

**New Life Community Church
Life Lines
Series: New Testament Church Life
The Epistle of James
Truths that the Tough Times Tell**

What Tough Times Tell About Our Faith

SCRIPTURE READING: James 1:1-12

1 John 5:4⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

**Trials contribute to things that make for spiritual joy.
How?**

Jesus gives a parable concerning faith responses to the Word of God that fail and living faith that bears fruit:

Luke 8:11-14¹¹ "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. ¹² "Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved.

(Does that represent a Christian? No. They will not believe and be saved.)

¹³ "Those on the rocky *soil are* those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no *firm* root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation (same word as translated 'tested' in James) fall away.

(Does that represent a Christian? No. They fall away.)

14 "The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

(Those who say the business, the house, the cars, the sports, and entertainments are more important than Jesus).

Does this soil represent a Christian? (No. It represents those given to idolatry).

Luke 8:15-16 ¹⁵ "But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, (WHO PRODUCED THAT GOOD SOIL and GOOD HEART? God- saving faith is a gift) and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

Every Christian has trials. Every Christian's trial is a test of their faith. Every true Christian believes and perseveres.

What is being examined in the test? The faith.

So obviously, James is speaking of the unique and exclusive advantages of the Christian in the trial. The Christian is one who has living faith. The evidence of the LIFE of faith will be THE FRUIT (works-evidence).

Living Faith will be Evident:

1. In the Way We THINK (James 1:2-3)

Faith Considers the Promised Outcome

In this we can rejoice:

James 1:2-3² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

‘Consider’- This word is an imperative. It is not the natural response, but it is a reasonable response in the light of what we know. Romans 8:28²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Jesus focused on the promised outcome of His suffering. We focus on Him and our future with Him.

Hebrews 12:2² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Living faith will be evident:

2. In The Way We ENDURE (James 1:2-3; Jude 1:24)

In this we can rejoice:

We have a New Perspective and Attitude in Trials

James 1:2-3² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

God's preserving power leads to joy. We know that it is His power that keeps us.

We can rejoice in this:

Jude 1:24²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.

One day we will all stand in God's presence with great joy without spot and we will know it is because He not only saved us but He sustained us and delivered us into His presence.

3. In the Way We GROW (James 1:4; 1 Peter 2:1-2)

In this we can rejoice:

The reward of enduring trials is life change.

A sign of living faith will be our hunger to feed on God's Word.

4. In the Way We PRAY (James 1:5; Philippians 1:4; John 16:24)

In this we can rejoice:

Prayer leads to joy. When we go through trials we are driven to our knees.

Paul described increased joy in his prayer life when he was in prison.

Philippians 1:4⁴ always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,

Jesus promised increased joy as we trust Him in prayer.

John 16:24²⁴ "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

We humble ourselves in prayer and receive grace.

James 4:6⁶ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

5. In the Way We OBEY (James 1:6-8, 22-25)

A doubtful hearer is one who fails to act on the Wisdom they receive from God's Word. They are forgetful hearers. Joy comes with doing the will of the Lord.

The result of obedience is joy (Acts 13:41-52)

Acts 13:49-52 ⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.

⁵¹ But they shook off the dust of their feet *in protest* against them and went to Iconium.

⁵² And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

How do you get persecuted and driven out of the city and still have joy? Where does the joy come from? It is because you are obeying your Lord.

6. In the Way We VIEW LIFE (James 1:9-11; Jeremiah 9:23-24)

We rejoice in that which is eternal and real.(James 1:9-11)

We boast in the Lord and nothing else (Jeremiah 1:9-11)

7. In the Way We PERSEVERE in love for Christ (James 1:12)

James 1:12 ¹² Blessed (Makarios- Spiritually prosperous and full of joy) is a man who perseveres

under trial; for once he has been approved (tested and found genuine), he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.

8. In our INCREASED JOY

What leads to joy?

(These additional outcomes in a believers trials lead to greater joy)

1. Believing God's Word (Romans 15:13)

2. Fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ (Romans 15:30-32)

3. Becoming firm in faith (2 Cor 1:24; 7:4-5)

4. Unity (Philippians 2:2)

5. Contemplating eternity (1 Thess 2:19)

6. When believers become humble and teachable (Hebrews 13:17)

There is joy when believers become teachable in times of trials. Trials have a way of not only humbling us, but in making us recognize and call

out to leaders. Sometimes people don't see their need for a pastor until they have trouble.

Trials in a believer's life can contribute to one's joy because of what they work in us- a greater humility, a drawing near to God, deeper Bible study, fellowship with the body of Christ and a greater focus on eternity.

Saving faith is an unfailing victorious faith,

Luke 22:31-32 ³¹ "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; ³² but I have prayed for you, **that your faith may not fail**; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

The Christian is someone who has a living enduring life-changing faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Every Christian will have a persevering faith, a proved faith, will love the Lord and receive eternal life which is their free gift of a crown.