

The Testing of Faith

WARM-UP

- What was the hardest test you ever took for school or employment? How did you prepare for it, and how did you do?
- Who is the one person you know that does not give up easily? Recall an instance explaining this.
- What was the biggest financial challenge you've had to face? How did you go through it?

WORD

²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. **JAMES 1:2,3**

(Read also **JAMES 1:4-18.**)

James, Jesus' half-brother, wrote a letter to encourage believers, reminding them of the right way of leading a Christian life. First, he challenged them to face trials with faith, regardless of their situation or status in life. In this lesson, we will look at four truths from this passage about our faith, tests, steadfastness, and God's faithfulness.

1 Our faith will be tested.

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds . . . **JAMES 1:2**

The Bible promises that believers will face many trials of different kinds. But when trials come, we are to *count it as joy*—not because we like being tested or being given a hard time, but because of the effect it has on our lives. How is a test, trouble, or trial an opportunity for growth and maturity?

2 Testing produces steadfastness.

³ . . . for 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. **JAMES 1:3,4**

If we, as believers, persevere in a trial, we will become steadfast—which means to be fixed in place, dependable, and not easily moved. So although tests are difficult and we all face different trials, we mature as we go through them. What happens when we *let steadfastness have its full effect*?

3 God rewards steadfastness.

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. **JAMES 1:12**

James encourages believers who are facing trials to do so joyfully, to ask God for wisdom, and to remember that worldly wealth and riches do not mean anything to God (James 1: 5, 9-11).

He assures us that if we remain steadfast under trial, we are blessed and we will receive a reward from God. This is the only reward that truly matters: the crown of life, which is our eternal life in Christ. To whom has God promised this crown of life?

4 God is the source of every good thing.

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. **JAMES 1:17***

James reminds the believers that though God tests people, He does not tempt them (James 1:13-16). In fact, because of God's unchanging nature, He remains faithful and He graciously provides every good and perfect gift we have. How does God's unchanging nature encourage you to remain faithful to Him even when your faith is tested?

APPLICATION

- Do you believe that God rewards those who love Him with the crown of life and is the giver of every good and perfect gift you have? How can you grow in your appreciation of God's faithfulness in your life this week?
- How can you count the testing of your faith as joy? How can you encourage others to do the same and trust God?
- Pray for a family member or friend whose faith is being tested. How can you be a channel of and remind him or her of God's goodness and faithfulness at this time?

PRAYER

- Thank God that with Him, unlike everything else in the world, there is no variation or shadow due to change. Thank Him for every good and perfect gift He has given you. Pray that you would look to Him as your source every day and trust Him no matter what.
- Pray that even as your faith is being tested, you will learn to count it as joy and remain steadfast. Pray that as you do so, others will be encouraged to remain steadfast in the faith as well.
- Pray that you will continually reflect God's faithfulness and goodness to your family and friends.

NOTES

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