



A Systematic Expository Study on the General Epistle of JAMES

Study 2: TRIUMPH OVER TRIALS

James 1:2-4

Our text speaks of "**temptations**" and "the trying of your faith". The word "**temptation**" is used in a double sense in the Bible: (1) enticement or solicitation to do evil or commit sin, (2) outward trials, troubles, testings to prove how genuine our salvation is. The "**temptation**" in our passage means test, trial, trouble, persecution.

There are tests that reveal how genuine gold, diamond and metals are. These tests and trials reveal how real or genuine is our faith or fellowship with God.

Life is full of trials; we live in a troubled world (Job 5:6,7; 14:1; Psalm 22:11; Ecclesiastes 2:22,23; John 16:33). Trial is something that breaks or disturbs the pattern of rest or tranquillity. Trials, disappointment, hardship, suffering, sorrow, adverse circumstances come to test or "try" our faith. These trials destroy false, superficial faith but they can only purify and develop real and true faith. Perseverance in and through our trials is proof of genuine salvation and living faith.

We can have victory in trials because of the **promise and power** of the Father (Isaiah 43:1,2), the **prayer** of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour (John 17:9,15) and the **presence** of the Holy Spirit within (John 14:26,27; 15:18-26). Our trials also strengthen our faith, lead us to fervent prayer, prove our love for God, produce greater commitment to Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, even perfect what is lacking in our character.

PROPER PERCEPTION OF TESTS AND TRIALS

James 1:2; Genesis 22:1,2,12; 1 Peter 1:6-8; Proverbs 17:3; Matthew 5:10-12; Luke 6:22,23; 1 Peter 4:12-16; Acts 5:40-42; Hebrews 10:34; 2 Corinthians 7:4.

These "**temptations**" are tests and trials. It is necessary, however, to note that they are not troubles of our own making. They are "**divers temptations**", that is, various or manifold trials. They come from different directions - from Satan, from the evil system of the world, from human corruption because of the sinfulness and depravity of men. Why does God allow them in our lives? As a good soldier is tested on the battlefield, not in the barracks, so our strength and sincerity are tested in the battles of life. Trials also test and prove our truthfulness in our profession of doctrinal belief. Your own faith in God is proved when you can cling to Him under temptations and trials. There are many things which do not prove our love for God - doctrinal knowledge, church affiliation, christian activities, church responsibilities, etc. When we hold fast to the Lord in hard times, in times of trial, that is a proof of our love for God. Loving God is the key to enduring all trials. "**Count it all joy** when ye fall into divers temptations (various trials)". Even Christ had troubles and trials and He rejoiced in them (Luke 22:28; Hebrews 12:2). We must rejoice in our trials because they are not meant to make us weaker; they are meant to make us stronger. The christian is like the athlete. The heavier the course of training he undergoes, the more he is glad, because he knows that it is fitting him all the better for victory and rewards. While we bravely bear the burdens that we must bear, there should also be joy in the Lord - joy in spite of those burdens with an overwhelming sense of fellowship with Christ who carries the heavy end of the load.

PURPOSE AND PATIENCE IN OUR TRIALS

James 1:3; Romans 5:3-5; 2 Thessalonians 1:4-7; Deuteronomy 8:2,3; 32:11,12; Judges 2:21-23; 3:1-4; 2 Chronicles 32:27-31; Job 23:10-14; 2 Corinthians. 4:16,17.

There is always a divine purpose in our trials. "The trying (testing) of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:3). The "patience" referred to here means perseverance - abiding firm and stedfast in the Lord under pressure. This "patience" consists in a calm waiting for the unfolding of the divine will and plan. To be patient under trial is to be calm in thought, resigned in temper, prayerful in spirit, submissive to God, steady in our faith and trust in God.

The believer who truly possesses patience is the one who has been tried or tested. First, he goes through the trials without murmuring against God. There may be ill-treatment and slander, he bears it without resentment. He may feel it keenly but he bears it meekly. Secondly, the patience which God works in us through trials makes us act under His control without undue haste. And then, we are able to cast aside disturbance of mind and wait after prayer without unbelief. Two little words are good for every christian to learn and to practise - pray and stay.

PATH TO PERFECTION THROUGH TRIUMPH IN TRIALS

James 1:4; 1 Peter 5:10; Psalms 119:6 7,68; 138:7,8; Luke 8:13-15; Hebrews 2: 10; Hebrews 5:8,9; 1 John 4:17,18

The aim of testing is to purge us of all impurity. The effect of testing rightly borne is strength to remain stedfast in the path of perfection and to conquer in harder battles.

The word "*perfect*" in our text has the meaning of perfection towards a given end. A person is thus "*perfect*" if he is mature and fully grown. His trials, rightly borne, prepare him and make him fit for the task he was sent into the world to do. The trials also make him "*entire*", that is, complete. His unswerving constancy removes the weaknesses and imperfections from his character. The power of God works in his life until finally he becomes entirely fit for the service of God and of his fellow-men. And these trials, troubles and testings also make him lacking in nothing, deficient in nothing, "*wanting nothing*". Day by day, as he meets the adverse circumstances with God's grace, he develops stedfastness, lives victoriously, being made conformable to the standard of Christ - the standard set for us by Christ.

*If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we' d like to hear from you.
You can email the pastor@deeperlife-liverpool.org.uk with your comments.*