

“Offspring convert us; they force us to become different beings. There is no way to prepare for them completely. They crash into our lives, they soil their diapers, they upset all our comfortable arrangements, and nobody knows how they will turn out. Willy–nilly, they knock us out of our complacent habits and force us to live outside ourselves; they are the necessary and natural continuation of that shock to our egotism which is initiated by marriage itself. To receive this great blessing requires courage” (Budziszewski, J., What We Can’t Not Know)

III. Conclusion/Summary

Piper: *“Frustration is normal, disappointment is normal, sickness is normal. Conflict, persecution, danger, stress—they are all normal. The mind-set that moves away from these will move away from reality and away from Christ. Golgotha was not a suburb of Jerusalem.”*

- A. There isn't an alternate route.

- B. We must develop staying power. We must not cave when the weight gets heavy. We must not retaliate, respond angrily, give up, but consider it joy!

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- When was the last time you unexpectedly encountered a trial? How did you respond? Was there grief? Anger? Did you consider it a joy?
- Why is it important to remember that *consider* is a command about how we think and not about how we feel? Or that this isn't telling us we can't have a sad emotional response to a trial?
- Do you have staying power? Or do you tend to quit easily or give up? In either case, how does this text speak to you?
- Read James 1:2-12. What words or ideas can you find that are repeated? How many “commands” (imperatives) can you find?
- According to James, why do we need testing? Or, what is the goal of testing for the believer? How does this help you consider it pure joy when you run into various tests of your faith?

Faith that Turns Your World Right Side Up (Part 1)

Faith that Perseveres

Jerry Cisar — May 8, 2016

Text: James 1:1-12

Introduction

James is about faith—real faith; faith that transforms us. Faith which serves as eyes to see the world as it really is and transforms our living because of what we now see. James is about faith that turns your world right side up so you can start walking right side up.

I. Opening (James 1:1)

- A. Similar greeting in Acts 15:23.

- B. “Jacob.”
 - i. *Jacob a slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes that are in the dispersion: greetings.*

 - ii. “The twelve tribes” (cf. Matthew 19:28)

 - iii. “The dispersion”

II. Trials Transformed (1:2-4)

John Piper: There is a mind-set in the prosperous West that we deserve pain-free, trouble-free existence. When life deals us the opposite, we have a right not only to blame somebody or some system and to feel sorry for ourselves, but also to devote most of our time to coping, so that we have no time or energy left over for serving others.

- A. Expectations
 - i. John 16:33
 - ii. Act 14:22
 - iii. 1 Peter 4:12
- B. ² Consider it pure joy, my brothers/fellow believers, whenever you face trials of many kinds.
 - i. The word for *consider* is a command, but not concerning *how we are to feel*. It concerns *how we are to think*.
 - ii. When? When we are going along in life and run into trials.
 - iii. What? Pure Joy. Sheer and utter joy.
- C. Why? ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.
 - i. What do you know?
 - a) That the testing of your faith produces perseverance.
 - b) Compare Psalm 12:6
 - ii. Steadfastness, fortitude, staying power
 - a) Remaining under a heavy weight; not caving.
 - b) The importance of perseverance to the Christian:
 - Luke 8:15
 - Luke 21:19
 - Hebrews 10:36

iii. The testing of your faith also approves the faith that endures.

- D. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
 - i. There is a goal in mind. Perseverance has a work to finish.
 - ii. ...so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
 - a) *Mature* stands in contrast to the double-mindedness of the “two-souled” (διψυχος) man (1:8). It is used for **the undivided heart** (1 Kings 8:59; 11:4).
 - b) Paul, using the same word, spoke of the goal of Christian life as becoming “**mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**” (Eph 4:13). Later Paul calls this “the new self” (Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:10)
 - c) *Complete*, emphasizes completeness or wholeness. Restored people.

The result of testing countered with genuine faith is that the believer matures into what God intends that a human being should be.

- E. We think highly of people who have held up under tremendous testing, but we place little value on the process.
 - i. Abraham the father of faith.
 - ii. Trials can mature us much like children can.