

Sunday Bible Study: James 1:2-3

May 3, 2020

Read James 1:2-3. What does the trying or the testing of our faith produce? _____

James 1:3 explains that God uses trials in our lives to test our faith and to produce spiritual perseverance/endurance/patience. (depending on the translation)

Trials are not a test of our personal strength and wisdom. They test our faith in the fact that God will see us through. Trials are like training challenges for an athlete. They build physical endurance and stamina. The athlete looks forward to physical and mental challenges because of the benefits that follow. If we were to walk through life on easy street and never face hardship, our Christian character would remain untested and underdeveloped. Trials develop our spiritual muscles, giving us the stamina and endurance to stay the course.

Read Romans 5:1-5 to see what Paul says about tribulations or trials. Fill in the following:

Tribulation brings about _____ which brings about
_____ which results in _____ which does not
_____.

Why does that hope not disappoint? (v. 5)

Read Romans 5:6-9 to see even further evidence that our hope in God does not disappoint.

What evidence do we have that proves God's great love for us? _____

We can count it **all joy** in trials because in them we learn to depend on God and trust Him. Faith that is tested becomes genuine faith, rugged faith, uncompromising faith.

Remember when Peter's faith was tested, he denied Christ. Later, he had many opportunities to exercise his faith in a variety of situations. Read what he wrote in **1 Peter 1:6-7**. "In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." Peter states that our faith is worth more than _____.

The argument is this. Gold is a perishable thing, and comes to an end with the rest of the world, or is worn away with handling and is lost; and yet men take great pains to remove any impurities from gold with fire. How much more do fiery trials prove the genuineness of our faith. Just as gold is perishable, everything in life can be lost or taken away—**except** God.

To summarize: Trials do two things: 1) They try or test the truth or validity of our faith and prove that it is true, genuine, and precious. 2) They produce endurance/perseverance/patience.

We might ask a question about trials and suffering. Is it okay to question God during times of trial? Actually, there are many examples in the Bible of people questioning God.

What questions does Jeremiah ask in Jer. 12:1? _____

What questions does the psalmist ask in the following verses:

Psalm 10:1 _____

Psalm 42:9 _____

Psalm 44:24 _____

Psalm 13:1-2 _____

What questions did Job ask in Job 4:11 and 10:18?

Nicki Gangemi notices a pattern in the Psalms. She notes that even as the psalm writers question and challenge God, they remain convinced of God's goodness and His sovereignty over all that is happening. Often, the very Psalm that begins with a question ends with the psalmist affirming God's character. For example, Psalm 10—which begins with "Why do you stand far away?" ends with "The Lord is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land. You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed." Psalm 42 ends, "Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God." In chapter 43:2-3, Job says to God, "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know."

So, we can conclude that it is a natural human tendency to ask questions during times of trial. God understands our questions, our honesty, and even our anger. (Remember that anger is one of the stages of grief that so many of us have experienced in our lives.) We can honestly approach God with our questions as a child approaches a loving father—sharing the things in our hearts. At the same time, we remember who God is; and affirm the truths we know about Him from His Word, from His faithfulness to us in the past, and from His promises to us for our future.

Often, when our questions remain, we remember **Isaiah 55:8-9** "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Thus, we come to a place of accepting that we cannot understand everything that happens here on earth. Nevertheless, we put

our trust in our Heavenly Father. Putting our trust in God also determines whether we become bitter or better when we experience trials.

Pray: Heavenly Father, Thank you for lavishing your love on me. Thank you for all the times you have been faithful to me. Please help me to trust in You no matter what circumstances or trials come my way. Help me to see Your guiding hand. Help me not to rely on feelings but to rely on the truth that I have joy from You and in You through the power of Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

***Please take the time to watch the following to see how real people walking through real life experiences affirm their faith in God.**

Search: YouTube Author Interview with Mary Beth and Stephen Curtis Chapman on Good Morning America (or use the link below)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLw2DHjFYf0>

Search: Choose Joy Kay Warren Youtube (or use the link below)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOQjszf3iTg>

Note: This interview occurred **before** Rick and Kay Warren's son committed suicide. This family has continued to live a life of faith; and, yes, they are still choosing joy.