

# Session 1 | The Pressure of Trials | 9/1/13

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- Overview
  - We are going to be spending the next 6 weeks in the book of James discussing different pressures that we as Christians will endure.
    - We will look at trials, temptation, partiality, words, conflict and retaliation.
  - Today's study we will be examining the first 4 verses of James and we will discuss why we go through trials in life. We will see that there is a purpose to them even though when we are in the thick of it we may not understand why.
- Who was James?
  - James is the half-brother of Jesus.
    - Galatians 1:19
      - "But I didn't see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. "
    - Matthew 13:55
      - "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't His mother called Mary, and His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?"
  - James early on did not believe that Jesus was who he said he was. He was in disbelief that he was the messiah.
    - Matthew 7:3-5
      - Verse 5: (For not even his brothers believed in Him)
  - But after Jesus rose from the grave he appeared to James and he was then a true believer as we can see from the very beginning of the book of James.
    - 1 Corinthians 15:7
      - "Then he appeared to James, then to all apostles."
    - James 1:1a
      - "James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."
  - James was a slave of God and the Lord Jesus
    - **Read James 1:1**
    - Notice that James doesn't say in his introduction James the brother of Jesus; one might think that to be a higher honor.
    - I think that James knew that the honor was greater to put yourself instead as a "servant of God and Jesus" which is what he meant by being a slave.
    - James makes it clear that he is a servant of God and Jesus so what does that mean?
      - 1: That he will voluntarily obey God's Will.
        - We just like James should always voluntarily obey what God wants in our lives we are to be obedient.
        - To be a servant of God is to obey God.
      - 2: That he will labor for God and not for himself.
        - As we talked about in our study in Ecclesiastes, we have a purpose in life that God has given us; we must labor for God before ourselves.
        - God has left us instruction on how to live our lives and how we can better the lives of others by showing them the truth.
        - A servant of God will put God's will before their own agenda.
  - Be joyful in your trials. (James 1:2)
    - **Read James 1:2**

- “Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials,”
  - So what is a trial?
    - Your book on page 12 lists a few different types of trials.
    - In the book of James depending on its context trials can mean a couple of different things:
      - 1: Hardships that test us
      - 2: Enticements to sin
    - **What other trials do we go through?**
    - According to James we are to have joy when we experience these trials. So one would think “what is James thinking!” We are supposed to consider these great joy!
  - **How many of you just love it when you are in a trial?**
    - **How often do you fall in one to then say OH YESSS!!! I just lost my job!!**
    - Being joyful may not be our first reaction, but according to the Bible we are SUPPOSED to be joyful.
    - Why should we be happy in a trial? The answer to that is in the next verse which is to test our faith.
      - The trials that we go through in life **test our faith.**
        - Why does our faith need to be tested? Well the better question is why not?
        - Our faith is tested to see if we will stay true to our faith in God and believe that he will carry us through.
        - OT Examples
          - Was Abraham not tested?
            - Genesis 22:1-3
              - “After these things **God tested Abraham** and said to him, “Abraham!” Here I am, he answered. Take your son, he said, your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”
              - **What specifically did God test with Abraham? His faith!**
      - As Christians our faith whether we like it or not will be tested.
        - Like the picture of the orange they show on page 9, what is going to come out of you when you are under the pressure of a trial?
      - God wants our faith to run deep and our true colors are shown when pressure is applied.
        - It’s easy to have faith when everything is going good, but how about when times are tuff? God wants to know.
    - Sometimes our trials benefit others. <-This is a reason to have joy!
      - **Read Philippians 1:12-14,20**
      - So what if Paul’s faith would have faltered in his trial of his imprisonment? Would the gospel have been advanced if he stated he would never speak of the gospel again if they released him?
      - Paul’s trial tested his faith and he showed true to the end.
      - Paul had joy in his trial because the bigger picture of what God wanted to be done was getting accomplished.
    - We are to have joy during our trials because when we are weak we are strong because of Christ.
      - Paul’s thorn

- 2 Corinthians 12:7b-10
  - Like Paul we may be in a trial that we cry for deliverance from, and like Paul God may tell us no and that we then must lean on our faith and God's grace.
  - This is the testing of our faith and we must have joy!
- As Christians we will have trials of persecution, but we have JOY knowing that Lord will rescue us from them all.
  - 2 Timothy 3:10-12
    - "But you have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance, along with the persecutions and sufferings that came to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. What persecutions I endured! Yet the Lord rescued me from them all. In fact, all those who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."
    - **Doesn't that give you joy knowing that you will be persecuted!**
    - **That may seem odd but if you have unbending faith in God you will have joy in everything because he is with you.**
- Questions:
  - Question#2 "What keeps you from reacting with joy when the pressure of life feels overwhelming?"
  - Question #3 "What emotions did you feel during your most recent trial?"
- The testing of your faith produces endurance (James 1:3) Page 14
  - Read James 1:3
    - "Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance."
  - So why does God want our faith to have endurance (patience NKJV)?
    - When we think of endurance we think of something physical like a runner who trains to increase his endurance so he can run farther and longer (like Shane)
      - If Shane didn't practice running and putting himself through the physical labors his endurance would not increase.
      - Know that his endurance has increased he is able to withstand pain and torment from longer races because he is conditioned for it.
      - **So must our faith.**
    - If our faith isn't "worked out" then how will it grow how will it prove that our faith can last through anything.
    - Well it can't, so God allows us to be tested and to experience trials so that the endurance of our faith will increase.
    - Paul's faith was constantly being tested and because of that he had the endurance to maintain his faith even until the end.
  - Jesus spoke to the need for the endurance of our faith
    - Jesus was speaking of signs that will show the end of the age:
      - Matthew 24:9-14
      - Jesus told us we must endure until the end. Our faith when we go through trials must endure.
  - Like Paul let us hope that our faith will endure until the end:
    - 2 Timothy 4:6-8
      - "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time for my departure is close. I have fought the good fight, **I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.** There is reserved for me in the future the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the

righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing.”

- Paul’s faith endured during his trials and he was strong. He finished his race of life and kept his faith.

- **Questions**

- **Can you look at previous trials in your life and see where your faith has been tested. Do you think that your endurance has increased now that you have come to the other side of those trials?**
- **Question #5 How have you been encouraged by the endurance of others during trials?**
  - **Have you seen someone who seemed to endure a tuff trial with grace in a way that perhaps you wouldn’t think you could?**

- Keeping the faith through our trials makes us more mature Christians. (James 1:4) Page 15

- **Read James 1:4**

- **Warren quote**

- Endurance must do its complete work.

- The work that is done in our soul through trials must be allowed to complete its work.
- Our Christian character is always being developed. When we go through our trials and our faith is tested, we know that it can be hard and difficult. However when we are weak if we rely on God he will get us through those trials and as we do this we become more spiritually mature.
- We become better Christians.
- I think it’s important that we must realize in all of our trials that there is something for us to learn, we need to be sure we ask God to show us what it is and to lean on him in our weakness. Because this will benefit our soul.
  - I try to think OK God what is it from this am I supposed to learn? If we are in a trial of great difficulty we may realize that we cannot do this on our own, and we have no choice but to lean on God.
  - And if we look back to 2 Corinthians 12:9 we see that Jesus’ power is perfected in weakness.

- 2 Corinthians 12:9 <-partial

- “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.”

- Our patience and endurance increase for our benefit so that we may be complete and mature, lacking nothing.

- God wants us to be mature Christians that are complete which means to be fully developed.
- Like a child or young adult growing up usually isn’t mature until they have had certain experiences that they learn from.
- Likewise we as Christians will be become more mature with every trial and we will be closer to becoming complete.
  - Now we will never be FULLY complete or perfect until we pass from this earth and we join Jesus in Heaven, but we while here in this sinful world must work towards being as close to that as we can.
  - This God wants from us.
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:23
    - “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- We must not let our trials and afflictions bring us down, on our own we do not have the ability to get through them ourselves, but in our weakness God's power will be shown and he will get us through each of them.
- God wants us to be lacking in nothing he wants us to be mature Christians, by doing so we can be just like Paul who was locked up in jail yet he was joyful, he was persecuted and treated poorly but he maintained his faith and never turned from God or denounced him.
- He was able to do this because his faith had endurance and he was striving to be complete and mature.