How to Benefit from Trials & Tribulations

James 1:2-8

***<u>YOU CAN PASS THE TESTS THAT GOD ALLOWS IN YOUR LIFE!</u>**

How? By following 3 necessary requirements.

I. BY <u>FACING THE TEST</u> WITH A RIGHT <u>ATTITUDE</u> (v.2,3)
THINK RIGHT!

This attitude involves an awareness that:

A. TESTS ARE <u>UNAVOIDABLE</u>

1.Tests will come at different <u>times</u>
2.Tests will come in different <u>ways</u>
3. Tests may come in different <u>amounts</u>

B. TESTS ARE <u>BENEFICIAL</u>

1.Look at each test with <u>optimism</u>
"count it all joy"
2.Look at each test with <u>confidence</u>.
"knowing..." Note: Joy (a right attitude) is caused by right <u>thinking</u>.
a. His purpose is to <u>prove</u> the <u>genuineness</u> of your faith.
"trying" = to prove or show to be real or genuine by testing.
b. His purpose is to <u>produce</u> <u>perseverance</u> in your life.
"patience" = endurance; lit. an ability to remain under, to persevere.

II. BY <u>FINISHING THE TEST</u> WITH A RIGHT <u>ACTION</u> (v.4)
RESPOND RIGHT!

GOD DESIRES YOU TO BE:

A. <u>SPIRITUALLY GROWN UP</u> *"perfect" = mature, complete in growth.*

B. SPIRITUALLY <u>FIT</u> "entire" = *whole, complete in all it's parts.*

C. SPIRITUALLY <u>BALANCED</u> *"wanting nothing" = not lacking any parts.*

III. BY <u>LOOKING IN THE RIGHT PLACE</u> FOR <u>ANSWERS</u>!
ASK RIGHT!
SEEK GOD'S PROMISE OF <u>WISDOM</u> *(v.5-8)*
(seek the essential wisdom that God gives)

A. He will answer if you <u>depend</u> upon Him. (v.5-6a)
B. He will <u>not</u> answer you if you <u>doubt</u> Him (v.6b-8)

How to Benefit from Trials & Tribulations

James 1:1-8

Intro: ex. of tests in school; tests to check our mental & fitness etc.

YOU CAN PASS GOD'S SPIRITUAL FITNESS EXAMS!
Interrog: How? By following 2 necessary requirements.

"test" =Can be translated tempt or test depending on the context.
From Satan's viewpoint it is a temptation so that you fail.
from God's it is a test so that you will pass.
God wants to bring out the best in us; Satan - the worst.

The difference is the intent.

I. BY FACING THE TEST WITH A RIGHT ATTITUDE (v.2,3)
THINK RIGHT!

This attitude involves an awareness that:

A. TESTS ARE UNAVOIDABLE

James says "when" not "if". Tests are a certainty, inescapable
external tests are in view here; internal in verses 12-15.

1. Tests will come at different times
   "fall into" - You don't always get advance notice of their coming. Often catch you by surprise. (ex. the good Samaritan who helped a man who "fell in" with thieves.

2. Tests will come in different ways
   "divers" = various, lit. many colored. Trials come in assorted shapes & sizes; diff. stiles & colors. What is a test for you may not be for me. God will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able to bear.

   ill. Of teachers who give different kinds of tests which makes it difficult to prepare for them; "wisdom" is needed cp.v.5.

   different degrees of testing: We tend to complain about the little challenges, and yet we say we are willing to climb big mountains for God.

3. Tests may come in different amounts
"temptations" = plural

B. TESTS ARE BENEFICIAL

Our natural tendency is to wrongly think that when things are going bad it is God's judgment; and when good it is God's blessing. Do good = good things happen; do bad = bad things happen. This is not true! Not true in this present life at least. In the kingdom when things are straightened out, Satan bound etc. it will be.

1. Look at each test with optimism
"count it all joy"
*mental optimism - "count" = to reckon, or mentally consider. This is faith! (cp. this idea in Rom.6 - note however: diff. but synonymous word for reckon)

This is not emotions! But a stable mental attitude.
Note: James does not say trials are joy; but trials are to be reckoned as occasions for joy.

*undivided optimism - "all" joy. You are to have no "mixed emotions" about the trial.

*joyful optimism - "joy". A mental attitude of gladness that results from something beneficial (favorable) happening to you.

Jesus commanded this attitude (Mt.5:12)
Apostles practice this attitude (Acts 5:41)

2. Look at each test with confidence.
"knowing..." Note: Joy (a right attitude) is caused by right thinking.

There is purpose for trials

God has a purpose in allowing them in your life.

a. His purpose is to <u>prove</u> the <u>genuineness</u> of your faith. "trying" = to prove or show to be real or genuine by testing.

Testings <u>reveal</u> character, more than forming it.

God does not allow testing to flunk you! Nor is He checking to see <u>if</u> you have faith.

Satan tempts to make you fail, but God tests so that you will pass and He will receive the Glory. (ex. Job)

"all things work together for good..." Ro.8:28

Sometimes grown men & women throw fits & rebel like pre-schoolers at irritating testings.

Ex. the sand that goes into the oyster and rather than being expelled it is turned into a precious, valuable pearl. "The sand speck of irritation results in the pearl of patience"

God wants to teach you; God wants to make you an experienced Christian veteran.

b. His purpose is to <u>produce</u> <u>perseverance</u> in your life. "patience" = endurance; lit. an ability to remain under, to persevere.

II. BY <u>FINISHING THE TEST</u> WITH A RIGHT <u>ACTION</u> (v.4)

RESPOND RIGHT!

Don't react & run, but respond & win!

"perfect work" = completed job (Your level of patience must mature so that you can mature)

endurance is <u>not</u> endurance if you quit (or run away) during the trial.
It must run its complete course. You must make it to the <u>end</u> of the finish line.
patience must have a <u>complete work out</u>. (ex. weight lifting or football practice)
"no pain, no gain"

We can (by God's grace) control the length of our endurance (patience), but not the length of the test.

GOD DESIRES YOU TO BE:
<u>SPIRITUALLY GROWN UP</u> "perfect" = mature, complete in growth.
SPIRITUALLY <u>FIT</u> "entire" = whole, complete in all it parts.
SPIRITUALLY <u>BALANCED</u> "wanting nothing" = not lacking any parts. A well rounded maturity - this is why tests come in different shapes, sizes & colors.

If you keep going through the same trial over & over again maybe it is because you have not passed that test yet.

III. BY LOOKING IN THE RIGHT PLACE FOR ANSWERS! (V.5-8)

ASK RIGHT!

One of the most frustrating things in life is being in a difficult situation and not knowing what to do.

YOU NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK IN TROUBLED TIMES!

SEEK GOD'S PROMISE OF <u>WISDOM</u> (v.5-8)
(seek the essential wisdom that God gives)

When the storms of life hit your shore, you need to know what to do! Most people panic, worry, become discouraged etc.

Sometimes when in the midst of trials (testings) there is a tendency to not know how to respond. We tend to speak & act hastily. Wisdom is needed!

We need wisdom so we will <u>not waste</u> the opportunity God is giving us to mature.

In order to gain wisdom you must first <u>know you need it</u>.

A. He will answer if you <u>depend</u> upon Him. (v.5-6a)

You can depend on God because: He is the source of wisdom, He is impartial, generous, kind, and faithful.

1. God is the <u>source</u> of wisdom. "ask of God"

   Note: He did not say: "try to figure it out yourself" Nor his He say "if any of you lack wisdom go to <u>college</u>"

   Jews thought the rabbis were the source of true wisdom because they "passed it on since Moses by word of mouth" No! God is the only source.

   You can turn to the eternal fountain of wisdom in <u>all</u> the circumstances of life.

2. God is <u>impartial</u>. "all"

   His giving of wisdom is not limited to a favored few.

3. God is <u>generous</u>. "liberally" lit.= with singleness of heart. A

banking term meaning "without interest", God has no ulterior motives.

4. God is kind. "Upbraideth not" = without insulting, humiliating or rebuking the asker.

he film "The Wizard of Oz" - He, with frightening lighting, loud voice etc., rebuked the lion who asked for courage, scarecrow - brain, tin man - heart, and Dorothy - home to Kansas.

5. God is faithful. "It shall be given him" Knowing this about God gives positive assurance. It encourages prayer. Cp. Mt.7:7-11.

When troubled times come you can stand up under that test a lot easier when you know what God's purpose is & what to do about it. He is always willing to give you the needed wisdom if you will believe He can and will answer.

The assurance (promise) of answered prayer does not mean that God is some kind of a dispensing machine into which we put a prayer and out comes whatever we select. A proper attitude is required first. This attitude is stated positively & negatively.

Pos. = "faith"; Neg. = "nothing doubting"

Faith is the proper response to a God who is impartial, generous, kind and faithful.

Belief in asking is man's necessary attitude because:

B. He will not answer you if you doubt Him (v.6b-8)

Ill. of a woman who prayed every day for the salvation of her husband. When asked "do you believe God will save Him?" She replied: "not really. You see, no one in his family is saved, and he is so set in his ways."

To not believe God is to insult Him. You are actually denying God's faithfulness and calling Him a liar.

"Let him ask in faith" - There is no acceptable prayer without faith!

Heb.11:6 "impossible to please God";

Mt.21:22 "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." cp.Mk.11:24.

"nothing wavering" = in no way doubting

"wavering" refers to a man with a divided mind. One who is torn in two directions; mental indecision; inner conflict; a desire to say yes & no at the same time.

When a doubter prays he is merely going through the motions of prayer. His words go no higher than the roof of his mouth.

The raging sea = pictures unrest. For example when the wind blows from one direction, the billowing waves move with it. When it blows in the opposite direction again the waves move with it.

v.7 - It is "faith that unlocks the divine storehouse, but unbelief bars its doors"

v.8 - "double minded" = Lit. "two souled" - He acts as if 2 distinct souls or personalities were in his body. Living 2 lives at once. Trying to go in 2 directions at once.

"unstable" = unsteady, wobbling like a drunkard.

The Oyster and the irritable sand speck

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