

Instructions for Encountering Trials in Life

James 1:1-4

1. **The Variety of Trials** (v.2)

Jesus told us that we would have troubles in this life (John 16:33). He also said that His followers would be victims of targeted oppression and persecution because we follow in His footsteps (John 15:20). The early church endured many difficulties, among them were persecution and privation which compounded one another (cf. Acts 8:1-4; 1 Cor. 16:1). The Christian is to be prepared for normal struggles in life (cf. Gen. 3:14-19), unusual difficulties in life (cf. Job. 1:8), and difficulties at the hands of men who hate Jesus (Acts 8:1-4).

2. **The Mentality in Trials** (v.2)

We are to look at all of the various trials that we must endure and intentionally respond with joy. Joy is not based on a temporary emotion nor is it rooted in the present experience of life. It is an intentional accounting of present things with an eternal perspective (cf. John 15:11; 16:20; 1 John 1:4; 3 John 4).

3. **The Product in Trials** (v.3)

The story of the nation of Israel is of a failure to endure in faithfulness to God, whereas the life of Jesus Christ is of absolute enduring faithfulness to God. Endurance is the result of maintaining faithfulness to Christ throughout the varying difficulties of life. Both patience and persistence in the midst of hardship are characteristics of faithful endurance (cf. James 5:7-11).

4. **The Result of Trials** (v.4)

Endurance is one of the many character traits which God graciously develops in us as He brings us to maturity (cf. 2 Pet. 1:3-11). Faithfully walking through trials will allow us to see the fervency of our own faith (Gen 22:1ff), to testify of Jesus in our world (Col. 1:24), to aid in our humility (2 Cor. 12:7), to help us to hold loosely onto the things of this world (Job. 1:20-22; Heb. 11:24-26), to make us long to be present with the Lord (Phil 1:21-26), to assist other believers through their trials (2 Cor. 1:3-5), and to rightly value the blessings of God, both now and those yet to come (cf. Matt 5:45).