

Trials and Trusting

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[0 : 0 0] I'm not Jeff, so that was my previous introduction. I'm sorry you guys didn't make it, but I'm glad you guys are here this morning. I do have some friends here.

Normally, they are productive members of their church where they come from, and normally I go and troll them when they are presenting in their church, and I sit right in the front row and make sure that they see me the whole time, so they have graciously returned the gift to me, and I appreciate it.

Thank you for being here. That's what you get. That's what you get. So I mentioned before, give Jeff and Greg some credit here. It does take a lot of work to study and read through God's Word and make sure that we're putting out what God's written to us and not what we want, but more importantly, how much material is equal to how long.

So that was difficult. So this could be 30 minutes. It could be two hours. So hang on. For those who don't know me, they already mentioned, my name is Matt.

I did some studies for our men's group here previously, and that's kind of where the idea from this came from. I'd ask my kids what we wanted to study next, and I was going to start studying through a book of the Bible, present it to the men's group.

[1 : 1 3] We got some recommendations that included Genesis. That one's out. Revelation. I'm not there yet. And then Romans, the greatest theological treatise ever written, so I'm not there yet.

So I picked James. So this morning we'll pray real quick, and then we'll be in chapter 1, the first four verses. Dear Lord, thank you for this opportunity for all of us to be here to worship freely in your name.

Thank you for the opportunity to have Scripture, to have Scripture written for us, to be in this generation that gets to read and know and do the things you've commanded us to do through the writers of the Bible.

We thank you, God, for all those who are here with us today, guests and friends and family. We pray, God, that you'd open our hearts and minds to hear what you have for us in your word. Pray, Lord, that my mind and heart would be steady and organized and even, and that my words would be yours, not mine.

Pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. James chapter 1. James chapter 1, right after Hebrews.

[2 : 4 3] James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad. Greetings. Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance, and let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

I am a lifelong soldier. It has taken its toll mentally, physically, but more importantly, I've learned a lot of good acronyms. One of the acronyms we use in the military is called a bluff, or the bottom line up front.

So the gift today is I'm going to read you the initial, the whole purpose of today's sermon, I'm going to tell you right up front. I'm going to tell you exactly what this sermon is about. The reason we do it is because most of our emails are too long, our briefings, our PowerPoint is too long, and people forget what the whole sermon or the whole mission brief was about by the time you get halfway through, so they can refer back to the bottom line up front throughout the sermon.

So we're going to try this out. Here it is. We should count it as joy when we are being tested by trials because our faith is being perfected and made complete, knowing that enduring through these ultimately brings God glory.

Our sovereign God has ordained all things for His good purpose, and we get to be part of that. This teaches us much about our gracious and loving God.

[4 : 14] So keep that in the back of your mind as we move through this, and as we dissect what James is trying to tell us here. The main point of this is we get to serve our good and gracious God by what He puts before us.

To help set up the main point here, I'm going to spend a little bit of time on the background and character of James. I think it is crucial to see his humble servant's heart in this. The character of the author tells us a whole lot about what he's going to say.

You ever think of someone who tells you something, and maybe they don't do the same things in their life, or the opposite. Maybe they're a very respected teacher, mentor, friend, and they tell you something, and you're like, oh boy, I better listen.

Well, that's kind of what's going on here. I want to set that up. Hopefully my aversion to technology isn't a distraction this morning, but I'm going to do my best. So originally the inclusion of the book of James in his scripture was contested, partly due to the perception that James was preaching a system of works.

I don't know if anyone's heard that before, because there's a lot of practical knowledge in this book. Remember Ephesians 2.8.9, a popular verse here in our church. That is not the case. We are not saved through works. And it's also due to its lack of mentioning the gospel message specifically.

[5 : 27] There's a lot of early theologians, including even Martin Luther, was kind of wary of the book of James in comparison to other New Testament scripture for not specifically mentioning the gospel.

I think the more we study this book, we will realize how seamlessly, though, it integrates into the rest of scripture and the wisdom that it provides. It's believed to be the earliest book written in the New Testament, thought to be written as early as 44 AD.

It is often viewed as a New Testament book of wisdom or a New Testament version of Proverbs due to its practical tests of genuine Christian faith. It discusses what it looks like to live a Christian life, not meant to be a checklist of Christian works that must be accomplished, but more a view of practical tests of genuine faith, a way to evaluate genuine faith.

So starting on verse 1, word 1, early church tradition, James, early church tradition and most scholars agree that James, the half-brother of Jesus, is the author.

He's prominent enough to identify himself simply as James. So that's one indication right there. This is who he, we know who he's talking about. It's one factor that points us to exactly who he is along with his brother Jude, who wrote the book of Jude.

[6 : 42] He became a pillar in the early church in Jerusalem after Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.

He was revered among Christians and Jews alike for being a just and righteous man. He was said to have knees like a camel, indicating his practical and continual prayer.

He was constantly on his knees in reliance upon the Lord. constant dependence on him throughout all the trials of his life, which we'll briefly touch on. James was a man who spent much time in prayer and relied on the Lord in all things.

This character trait is valuable to us as we consider persevering through trials in life. He is relying on the Lord through these difficult situations. Knowing the suffering and challenges of the one who is telling you to endure suffering and challenges is why I mention this.

We know from some of James' characters through the lens of history, through some early church historians and some other things, we also know this from his own words in verse 1. He humbly refers to himself as a bondservant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[7 : 57] So if you're reading your translation, it could be bondservant, servant, slave, depending on how each translation chooses to do it. I'm reading out of the NASB. NASB, New King James, rendered as bondservant.

King James, ESV, NIV, they use servant in that one. The Greek word is *doulos*. That's the only Greek word I'm going to do today because I will embarrass myself even more by trying to pronounce them.

But that word, it could mean bondservant, servant. The context is key here. How it's being used is very important. James is using this to indicate his heart posture. You notice Paul uses this in several of his letters in the same way.

And a lot of these translations render it the same way. And I think for rightly so. He is indicating he is a servant or slave that is choosing to be a servant or a slave.

The idea is a slave that willingly stays a slave and commits himself to his master. I won't go into it too deeply. For the note takers here, in Exodus 21 breaks this down, how this works.

[8 : 59] But the basic idea is in Jewish families, for example, you may have slaves and other servants in the household. Perhaps that servant gets married, has a family. That servant is then released.

The family may not be. That servant now would commit himself to his master, voluntarily serving his master willingly, with no credit or due or anything like that.

And that's the idea here. James and Paul used this term in its original language at that time is very significant to note. Because the idea of slavery, or even especially voluntarily slavery, it was repulsive in Greek culture.

That Greek culture and the word use of that, it doesn't click to them. Why would somebody commit themselves as a slave? Especially to somebody that we don't know, Jesus Christ.

I don't understand this. That's kind of the mindset. It was not popular. Imagine volunteering for military service. Some of us here know what that's like.

[9 : 58] Imagine you get no pay. You get no status. You get no promotion. You're at the mercy of whomever is in charge of you. And you're doing it for an indeterminate length of time.

That's sort of the way, the technical way that Greek culture viewed voluntary slavery at this time. So again, James using this, he was driving the nail. I am a voluntary servant to Christ.

Now consider voluntary submission knowing you are willingly signing on to persecution and trials. Because we're told it's going to happen. Continuing with his introduction, he very distinctly highlights his submission to God and Jesus Christ.

What is interesting to note here is the original word order of this verse. The Young's Literal Translation, which is literally just the Greek put into English, but in the order that it originally was, says it like this.

I think I got it. Yeah, I got it up there. James, of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, a servant. To the twelve tribes who are in the dispersion, hail.

[11 : 05] The emphasis here is on the first part of the verse. The emphasis is on God. He is showing his readers where the main focus should be as he starts out and preps to tell us about trials and how we should be conducting ourselves and generally viewing these trials.

The focus should be on the Lord. He's showing his Jewish audience. Matthew Henry put this better than I could. That as Matthew Henry puts it, In all our services, we should have an eye to the Son as well as the Father.

We cannot acceptably serve the Father unless we are also servants of the Son. Remember, this is still somewhat of a new concept for a lot of new believers. Some of them may be devout Jews, grew up in Jewish homes, Jewish families.

This concept of Christ was new to many of them and new in a lot of these churches. James isn't pulling any punches in regards to where he stands in regards to Jesus and the Father.

And that's what's important to note here. He's dividing thoroughly that original Jewish upbringing and now the Christ has come. This is important considering his audience is the diaspora.

[12 : 20] Your translation may say those in the dispersion or may say the diaspora. It means those dispersed or scattered. And this term diaspora commonly refers to Jewish believers in Christ scattered because of persecution.

Those Christians dispersed because of their belief in Christ, finding safe harbor and often welcoming in Gentile areas that maybe they weren't in their original Jewish homeland.

They were being persecuted, often violently. They had been displaced, removed from their communities. Families would be broken apart. However, God is in control.

You're going to hear me say that a lot today. Even when we don't see it or understand it, he had a plan for the dispersion all along, just like he does for us in our trials. Going back to James the man, he was martyred in A.D. 62.

By some historians' account, he was thrown from a rooftop. Depending on what historian you look at, it was either a balcony or the rooftop of a synagogue.

[13 : 24] One historian's account, they led him up there and said, simply recant Christ. Just recant Christ. It's okay. Everything will be fine. We'll leave you alone. We'll quit persecuting you and the Christian.

Just recant Christ. James, not a problem. And he went to the top of the roof and preached Christ. They pushed him off the roof. He didn't die. And you hear a lot of translations, they stoned him or beat him to death.

There's some depending on where it came from, either or both. He went up, preached Christ, was pushed off, didn't die. They stoned him to death. As he was dying and being stoned to death, he was praying for his attackers.

He was so highly esteemed that more than one ancient historian attributed the beginning of the downfall and unrest of Jerusalem that eventually led to the fall.

They attribute it to him and that moment right there. They pinpoint that moment as when this began to happen, as when people were so anxious and frustrated and both sides, Jews and Christians alike.

[14 : 25] And this began some of the uprising against Rome and some of the things that eventually as you go through history, you'll see. That's the type of man he was. It is important to consider this as we move on.

The outrage over his death from Christians and Jews alike was an indication of the type of man he was. Let's just keep this in mind as we talk about enduring through trials.

To the first main point. That was the pre-sermon before the actual first point here. First main point. The second verse, Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials.

We're going to drill down on the word consider. Your Bible may say count, to count it. James starts out by telling us to consider or count it as all joy. This verb carries the sense to make it a reality in your mind.

It has the sense to make this happen in your mind. Force it to be that what you are going through should be worthy of, to count it as all joy, should be worthy of rejoicing.

[15 : 28] This is an action in your mind that should be worthy of rejoicing. This is an imperative. This requires effort on our part. This is something we must do.

We can't just kind of sit around and wait for this bad situation and we'll kind of dive down what those mean specifically in a little bit here. But this isn't something we just sit back and this situation will turn good if I just sit here and do nothing.

That doesn't necessarily mean our physical action to get out of the trial. That's certainly not what's going on here. It is a physical action is a battle of the mind. It is a battle to trust in the Lord. A word of caution as we move deeper into this though.

This isn't some stoic and emotionless enduring of hard circumstances. Grieving in hard circumstances is okay. By no means is that what's being communicated here that we should not be grieving and our hearts are broken in some of these hard times.

While we grieve, we hope in the Lord who will lift our hearts to experience joy in the storm. That is the key here. Reaching back to our call to worship in Psalms 34, 18, the Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

[16 : 43] So remember that as we go through and there's some strong action language here but keep this in mind. We are going to grieve through these hard circumstances but our hope is in the Lord. David wrote this.

He wrote that particular part of that in regards to when he was fleeing from Saul to a Philistine city. The name eludes me at the moment but Saul was pursuing him. He feigned being crazy to get out of being caught.

He was anxious and fearful and brokenhearted in that moment. So as we move forward and talk about the action that James says we must undertake, I want to make sure we don't see this as some cold mechanical reaction that we just have to do this thing and some stoic movement of I'm going to be happy no matter what.

That's not what's happening here. If you're crushed in spirit and brokenhearted, please know the Lord hears you and is with you to bring you through these hard times. That was my segue.

Continuing on, we are not sitting around however and just waiting for an event to somehow just now be joyful. It's just going to happen all on its own. This is a battle in our mind. We are not putting forth effort or acting to get out of the trial.

[17 : 49] This is an act of our minds to consider the state of our circumstances. This isn't always easy to do. However, we must choose to exercise our will in the right way. And the moment the test happens and in that moment, we're tempted to be bitter, angry, frustrated.

Oftentimes, it's why is it the woe is me attitude? Why does this always happen to me? It's one of my common responses. I feel that's the thing. It's like, man, does this always happen to me?

Does this happen to other people? That's wrong because we're told that it happens to all believers. Instead, James is telling us to consider the situation differently.

Consider it joyfully because we are given an opportunity to choose between glorifying God or our own sinful desires in these moments. How much differently is that from what the world tells us to do?

Who gets the glory when we respond appropriately? So think about that for a moment. I'm a little embarrassed to say this. This isn't in my notes. This is a little ad lib. I'm reading a book on working through problems or problem solving, more of a corporate level problem solving.

[18 : 57] It is a secular book. It's not a Christian book. But the way the world deals with problems, how much different is that than James is telling us to do as a Christian deals with problems? The world tells us to, you did something wrong and you need to fix your life.

The world tells us, there's a way out of this. You just need to buy my book. Thank you. And you need to read it and figure out how to do it. And you need to get your company on track and you need to get this on track because these problems shouldn't be, your life should be perfect.

Goodness sakes, the internet tells us that, right? Enough YouTube videos out there about perfect life. So these problems, the world views these in an entirely different way than what James is telling us here. So it's important to note, yes, there are some things we're going to get into that that maybe we cause through sinful behavior.

However, there are also trials that are brought upon us for our testing. Slide again. There, I'm on track. Sorry. Peter tells us in regards to these situations, in 1 Peter 1.13, you can turn there if you want, keep a thumb in 1 Peter if you want.

We'll be kind of in and out of there. Therefore, prepare your minds for action. Keep sober in spirit.

[20 : 11] Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. What drew me to this verse and what kind of led me there was the words, prepare your minds for action.

That's the NASB again. Keep sober in spirit. Prepare your minds for action. Another translation, which I like for this one, many of you may have heard it, is translated, gird up the loins of your mind.

So that same phrase is gird up the loins of your mind. It essentially has the idea, Paul uses this in several of his letters, depending on the translation. It has the idea of picking up your insides and pulling them in, but picking up your robes or your cloak or whatever was hanging down, preparing yourself to run or to move or get ready for a thing.

John McCarth had a quote more succinctly cleaned up than I think I could do. And I liked it, so I put it on here. He says this about it. The meaning is to pull in all the loose ends of one's thinking by rejecting the hindrances of the world and focusing on the future grace of God.

By rejecting the ways of the world, putting off our sin nature and choosing to exercise our will and see these situations with a joyful heart, we now have the opportunity to glorify God instead of ourselves.

[21 : 37] Closing the first main point and kind of moving into the second, we must consciously act in our minds to endure these events with a grateful and joyous heart. Not falling prey to the temptation to sin in our reactions.

And we'll talk about the reactions here in a moment. But that's really the key here with this first point is when that thing happens, what is my first reaction to do? Remember, it does not mean that we're not grieving. We're not brokenhearted.

We're not sad. But what is my first reaction in that moment? Am I immediately angry at the one, the person, the thing, the it, whatever that did it to me or why it's happening? Am I angry at God? Am I angry at my spouse?

Am I angry at the world? Or am I trusting in God's good grace, good future promise of hope? And who's getting the glory when I react that way? Second main point.

Continuing in verse two. When, consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials. We know James is telling us to consciously make a decision in our minds to reject the ways of the world and see these situations differently.

[22 : 52] What situations are these? I'm sure I keep saying that what we're asking. We're going to get there. We'll define those, but let's not skip over the word when. That really provides excellent context of if these things should be happening to us or if they're actually happening to us.

Surprise, they're happening to us whether we see it that way or not when these trials are happening. As a Christian, we're guaranteed a few things. Our salvation is secure.

Our hope in the Lord for our salvation is secure. And persecution. We are going to be persecuted. There's a slew of scripture on this. I didn't make it into the final cut of the slide, but there's much scripture on when you are going to be persecuted.

So I'm not going to really drill down on that too much. You don't need to turn there. But 1 Peter 4.12, many of you probably know this. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though something strange were happening to you.

How many times is something happening to you and then something else and something else and something else and the next thing and the next thing and the next thing and you're thinking in your mind, what is going on here?

[24 : 06] You're thinking, did I do something wrong? What did I do? The car broke down. I blew a tire on the way to work. The water heater broke. The air conditioner breaks two days later.

We know, everyone's experienced these things in life, but what are we told? Do not be surprised. These things are coming. Hopefully, this alleviates any doubt in our minds that these events are going to happen.

And that's not a threat. It's not meant to be fearful. We shouldn't be fearful. We should not be cowering back going, oh, when's the next thing going to happen? Boy, I sure hope it doesn't happen next. No, that's not what's going on.

Remember, this is given to us to increase our faith in the Lord, to glorify Him. Amen. I won't camp out here too long.

This makes us pause and take note of our lives, though. Are we being tested? If so, to the main point, if you related to what I said and you've had the experience of the sickness, the sudden family illness, the sudden loss, the air conditioner, the house, keep going, right?

[25 : 20] Insert whatever. If you've had that experience and you know exactly what I'm talking about, good. Good. You know what I mean. In those moments, you know, you have that test in that moment.

Do I glorify God? Do I glorify and lift up my anger and my sin? If not, it may be good to compare our lives to Scripture. Maybe see where we fall short. Do our lives mirror that of the unbelieving world?

Do we look exactly like our neighbors? Do we do and watch and see the same things? Do our lives mirror that? Just something to consider. When you encounter various trials, this word group tells us everything we need to know about what James is talking about in regards to trials themselves.

Encounter, it means simply to fall into or fall around or fall among. This is the same word use in the parable of the Good Samaritan. You don't need to go there.

I'm not going to read it. So Luke 10, 30, 39. Do I have it up there? I think I... Here we go. You don't need to turn there. But when Jesus says of the man, he fell among robbers, he, depending on the translation, he fell among robbers, he fell into robbers.

[26 : 34] This is something outside of our control, not outside of God's control. Again, driving that point home and not necessarily something we could have done anything about. Remember, this isn't the worldly view of problems like, man, what did I...

How did I not set my life up previously? This isn't the man, well, I should have taken the left road and not the right road and I should have taken I-95 and instead of this, that's not it.

He fell among these robbers. He fell into them. This wasn't something he could have done anything about. It's the same language use there. Examples, and I kind of already brought them up and we won't belabor this, but this could be health issues, maybe a sudden unexpected loss, maybe losing a job, not due to any fault of our own, some kind of random layoffs.

It doesn't necessarily mean it has to be some big calamitous event, though. I know oftentimes we think of trials in life and that's kind of where I've gone already with this a little bit. It does not have to be a big calamitous event.

How many people immediately thought of Job when we thought of trials today and they probably already had their thumb there thinking I was going there. I considered going there, but this would be at the two-hour end if I brought that in.

[27 : 46] So we'll just do a quick 30,000-foot view. So we think of Job, we see it through that lens. Job, what happened to him? A couple things.

His ox and his donkeys were taken and the servants with them killed. Fire burned up his sheep and servants with them. Fire burned up his sheep and the servants with them. His camels were taken and the servants with them.

Then a great wind came and took his children while they were celebrating eating together. Then he was physically afflicted as it moves into, I'm sorry, he was physically afflicted as it moves into chapter 2.

It tells us one, Job's servants are, that's probably not the desired line of work, but he was heavily afflicted. That doesn't mean, this isn't always necessarily what's going to happen to us.

The devil is tricky. He is a liar. There. Trials may not always be in grand and scope or scale like Job. The point is that James is indicating to us that this is something we fell into, not the consequences of sin, which is where we're kind of moving into.

[28 : 51] If we make bad decisions and engage in sinful behavior, are we not suffering the consequences of that behavior? I thought about trending into parenting here because I'm sure that would translate very well to many in the room, but when you sin, there is consequences for that sin.

Peter tells us in 1 Peter 4, again, 1 Peter 4, 15, make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer or thief or evildoer or troublesome meddler.

Now, we can still glorify God when we make bad decisions. If I do something bad, if I murder someone, yes, that is sinful. Of course, that is sinful. If I go to jail for my crime, am I not being punished for my crime?

Now, that does not mean, this is separate here, does not mean that God cannot be glorified in that. Maybe I start a prison ministry and so on and so forth, but this is not the falling into of trials.

This is not the consequences of our sin. This is different. We can still glorify God when we make bad decisions. Our bad decisions, though, don't define us.

[29 : 53] Our Creator defines us. Not consequences to our sin. I think I might be back one click. I apologize. I apologize. So, trials, to help us kind of drill down on this more, your translation may say temptations.

They could also be translated temptations. It kind of helps further define how we should view this situation. Just as much as a hard situation that falls upon us may be difficult to deal with in the physical sense, physically changing the tire, getting through the event, the emotional toll, the sadness, the sorrow, those situations those situations and the key here, those are also a temptation to sin.

Remember back to the beginning, are we glorifying God or are we glorifying and lifting, elevating our own sinful desires? Just a brief segue into where that may be coming from.

First Chronicles 21, 1 through 2. I think I have that, I already got that up there. Hopefully my aversion to technology doesn't distract us here. I apologize. Then Satan stood up against Israel and incited David to count Israel.

So David said to Job and to the leaders of the people, Go, count Israel from Beersheba to Dan and bring me word so that I may know their number. Just like in the situation of Job, Satan does have influence in this world.

[31 : 18] But remember, not without God's permission. He is in control. Amen. Jesus also said to the Apostle Peter, you don't need to turn to this.

In Luke 22, 31 and 32, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to sift you men like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail.

Camp out on that for a minute. These temptations can be brought on us by Satan. God allows these situations for our testing and benefit. Notice what Jesus prays for in his disciples, though, that their faith will not fail.

But what's the key here? God is not tempting us. God is not tempting us to sin. God is not, this is not some dangling of a meat in front of the animal.

A little further down in James, if you've still got a thumb in there, James chapter 1 still in 13 and 15, he tells us, no one is to say when he's being tempted I am being tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself does not tempt anyone, but each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

[32 : 39] Then when lust is conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it has run its course, brings forth death. So the order goes like this.

I think I put this up there. Remember back up, it goes like this, I'm sorry. So it goes to the test, it's brought before us, right or wrong response to the test, temptation, sin.

So that could be something as the trial or temptation is presented, we allow ourselves to be carried away by our own desires or lust.

And as James says, sin is conceived. So let's look at this in everyday life. Remember, this isn't always grand, this isn't always the story of Job in chapter 1 and 2, this is some grand calamitous event, it could be, many have experienced that in our church, it could be something simple, it could be the fender bender on the way to work, and you know you've got an important meeting or something very valuable going on that day, it could be maybe just some minor health stuff, it could be you're on I-64 in the left lane doing 79, and everyone else wants to do 81, so they constantly cut you off and give you the one finger wave.

Is that not a temptation to sin right in front of you? How are you going to act? Are you going to wave back? I hope not. I use I-64 a lot, that is a challenge for me, I spend an hour and a half on it generally every day, but in that moment, what happens?

[34 : 15] I choose to get angry, I choose to yell back, I choose to, I'm usually bigger and faster than them in my truck, do I cut them off? Do I fulfill that anger in my heart and give way to it because that's what I want to do, or do I glorify God?

Get out of the way, maybe they have something, maybe they have something going on they need to get to. Their situation may be much more important than mine. What do I do in that moment? Who's being glorified? Not that the other person knows, remember this is a mind and a heart issue.

Am I glorifying God in my mind? Am I glorifying God with my behavior? Now I challenge you, these tests may be easy, it may be small in that moment, but what is he preparing us to do? He's preparing us to endure more, he's preparing us to serve him greater, he's preparing us to uplift his name through more difficult times and trials.

I have a couple examples here, I don't think we need to dwell on them too much, but house burning down, maybe wrongfully accused at something, that's the worst.

When you know, whoever is accusing you of this thing or whatever the event may be, you know they're wrong, you know it's a lie, you know it's not true, and you're being accused of it anyway.

[35 : 31] That's difficult, I struggle with that, I know many do. How are you going to react in that situation? Remember, as we go through these trials, we're just as much a ministry for those around us as we are enduring them and getting to the end.

While we are enduring these trials, people are looking at us. Do they know you're a Christian? Do they know how you're acting? Do they know how you're controlling your behavior, what you're saying? You're glorifying God in those moments.

Remember back up to the counted as joy part in the beginning. Likewise, we must choose to respond to testing in the proper way. The proper response is a conscious decision to reject the ways of the world, resist the devil, as James tells us in 4.7, put off our sin nature, and acknowledge that God is in control.

God's ways are not our ways, we must rest in his sovereignty. And that's a hard thing to get through in a lot of these situations, resting in his sovereignty, resting in his control.

And our joyful expression is going to come from that rest, come from that peace that we know he's in charge, I'm not. Even though it feels like, remember, why is it me? What was me?

[36 : 46] This has happened to me again. The water heater, the air conditioner, the car, the thing, the thing, the thing, the thing, we get so focused on fixing the trial, we get so focused on the world telling us how to get through it.

We are not responding properly. Oftentimes, to endure that test, we must rest in his sovereignty. And that is where our peace comes from. Did I click it?

I didn't. There's the bullet. Test, temptation, sin. Third main point.

There's another click. So moving to the last two verses of today's passage. So verses three and four. James one, three and four.

Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have its perfect result so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

[37 : 52] Just like the others, we'll parse that out a little bit. Knowing. It is another verb meaning to come to know or to recognize something.

It is more than just the intellectual knowing of something. Like rote memorization. We have many homeschoolers in this room, I'm certain. I don't know how many of you go through your timeline cards, which is incredible to me.

These stacks are this tall. And these kids can memorize the timeline of the world from the beginning until now. Every date, time, and place. It's just incredible to me. This isn't necessarily equating to that exactly.

Knowing a fact. Knowing a thing about something. This is more of a relational knowledge. So the New Testament use of this word refers to relational knowledge or knowledge that is gained through experience.

This is experiential knowledge. This is the knowledge you gain through doing it, seeing it, feeling it with one's hands. We have some carpenters in this room, some very skilled craftsmen here.

[39 : 00] This is the knowledge they gain. They know how to do it. They know how to put the pieces together and they know the slight change, angle, degree that makes it all work out and come perfectly. This isn't the rote knowledge of that is wood and this is a nail.

This is the knowledge of I know how to use this wood and I know where to put this nail to make this all come together. And that's important because James is not just giving us basic facts or assigning us some checklist to follow.

Remember, this is not a checklist for Christian behavior. I get up this morning, I do the thing, I read my Bible, I do this, and I'm going to be happy and that's it no matter what. That's not what's happening here because that's difficult. I've tried it.

I know many have. We struggle through this. I'm going to be happy today. Maybe it works. It doesn't work for me. This is knowledge gained through experience.

I use a carpentry example, mechanics, carpentry, helicopter flying. I'm a helicopter pilot. So you can know that a control in a helicopter, I know that when I pull up on this thingy on this side, the trees get small, right?

[40 : 04] I know when I push it down, the trees get big and we have crew members in this room also and they yell at you because what are you doing? The trees are getting big. I know that that is, but if you got in a helicopter right now and you said, oh, Matt told me trees get small, trees get big, go forward, go backward.

Will you be able to take that knowledge and then apply it and pick up the helicopter and hover perfectly steady? Some of you maybe. I couldn't. I couldn't do that.

And here's another point on that. If I get out of that for a while and I get back in that, even knowing rote how to do it, if I stay out of this and then I try to enter back into it, boy, it doesn't come the same way.

It doesn't come back the same way. When trials come, we're giving a chance to exercise this, knowing what we must think and knowing what we must do through this whole process, right?

This is enduring. enduring. We must gain the personal understanding that what we are enduring is truly for our benefit and God's glory.

[41 : 12] That's hard. I missed one. There we go.

So these trials, your translation may translate it tests, temptations, ESV, King James, switch sometimes, and ESV switch.

It could be, it could also mean temptations and that's used commonly. And I like the use of temptations or at least understanding the value of that word or the expansion of that word in the original Greek because you can kind of get to know what James is telling us here.

That word, testing or growing our faith. So the word testing is the same one used in the context as Paul uses it in other places in the New Testament and in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Bible, in the Old Testament, talking about smelting metals and pushing down metals or melting them down to their purest form.

What happens during that process? It gets hot. The element is superheated until all the impurities are burned away and the perfect metal is all that remains.

[42 : 32] So I watched a quick YouTube video on this so I could accurately describe it because I don't know anything about smelting metals. I told you I'm a pilot. Pilots don't smelt metals. But watching that is interesting to see.

So if I was smelting metals in the helicopter, that would be bad for everyone. But it is interesting to see when you see that video and they put the metal, whether it be gold or something, gold is commonly what it's referred to and they put that in there and they have the camera on it and you can see it.

It's very interesting. You see it start to melt and you see the impurities or the dross. Thank you. You see the dross begin to separate off the metal and as the dross is separated and the metal comes complete in its own form, it separates away from the impurities.

It goes away from it and they can literally pour it right off and slide it right off the top and all that's left in that little cup is the pure gold, the pure metal. That's the testing.

That's the same context of that word that's being used. So now apply that back to where we're at. We're being tested, right? We are, when we're being tested to what is the purpose of that?

[43 : 39] We're starting to see and drive the purpose of that is get rid of those impurities. The next time that test comes, I have less of that. I have less of that dross. I'm burning it away. I'm burning it off because I want to react appropriately to glorify God.

I want to react appropriately to preach the gospel even in my actions as I go through those hard times. God is producing us endurance and patience when we respond in the correct way to those tests.

As that dross is moved off and we respond appropriately to the testing in that situation, although the analogy is using gold in its perfect form, in us it's producing, the product at the end is our endurance or patience when we respond correctly.

We must remember that nothing is being put before us that we cannot handle. Some of you are probably already thinking here. 1 Corinthians 10.13.

I'll just go ahead and read it here for the sake of time. I won't turn there. No temptation has overtaken you except something common to mankind. And God is faithful so he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able.

[44 : 58] But with the temptation will provide the way of escape also so that you will be able to what? Endure it. Not get out of it, get through it, get around it.

You will be able to endure this trial. I liken this to as some have teenage boys and other men in the church. Like I mentioned I previously taught in the men's study. I can provide a very simple analogy for this because the world is just so egregious with images and things these days.

It drives me batty. You can't even go to a grocery store and go down an aisle and I remember generally the night before to get my wife a card for Mother's Day or her birthday or something else.

Oh my goodness, I better go to the grocery store and get my wife a card for her birthday. It's also the magazine aisle. You can't even get a shooting magazine without something on the cover that you don't want to see. It's horrendous.

It's incredible. Like what has happened to people? However, how do we escape? The ends of the aisle. It's provided. God's provided us that way out of it.

[46 : 00] If you know that's in there, God has provided you a way out of that. You walk into something. Oftentimes, I tell my teenage son, you walk into a situation, you walk in a room, you're like, this isn't right.

I don't like it. I don't like what I'm seeing, doing, happening. Where's the way out? The door. Get out. Go. Walk away. There's another place to get my wife a card or I'll handwrite one on paper.

I've done it. It's embarrassing. Bringing the point that was made in verse 1, kind of pulling that into here though. This doesn't happen if we don't exercise our will to view these trials in the way in which we are commanded and respond correctly to that test.

Respond correctly to that temptation and resist the temptation to sin. James' word choice through this passage of scripture gives us a view of action. A lot of these, I kind of bring up verbs, imperative.

It is a view of action. We're not action to get out and get away from the temptation. The trial itself were meant to endure it. So, his word choice is telling us it is a matter of doing and participating.

[47 : 10] Remember, God graciously gives us these to allow us to participate in this. Imagine if we were given the opportunity to do this, right?

We want to grow. Imagine our faith. Imagine it like our bodies. We're given the opportunity to do this. How many of you love to exercise? No, right? We got one. However, let me ask you this.

How many of you love the benefits of the exercise? Don't we all want to be healthy and fit and do the things and not the pops and the creep? We all want the benefit of it, right? We want to feel good. We want to have the endurance.

We like to go running and have the endurance. We have some crazy people here like to do the things to get this. I don't always, but boy, I love the benefits. I love being healthy. I love being able to pick and lift things up and play with my kids and maybe grandkids one day.

I love that. Now imagine if this was put before us, right? I go to the gym. Ah, somebody gave me an opportunity to go to the gym. I walk into the gym. Here's the exercise.

[48 : 08] Here's the test. I go down. I pick up the weight. Boy, that's heavy. I don't want to deal with that. And I walk out and go away. Did I gain any benefit?

Did anything happen? I got nothing from that. Running, same way. What if I walk out on the road?

I see the long road before me. I'm going to increase my endurance. Walk out there. That road's long. Nope, not doing that. Turn around and go back. Did my endurance increase?

We must endure it and patiently work through this. Much like our physical body requires enduring, training, and testing to get stronger, so does our faith.

That is why these trials must come. They must come. When? What happens during the smelting process if the gold is removed from the heat too quickly?

[49 : 18] It's not pure. It doesn't finish. The impurities are still on it. How many have started these trials properly? I've got this. I know God's putting this before me. Oh, that got hard.

I'm not doing that anymore. And you immediately step out. All those impurities are still there. We didn't endure the testing. We didn't go through this. And remember who this is written by. He knows what that looks like.

If you pull that gold away, it's not refined. It's not complete in its desired form. God will remove these afflictions in his good timing. Scripture tells us we must endure these tests, not get out of them, to be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

This is not perfect in regards to our sin nature, but perfecting our character, perfecting our faith. That is what we're looking at perfecting and complete. We lack nothing. If we have complete faith in the Lord, we lack nothing.

What do we need? We know God is going to take care of us. We trust in our salvation. We trust in what good things he's given us. That is why James mentions we are perfect and complete, lacking in nothing, because we rest in the Lord.

[50 : 28] I need and want for nothing because I know he will provide. Before we kind of start moving to a close here, I want to read through two passages of Scripture to kind of help finalize this point.

Since I was already in Peter a bunch, we'll start there first. If you've got a thumb in there using your digital Bible, you can click right over there. Am I a few slides behind? Nope. There we go. 1 Peter 1, verse 6 and 7.

Chapter 1, verse 6 and 7. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now, for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

What's the point there? Isn't that it? That's it. That's the point. Remember how one of James' main focuses is practical tests of genuine Christian faith?

The proof of our faith is our reliance on the Lord during these trials. Just as he was said to have knees like a camel, indicating his constant posture of prayer and reliance on the Lord.

[52 : 03] Next one is Romans 5. Chapter 5, verses 3 and 5. Chapter 5, verses 3 through 5.

And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance, and perseverance, proven character, and proven character, hope.

And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Remember back to the first part we were talking about the diaspora, the Jewish believers who've been scattered and pushed out everywhere.

This was originally Jeff's point. I stole this from him, by the way, but it was just so good. I had to make it in here. Those believers, imagine if they weren't persecuted. Imagine if nothing happened to them.

They've been pushed out. They're now in new communities in Gentile lands. They're now in new areas in other places. New friends, new contacts, new relationships, new markets, new everything. What are they doing?

[53 : 18] They're spreading the gospel. They're spreading the good news that may have originally been contained. What if they weren't persecuted? God's plan is good. He knows what he's doing. His plan for the diaspora was good.

He had a plan for them all along. In closing, we may not always know why something is happening, but we are to count it as joy, church family, when we encounter these trials because our God is refining us.

He's strengthening our faith and building our character so that we may be joyful as we serve the Lord. Let's pray. Dear Lord, thank you for your word.

Thank you for scripture. Thank you for showing this to us. Thank you for the ability to be able to speak your truth. We pray, God, as we go out into the world today, that these events come before us, these testings, that we are able to evaluate them.

We are able to evaluate the sin in our lives, evaluate the traps and the tricks of the evil one, and we are able to pass the test, God. We pray, Lord, that you give us faith. Help us to pray fervently and rest in your good peace and your good faith that you've given us, Lord.

[54 : 31] Pray that we exercise that faith and we rest in you knowing you will bring us through these trials, God. We pray that through our grieving, our sadness, and our frustrations at times, God, that we lean on you.

We constantly remember in our minds we must battle this and we must know that you've intended this for good, for our good and your good, Lord. We pray you just pacify our hearts in those moments.

Help us to lean fully on you. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.