

# THE ESSENTIAL ATTITUDE TO TRIALS AND TEMPTATION: JOY JAMES 01:02–04

## *Introduction*

The path of life is not an easy path to walk. It is filled with all kinds of trials, trials such as sickness, disease, accidents, disappointments, sorrows, suffering and death; and trials such as all the seductions to sin and evil. What we need is a guaranteed way to conquer all the trials of life. This is the glorious message of this passage: there is a way to conquer and triumph in this life, no matter how severe the trial. What is the way? It is possessing a spirit of joy and perseverance as we face the trials and temptations of life.

- I. The fact: we will have many trials and temptations (v. 2).
- II. The needed attitude: joy (vv. 2-4).
- III. The result: makes us mature and complete (v. 4).

## *Another Outline: Endurance (James 01:03–08)*

This is a striking study on endurance.

- I. The source: testing, trials and temptations (v. 3).
- II. The condition: must let trials do their work (v. 4).
- III. The purpose and results (v. 4).
  - a. Makes one mature.
  - b. Makes one complete.
- IV. The way to endure (v.5).
  - a. Ask wisdom from God.
    - 1) God gives generously.
    - 2) God does not scold.
  - b. Ask in faith — must believe (v. 6).
    - 1) Doubt illustrated.
    - 2) Doubt receives nothing (v. 7).
    - 3) Doubt shows instability — in all things (v. 8).

## **I. James 01:02 Trials and Temptations**

The fact is certain — we will have many trials and temptations. The Greek word used for temptations or trials throughout James is peirasmos. It means to tempt; to try; to test; to prove. Throughout the Bible the word peirasmos and its various forms are used to refer to both the temptations and trials of life. But note that the word means far more than just to tempt; it means...

- to test
  - to try
  - to prove
-

That is, the temptations and trials of life are to prove us: they are for a beneficial purpose; they are permitted by God for a good purpose (W.E. Vine. *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 116). What is that purpose? To make us stronger and more pure.

- => When we conquer trials and temptation, we become a much more pure person — more holy, righteous and just.
- => When we triumphantly go through the trials of life, we become a much stronger person — more steadfast, enduring and persevering
- => When we stand up against trials and temptations, we become a dynamic witness to all those who see us: we demonstrate the living presence and power of Christ — that He actually does live in our hearts and lives and is going to give us eternal life.

As said, God allows temptations and trials for a good and beneficial purpose: to prove us — to make us much stronger and much more pure and righteous. God wants us to face the temptations and trials of life and to conquer them, and by conquering them to become much more like Christ and to make Christ more fully known to the world.

Note one other thing that James says: he says that we shall *fall into all kinds* of temptations and trials. The Greek scholar A.T. Robertson says, “It is the picture of being *surrounded* (*peri*) by trials” (*Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 6. p. 11). The idea is that of many trials and temptations, of all sorts and of all kinds of temptations and trials. But we must always remember: no matter what the trial or temptation, it is for our good and for our benefit. It is to help us. It is to prove us — to make us stronger and much more pure and righteous — to make us much more dynamic witnesses for Christ. God allows trials and temptations to make us more and more like Jesus.

**2 Cor 3:18** *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

**2 Cor 4:17** *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

**Heb 12:11** *No discipline [trials] seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

**James 5:11** *As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

**1 Pet 3:14** *But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

*1 Pet 4:14* If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

*Rev 7:14* I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

*Job 23:10* But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.

## II. *James 01:02–04 Trials, Temptations and a Spirit of Joy*

The attitude needed to face the trials and temptations of life is startling — it is joy. We are to face every trial and temptation with a spirit of joy. How is this possible? How can a believer be joyful...

- when facing such trials as disease, accidents, pain, sorrows, disappointments, suffering, pain and death?
- when facing the seductions of temptations?

Joy is usually not what fills our heart when we face these things. When severe trials come our way, too often we despair and become discouraged and defeated. Most of us certainly do not joy.

There is only one way to face trials and temptations with a spirit of joy: we have to *switch our thinking*; turn our attitudes about trials and temptations completely around. We have to quit thinking negatively and think positively. In the words of Scripture we must know something and we must do something.

1. We must know something: know that trials and temptations develop perseverance (v. 3). We must know what point one stressed: that trials and temptations are not to defeat and discourage us, but to prove us, to make us much stronger and more pure and righteous. The word "perseverance" (hupomonen) means to be steadfast; to persevere; to endure. The believer is to know that the trials and temptations of life will make him more steadfast, more persevering and more enduring. They will make him much stronger, not weaker. They will make him strong just like Jesus and they will give him a pure and righteous character just like Jesus. When the believer keeps this fact in his mind, he can face trials and temptations much more positively. He can then begin to move toward the spirit of living joyfully in the face of trials and temptations.
2. We must do something: we must let perseverance finish its work within us. As stated above, perseverance means to be steadfast, to be patient and to endure. But it means more than this in the Greek. It means far more than just bearing and putting up with the trials and temptations. It means far more than just following the advice of medicine and psychology: to take it easy; to be calm; to relax in stressful situations. It means far more than learning to deny the existence of trials and temptations.

Perseverance means...

- to persist and to continue on, never giving in.
- to take the initiative and to exert the energy and effort to conquer and to gain the victory and to triumph over the trial and temptation.

Now note the point: How can we joy when a trial or temptation confronts us? By knowing that it will make us stronger by persevering against it and conquering it. By knowing that it is an opportunity to make us stronger and more pure just like Jesus and by using the trial or temptation to become a little stronger and a little more pure and righteous.

When we look at trials and temptations as opportunities, then we will begin to face them in joy. And when we begin to persevere and conquer them, then we will begin to walk through them in the joy of the Lord.

***1 Cor 10:13** No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

***Heb 2:18** Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

***James 1:2-3** Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.*

***James 1:12** Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*

***1 Pet 5:8** Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

***2 Pet 2:9** If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

***Rev 3:10** Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.*

***Prov 1:10** My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them.*

***Prov 4:14** Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men.*

***Rom 6:13** Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

***Eph 6:13** Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

**2 Pet 3:17** *Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.*

### III. **James 01:04** *Becoming More Perfect and Complete*

The results of facing trials and temptations can be wonderful. A most wonderful thing happens when a person perseveres and conquers the trials and temptations of life.

A person becomes more perfect or mature (teleioi). The word does not mean perfect in the sense of becoming a perfect person. The word means *perfection of purpose*. It has to do with an end, an aim, a goal, a purpose. It means fit, mature, fully grown at a particular stage of growth. For example, a fully grown child is a perfect child; he has reached his childhood and achieved the purpose of childhood. It does not mean perfection of character, that is, being without sin. It is fitness, maturity for task and purpose. It is full development, maturity of godliness. (See note, Eph. 4:12-13; cp. Ph. 3:12; 1 Jn. 1:8, 10.)

This means at least two things.

1. First, when a person stands against trials and temptations and conquers them...
  - he grows in maturity for the purpose God intended. That is, he becomes a stronger and more pure person — a person who is a little more like Jesus.
  - he grows in maturity for his task and purpose for being on earth a little bit more.

God has a twofold purpose for every believer: to become more and more like Jesus and to do a specific task or job while on earth. When the believer perseveres against and conquers trials or temptations, he matures in both purposes a little bit more. He becomes more like Jesus and he finishes his task a little more.

2. Second, a person becomes more and more complete in all parts (A T. Robertson. *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 6, p. 12). The person becomes complete (holoklerian), wholly fit, perfectly sound, complete with no weaknesses, flaws, defects or shortcomings. This means a most wonderful thing. When a person perseveres and conquers trials or temptations...
  - he becomes more complete, more fit, more sound and more complete.
  - he also eliminates more weaknesses, more flaws, more defects and more shortcomings.

Day by day — trial by trial — when a person perseveres and conquers, he becomes more and more complete. He becomes stronger and more pure and righteous — more and more like the Lord Jesus. As the last three words of verse four say, “not lacking anything.” The believer who faces trials and temptations in the joy of Christ conquers all, and he does not lack anything.

- => He becomes more and more mature, fulfilling his task and purpose for being on earth a little bit more.
- => He becomes more and more complete and fit, eliminating more and more weaknesses and shortcomings in his life.

The person does not lack anything. He has no unmet needs. He has all the abundance and fullness of life. He walks through life conquering and triumphing over all the trials of life, no matter how severe and stressful. It may even be death, but he stands fast in his faith and conquers death. And God rewards him with an eternity of perfection, fitness, completion and fulfilment — all forever and ever. The believer is conformed to the perfection of Jesus Christ.

**Rom 16:20** *The God of peace will soon crush [defeat] Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

**Mat 5:48** *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

**Luke 21:19** *“By standing firm you will gain life.”*

**Rom 12:12** *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

**2 Cor 13:11** *Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.*

**Eph 4:1e-13** *To prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

**James 3:2** *We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.*

**Phil 3:12** *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*

**Col 1:28** *We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.*

**Heb 6:1** *Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,*

**Heb 10:36** *You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.*

**James 1:4** *Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

**James 5:7** *Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. ■*