

## THE VALUE OF TRIALS, Part 1

### **TEXT: JAMES 1:1-12**

#### **Introduction:**

1. James was probably the first book of the New Testament to be written.
2. The epistle of James is the first in a group of epistles often called the "general epistles," which also include I and II Peter, I,II, and III John, and Jude.
3. They are sometimes referred to as the "catholic" (not Roman Catholic) epistles in the sense that they are universal, not being addressed to any particular individual or church, but to God's people everywhere.
4. There is some disagreement over which James wrote this epistle. I believe the author is James, the Lord's brother (cf. Matt.13:55; Acts 15:13; I Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19; 2:9). He did not believe in the Lord until after His resurrection (cf. John 7:5).
5. The epistle of James has been misunderstood. Some have wrongly supposed that James was teaching that one is saved by works. The great Reformer, Martin Luther did not believe the book of James belonged in the Bible and called it an "epistle of straw."
6. But there is no contradiction. Paul emphasized our justification before God, and James our justification before men.
7. Our text tonight deals with being tested. The word translated "temptations" in James 1:2 literally means "trials" or "testings" (margin).
8. Frances Ridley Havergal wrote, "Every joy or trial falleth from above, Traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love." She was right in that nothing happens to us that God does not allow.
9. Furthermore, God has a purpose in these various trials and testings.
10. I would like to preach tonight on "The Value of Trials." James says we should be joyful when we find ourselves going through a trial.
11. Our Lord said in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

#### **I. TRIALS DEVELOP CHRISTIAN CHARACTER**

1. It has rightly been said that character is formed under pressure, and James explains this in verses 2-4.
2. Through trials and testings we develop patience. Webster's Dictionary defines patience as the ability to "bear pains or trials calmly or without complaint; manifesting forbearance under pressure; remaining steadfast despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity."

3. Later in the epistle, James says, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job" (5:11).
4. The Bible teaches that God is trying to produce Christ-likeness in all of us. This process necessarily involves suffering, frustration, and sometimes great difficulties (1:2).
5. There is a distinction between temptations and trials. The *Scofield Study Bible* says, "Temptation" is used in two senses: (1) Solicitation to evil (e.g. Gen. 3:1-6; Matt. 4:1; I Cor. 10:13; II Cor. 11:3, 4; James 1:14). (2) Testing under trial (e.g. Gen. 22:1; Luke 22:28; cf. Luke 4:2). Cf. Matt. 6:13 (solicitation to evil) and I Peter 1:6 (testing under trial)" (page 1307).
6. The word as it is used here in James 1:2 means trials or "testings" (margin). These are from God, though He may use Satan, as in the case of Job.

## II. GOD DOES NOT TEMPT US

1. God never tempts a man to do evil (cf. James 1:13-15).
2. The devil tempts men to do evil (Matt.4:1-11). In fact, he is called "the tempter."
3. In Matthew 4, the devil came to our Lord when He was in the wilderness. In Matthew 4:3 we read, "And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."
4. In I Thessalonians 3:5, the apostle Paul wrote, "For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain."
5. It is difficult for us to go through trials and troubles and testings, but if we know the Lord, we can see His hand at work and truly "count it all joy" (1:2).
6. God is working in all of the events of life and is seeking to build Christian character. We can be sure that God is dealing with us for our own good (1:3; cf. Rom. 5:3, 4; 8:28).
7. It is a fact that without trials we would never develop patience. Even worldly people recognize this principle. Charles Kettering was a successful inventor and businessman.
8. Many people do not recognize his name, but most of us have heard of the famous Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan.
7. Charles Kettering invented the electric starter, developed the first electric cash register, and founded the Delco Company. When Delco became a subsidiary of General Motors, Kettering became VP and director of research for GM. He said these words: "Problems are the price of progress. Don't bring me anything but problems. Good news weakens me."

8. A young preacher once asked an older pastor to pray that God would give him more patience, because he realized that he was very impatient. The old preacher knelt down and began to pray that God would send trouble and difficulties upon the young pastor. Finally the younger man tapped his older friend on the shoulder and whispered: "You must have misunderstood me; I asked that you would pray that I might have more patience, not more trouble." The old preacher replied: "Remember the Scripture says, 'Tribulation worketh patience' (Rom. 5:3). That is the only way!"

### **III. WE MUST LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK**

1. We must "let patience have her perfect work" (1:4), that we "may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
2. Matthew 5:48 is to be understood as a literal command – "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
3. This Christian perfection can never be attained without patience having "her perfect work" (1:4).
4. When Fanny Crosby was just eight years old, she wrote these words:
5. "Oh what a happy soul am I  
Although I cannot see;  
I am resolved that in this world  
Contented I will be.  
How many blessings I enjoy  
That other people don't.  
To weep and sigh because I'm blind  
I cannot and I won't."
6. God is trying to refine the gold from the dross in His fire. His fires of persecution, sickness, sufferings, and sorrow determine if our faith is genuine. "As soon as the Refiner sees His reflection in the molten metal, He turns off the heat" – William MacDonald.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. An Englishman named Sir Philip Sydney was shot in battle.
2. As the doctor cut out the bullet, some of the other soldiers standing by, pitied his pain, but he replied: "Though I groan, yet I bless God I do not grumble. God allows his people to groan, though not to grumble."
3. Let's not grumble; let us "count it all joy" (1:2).