\_\_. This is definitely not a natural response. My first response to a problem is not, "oh yay!"

Let's look at why we would consider trials an opportunity for joy.

James 1:3-4 tells us that trials test our \_\_\_\_\_ which gives our \_\_\_\_\_ a chance to grow. When your endurance is complete you will be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ lacking \_\_\_\_\_. So if your goal is to have your faith grow and to become more and more like Christ (perfect and complete) then a trial is something to rejoice in.

Read Habakkuk 3:16-19. What were the circumstances surrounding Habakkuk?

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In verse 16 what was Habakkuk's natural tendency to do? \_\_\_\_\_

And yet in verse 18 he makes a choice to \_\_\_\_\_ and be \_\_\_\_\_

We must choose to rejoice and have joy despite the circumstances.

Read 2King 6:13-17. What Elisha's servant saw looked pretty hopeless until God \_\_\_\_\_ and he saw the spirit world? This story tells us that we don't know all the circumstances. We can rejoice that God has us covered in the spirit world.

1Thesalonians 5:18 tells us to be thankful in \_\_\_\_\_ circumstances. Notice it does not say in good times or when you like the way things are going or when something good happens. It says is ALL circumstances.

It is hard to be thankful for bad things in our lives. Should I be thankful for having MS? I don't believe God gave me MS. Look at Matthew 7:11. What kind of gifts does God give? \_\_\_\_\_ God only gives good gifts.

However, you need to be thankful for the positive that comes out of this trial. Look again at James 1:2-4. List some positive things that come out of trials.

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In every trial we can choose to find the good in it and be thankful. Again, this has to be a conscious choice. Your flesh will focus on the negative. Colossians 3:5 tells us what we should do with things of the flesh.

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Jesus is our example. Look at Hebrew 12:2. Jesus endures a most horrible death and yet He endured it for joy. What do you think the joy set before Him was? \_\_\_\_\_ We are to \_\_\_\_\_ our eyes on Jesus. Strong's defines fix as firm, stand, fasten, be stable. So if Jesus had joy in enduring the cross we should be able to find joy in our circumstances.

Nehemiah 8:10 tells us the joy of the Lord of is \_\_\_\_\_.

It is extremely hard in the middle of a trial to find joy. How do we do that?

Psalms 16:11 gives us a clue where to look. \_\_\_\_\_

Look up Psalm 43:4 (NLT). What or who is the source of all joy? \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms 65:4 (NLT) There is joy for those who \_\_\_\_\_ in God's courts. Strong's defines dwell as abide, continue, inhabit, remain, rest.

In John 15:9-11 Jesus tells us to \_\_\_\_\_ in His love. We do this when we \_\_\_\_\_. Then our joy will \_\_\_\_\_.

In John 17:13-14 Jesus is talking to The Father about us. He has given us God's \_\_\_\_\_ so we could be filled with joy.

Scripture shows us that spending time with God and His word will bring us joy. We are not expected to find joy in our circumstances outside of God. He is the source of our joy. The only way we can have His joy is to spend time with Him and His word.

Read John 16:20-22 Jesus is describing what will happen at His death. The disciples couldn't imagine joy in such a terrible thing as Jesus being crucified. And yet in verse 22 Jesus tells them they will \_\_\_\_\_ and no one will \_\_\_\_\_. If that was true for the worst event we can be sure it will be true in our current trial.

It is important to remember as we go through trials that the trial will not last forever. Ps 30:5 assure us that when there is weeping it lasts only \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ will follow it.

**KET THOUGHT:** We can have God’s joy even in bad times.

**APPLICATION**

Think on a current or recent trial. List 5 things to be thankful for in this trial.

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List several possible positive outcomes from this trial.

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List any positive things you have already seen from this trial.

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What are some things you have gained through this trial that you would not have if the trial had not occurred?

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Memorize **James 1:2-4** Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

And **Nehemiah 8:10** This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”