

JAMES 1:2-4

The 5 stages of grief and loss are: 1. Denial and isolation; 2. Anger; 3. Bargaining; 4. Depression; 5. Acceptance. People who are grieving do not necessarily go through the stages in the same order or experience all of them.

²Count it all joy, my brothers,^[b] when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

I. An audacious (bold, risky, foolhardy, almost disrespectful) **command** – *You are to find joy in the midst of your trials.*

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds..." (this is counterintuitive... why would anyone want to rejoice when trials come into their lives?)

- Count (hēgeomai: aorist, middle, imperative)– to lead, guide, or be in a supervisory capacity, to have dominion over
- Joy – gladness, happiness, delight
 - The result of an eternal focus: Mathew 5:12 – **"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."**
 - The result of a historical focus: Mathew 5:12 – "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, **for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."**

II. A comforting reality – *You are not alone in your trials.*

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds..."

A CALL **TO ALL THE BRETHREN** TO CHOOSE JOY IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULTY.

- Count (hēgeomai: aorist, middle, imperative, **2nd person plural**)– to lead, guide, or be in a supervisory capacity, to have dominion over

III. A sobering fact – *You will face trials. (Trials are part of this life.)*

We live in a sin-cursed world. We never know when we will be recipients of bad news, random act of foolishness, or fall prey to the raging desires from within.

- Not "if" you meet trials but "when" you meet trials

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds..."

- Trials (peirasmois: an attempt to learn the nature or character of something)
 - A test that can be passed. (James 1:12)
 - A test that shouldn't be blamed on God. (James 1:13)
 - The character of God NEVER CHANGES!
 - God cannot be tempted with evil.

- He doesn't tempt anyone
- A test that originates from within. (James 1:14-15)
 - When you are lured and enticed by your own desires.
 - When desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin.
 - Sin when it is fully grown, brings forth death.
- A test that originates from without (James 1:1; I Peter 4:12; Matt. 4:1)
- A test that reveals the depth of your faith in God.

²Count it all joy, my brothers,^[b] when you meet trials of various kinds, ³**for you know that the testing of your faith**

- One main objective - [the test of faith]
 - (1) Is God real? / Does God exist?
 - (2) Is God good? / Does God even care?
 - (3) Is God right? Do I believe what He says about "a bigger purpose in life?" ...the praise of His glory and grace
 - Make the connection to the temptation of Satan in Genesis 3.
- A variety of learning outcomes - (Faith Produces various results or learning outcomes:) [Notice the connection to the Trinity]
 - **Romans 5:3** - Hope or COMFORT in the Holy Spirit;
 - **JAMES 5:11**- CONFIDENCE in the Sovereignty of God... revealing His character of compassion and mercy;
 - **2 Peter 1:7-9** - a deeper CONNECTION to the Person and Work of Jesus...fuller knowledge of Jesus Christ)

V. A motivation to persevere under trials. – Your trials have a purpose. They help conform you into the image of Jesus Christ and make you more useful in God's economy.

²Count it all joy, my brothers,^[b] when you meet trials of various kinds, ³**for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness**. Produces steadfastness

(hypomonēn: the capacity to bear up in the face of difficulty, patience, endurance, fortitude, perseverance)

- Especially when enduring toil or suffering (Lk. 21:19; Rom. 5:3; Romans 15:4; 2 Cor. 6:4; I Thess 1:3; 2 Thess 1:4; I Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:10; Tit. 2:2; Heb. 10:36; Rev. 2:2, 19)

Luke 21:14-19 – Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives.

Romans 5:3 – More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Romans 15:4 – For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

2 Corinthians 6:3-10 – We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger, by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

1 Thess 1:2-3 – We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thess 1:4 – Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

1 Tim 6:11-12 – But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

2 Tim 3:10 – You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra – which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Titus 2:1-2 – But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Hebrews 10:36 – For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

Revelation 2:2 – I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance...

Revelation 2:19 – I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.

4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- Full – teleion (GOAL)
- Effect – ergon (WORK)
- Perfect – teleioi (meeting the highest standard)
- Complete – undamaged, intact, blameless
- Lacking – to fall short, be inferior

Application:

- What types of trials have you faced this past year?
- Has the trial strengthened your faith or weakened your faith? In what areas (+\ -)?
- Has the absence of someone or something revealed anything to you about what you have cherished above the glory of God and a deeper walk with God?

- Success
- Peace
- Companionship
- Health
- Remind yourself daily that God is real. He is good. And He is right.
- Pray. (James 1:5-8) Ask God for wisdom to strengthen your dependence on the comfort of the HS; your confidence in the goodness of God's sovereignty; and your connection to a deeper knowledge of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ!