

The Book of James
Chapter 1 Part 1
“The Purpose of Trials”

Return To
All Commentary

What is the purpose of trials?

If the God we serve loves us, why does He not only permit us to suffer, but many times He Himself is the source that brings the trial into our life?

Paul is the man that the Lord used to write most of our New Testament, and yet at the very beginning of Paul’s relationship with the Lord, Jesus said of Paul:

Acts 9:16

For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

When Paul was falsely arrested by the Roman leadership, he was being held in a prison, chained 24 hours a day between 2 Roman soldiers.

While Paul was chained, he wrote the following to the Christians that were in Philippi:

Philippians 1:12-14

12 But I want you to know, brethren, **that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,**

13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;

14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

The trial that Paul was enduring, being falsely arrested and held in chains in a Roman prison, Paul said that “*What happened to me actually turned out for the furtherance of the Gospel*”.

- ☞ **The 2 Roman soldiers** that were chained on either side of Paul 24 hours a day, were a “**Captive**” audience.
- ☞ **These Roman soldiers** heard about Jesus night and Day from Paul.
- ☞ **The Tradition is** that these 2 Roman soldiers both accepted Jesus as their own Lord and Savior because of being chained to Paul.

Then Paul said that it was “*Evident to the whole palace guard*” that Paul wasn’t guilty of the crimes he was accused of, **but the real purpose of his arrest and being held in prison, was so that the Lord could use Paul to speak to these roman soldiers about Jesus.**

In the Book of Genesis, when Joseph had been thrown into the well by his brothers and left for dead.

- ☞ **His brothers then pulled him out of the well** and sold him to slave traders bound for Egypt.
- ☞ **Joseph ended up** in prison also being falsely accused of trying to seduce his masters wife.
- ☞ **Pharaoh had a dream** that deeply troubled him and Joseph was the only one that could tell Pharaoh what his dream meant:
- ☞ **There would be 7 years of tremendous harvest** in Egypt and then 7 years of world wide famine.

Because of this wisdom Joseph had in giving Pharaoh the interpretation of his dream, Joseph was elevated to the position of second in charge of all of Egypt.

- ☞ **As the famine spread to Israel**, the same brothers that had sold Joseph to the slave traders, were told by their father Jacob to go to Egypt because word had been received that there was grain that could be purchased there.
- ☞ **Arriving in Egypt**, these brothers of Joseph did not know that the same Joseph they had sold into slavery, The Lord had now elevated him to the second most powerful man on the entire earth.

As Joseph stood before his brothers that had done such horrible things to him, he said this:

Genesis 50:20

But as for you, **you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good**, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

The Trial that Joseph endured at the hands of members of his own family, ended up being the very means that the Lord used to save Joseph's entire family.

James 1

1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

2 My brethren, **count it all joy when you fall into various trials**,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

At the time Paul was chained up in the Roman prison, he could not see that this letter he would write to the Philippians that **“What had happened to him had actually turned out for good...”**, would be read by us this morning and be such a tremendous encouragement to us.

When Joseph was in that caravan on his way to Egypt, knowing that his life seemed like it was over as he would be a slave most likely for the rest of his life, **he had no way of knowing that in time, He would end up saving the lives of his entire family from a world wide famine.**

Joseph couldn't see that when we would hear about his story this morning, how much it would bless and encourage us 2,000 years later in our own trials.

We cannot see the Joy that is ahead when the trials we are enduring now are happening.

- ☞ **All we can see** is how terrible things look to us right now, because it is happening to us.
- ☞ **All we can think is** *“Why Lord?, why is this happening to me?”*

James, the writer of this new book we are beginning this morning, was the 1/2 Brother of Jesus.

- ☞ **After Jesus was Born**, Mary and Joseph had other Children together.
- ☞ **James** was one of Jesus younger brothers.
- ☞ **We know that before Jesus was resurrected** from the Dead, James did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah.
- ☞ **After James had seen Jesus raised** with his own eyes, he realized that everything Jesus had said and claimed about Himself was absolutely true.

“Count it all Joy when you fall into various trials”here is the key word.... “KNOWING that the testing of your faith produces patience...”

- ☞ **I don't know of anyone** that says in the middle of a trial in their life, when they are suffering: **“Yippee, this is great!”**
- ☞ **That is not** what James said here.
- ☞ **James said** *“Count it all Joy, because you know that there is a purpose for the trial. You know that in the end, the Lord will use this trial to make it turn out for good for you.”*

So the Joy we can have in our times of suffering is not because we are suffering, but because we know that the Lord has determined that we really need this trial so that He can change us and make us grow.

- ☞ **Sometimes**, we are for the most part **“The innocent party”**, we have not really done something that we deserve what is happening to us.
- ☞ **In these moments**, when people sin against us and cause our trial, the Lord is also mighty in these times, because He promised:

Romans 8:28

... that **all things** (will) work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

In both of the examples I gave you this morning from Paul's life and from Joseph's life, they had not done anything wrong.

- ☞ **They simply were caught** in the sin of other people.
- ☞ **But the Lord already knew** that it was going to happen, and so ahead of time, He planned to use the situation to train and teach both Paul and Joseph.

Paul wrote later that these things that happened to him and others that we read about in the Bible, happened to them, so that 2,000 years later, when we read about what they went through, **we would be encouraged.**

Romans 15:4

For whatever things were written before **were written for our learning**, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures **might have hope.**

And there are also many times when we suffer in our life, just because we have been Dumb!

- ☞ **We have done something** that we are now paying for.
- ☞ **Well, the good news is** that Jesus will even make your own foolish mistakes turn out for good, if you humble yourself before Him and admit your made a mistake and surrender it to Him.

All you have to do is admit that you were wrong. The moment you turn to Jesus and ask Him for Help, He will rescue you.

Some of us here this morning have made mistakes in our relationships with other people.

- ☞ **There are husbands here this morning** that have not loved their wife the way that Jesus told us to love our wife.
- ☞ **There are ladies here this morning** that have not kept that quiet and gentle spirit that the Lord says is so precious to Him.
- ☞ **There are many of us** that have had **anger and yelling** in our dealing with each other, rather than **tenderness and understanding.**

Some of us have turned our backs on Jesus for a time, and done things we knew when we were doing them that they were wrong for us...

No matter what you have done, or whatever people have done to you...

Jesus will rescue you this morning if you will turn to Him, humble yourself, break your heart before Him this morning, and ask Him for His mercy.

Jesus will take your present trial and not necessarily end it, but make it turn out for a good purpose, if You will turn it over to Him and trust Him.

James 1

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

4 **But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete**, lacking nothing.

Dr. J Vernon McGee was speaking at a church one morning when he turned to the pastor of that church and said to him:

“There are more babies in this sanctuary this morning, than there are back there in the nursery...”

Babies are cute and wonderful, unless they are a Baby Christian that has been walking with the Lord for 5, 10, 15 or 20 years **and is still a baby**.

- ⊖ **A Believer in Jesus** that does not have a proper understanding of the real purpose of the trials of their life, will never learn anything from them.
- ⊖ **They will remain in a constant state of Infancy**, never having been trained by their trials.

But if you can understand that what is happening right now in your life, no matter how small the detail, it is all from the Lord, with the sole intent of causing you to **“Grow Up”**.

- ⊖ **Sadly**, there are some people who claim to know Jesus for many years, but they refuse to Grow up.
- ⊖ **I know of 3 Dear Christian families** that I have known for many years, that right now, either the husband or the wife, have filed for a divorce in their marriage **because one or both of them, has refused to grow up and do the work that is necessary to work out their present trial in their marriage**.

Shame on any of us, if we claim to have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, but we will not even be willing to reconcile with our own Husband or Wife!

1 John 4:20

If someone says, “I love God,” and hates (his wife or her husband,) he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

Listen to me Christian Husband and Christian wife, you are called to do whatever it takes to work out your problems that you have in your marriage.

- ☞ **Divorce is not even an option** for the couple that claims Jesus is their Lord and Savior.
- ☞ **I have heard a phrase so many times** before that I am literally nauseous when I here it again:

“Well, I no longer love my husband or my wife...I have lost all my feelings for them...”

May I say to you, **Jesus never asked you to stay married to your mate only when you felt like it**, he called you to stay married to them *“For better of for Worse...”* Do you remember promising the Lord that...I do!

The problem with feelings is that they are constantly changing, therefore we cannot trust them.

I have had times, and so has Elsie, when we have looked at each other and said: *“I don’t feel love for you right now, in fact, right now I don’t even like you right now!”*

But these kinds of feeling change all of the time. When we are mad at someone, we will not feel love for them. But Anger is caused by chemical reactions in our brains, that make us feel differently.

- ☞ **As soon as you take the time** to try and work out your problems with understanding and Love, **those feelings change.**

“Feelings always follow Obedience.”

- ☞ **You do what is right**, and your feelings will change.
- ☞ **Your heart will follow** where your mind and Body go, it cannot operate independent of you.

If you are a believer in Jesus this morning, you have accepted His great sacrifice for your sins, do not take His sacrifice for Granted, it Cost Jesus too much.

- ☞ **We should never say to ourselves or others**, *“Jesus will forgive me...”*
- ☞ **How dare us** do something that we know Jesus had to suffer so much for, just because we know He will forgive us.
- ☞ **How horrible it is** to justify our unwillingness and stubbornness by saying *“Oh, the Lord will forgive me...”*

No, let this trial you are having with your husband or wife have its intended goal: that you will learn to be more patient and long suffering and exercise the kind of Love Jesus died to show you. A love that is not based on feelings, a love that is based on ACTION.

- ☞ **If we will not learn**, then we are destined to repeat the same lessons over and over.
- ☞ **Do we really think** that if we refuse to reconcile with someone now, that the Lord is going to just let it go?

- ☞ **We will repeat the same trial again, with someone else**, and continue to do so, until we humble our hard hearts, and learn to work out problems instead of running from them.

That is my little mini marriage study this morning. I have been deeply hurt personally by people that I have loved for many years, who stood right in front of me and promised the Lord and all of the witnesses in the church that they would never leave or forsake their husband or wife, but are doing so right now...

If you are having problems in your marriage right now, do not even let your heart and mind consider any other option except to begin to work through this problem and stay together...Divorce is never an option!, you promised to stay married forever, do it!

James 1

5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God**, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6 But **let him ask in faith, with no doubting**, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

The Bible makes a distinction between “**Wisdom**” and “**Knowledge**.”

- ☞ **Knowledge** is having the information in your mind about a particular subject.
- ☞ **Wisdom** is knowing what to do with that information.

There are many who obtain Masters degrees or Doctorates in a particular subject, but they just do not have any real wisdom what to do in a particular situation.

- ☞ **The Bible says** that if you are like most of us, we lack good wisdom on what we should do in a particular situation.
- ☞ **All of us here have made stupid choices in our life** that we or others paid for, or perhaps are still suffering through.

Jesus is the source of all wisdom the Bible says, because He is the One through which everything in the universe was created.

Colossians 2:3

...in Jesus, whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

So here in this first chapter of James, The Lord encourages us to ask Him for wisdom in a particular situation, and when we do, that the Lord will give wisdom to us.

- ☞ **Once we have asked the Lord for wisdom** and He has given it to us, then we are accountable to Him for what we do with the wisdom He has given to us.

- ⊖ **First**, we should not doubt what the Lord has told us to do.
- ⊖ **If we allow our mind** to go back and forth between believing what the Lord said and doubting what He said, we will not receive any help from the Lord.
- ⊖ **Second**, if we go back and forth in believing and doubting, we will be “Unstable”, that is, **without confidence**, without a firm foundation, unable to act in a situation.

When the Lord tells us what to do, we need to act on that wisdom without any doubts or wavering.

- ⊖ **One of the biggest mistakes** that we all make, is that of not allowing the Lord enough time to do what we asked Him to do.
- ⊖ **We pray**, ask the Lord for wisdom, or ask Him to help us in our particular trial, struggle or situation, **then we are supposed to just “Wait on Him”**.

Most people will only wait on the Lord a few hours, or a few days.

- ⊖ **We don’t get the answer we want in the time we allow the Lord**, so we begin to take things into our own hands and act.
- ⊖ **As soon as we start to act, the Lord stops acting**. He is perfectly content to let us try and do it ourselves.
- ⊖ **But if we wait and wait** until we see Him moving, then He will always bring it to a good conclusion.

The reason many people are in trouble right now, is that they didn’t give the Lord enough time to work out the problem in His own way and His own time.

- ⊖ **Men and Women** will pray for their husband or wife to change. Then they wait a few months or a few years, then they give up.
- ⊖ **Many times**, when we are asking the Lord to change someone else, **the real problem is us**, and we are the one that the Lord needs to change.
- ⊖ **If we wait on the Lord long enough** He will show us that we are the one that also needs to change.
- ⊖ **Whenever we want a situation to change in our life**, we should always first go to the Lord and say: *“Lord what is there about me that you want to change first?”*

James 1

9 Let **the lowly brother** glory in his exaltation,

10 but **the rich in his humiliation**, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

Another problem that all of us have is that of an incorrect view of who we really are.

- ⊖ **If you have come to Jesus** and accepted His sacrifice on the Cross for all of your sins, you had to do so only because you saw yourself for who you really are.
- ⊖ **A sinner who has broken God’s law**, who is worthy of nothing but death and hell.

- ☞ **But then you also understood** that when you humbled yourself before the Lord, and asked Him to be merciful to you a sinner, He would lift you up from your helpless situation and exalt your life.

Most of the time, we are exalting our self, when we should be humbling our self.

- ☞ **If we are having a problem with someone** in our relationship with them, it is usually because one of us or both of us see ourselves as greater or more important than we should see ourself.
- ☞ **If we are a believer in Jesus**, then we should always see ourselves as Jesus servant or slave.
- ☞ **Servants or slaves** do not have any rights of their own, they are humble, flexible, teachable and totally submitted to the will of their master.

Most of the time when Paul begins one of His letters, he calls himself a “Slave or Bondservant of Jesus Christ”.

Romans 1:1

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ,

1 Corinthians 9:19

For though I am free from all men, **I have made myself a servant to all**, that I might win the more;

Here in James chapter one, the Brother of Jesus is teaching us from his own personal experience, what it is to humble yourself and submit to Jesus authority.

- ☞ **Remember**, before Jesus rose from the Dead, James did not believe that Jesus was Lord and Savior.
- ☞ **It was not until afterwards** that Jesus own brother bowed His heart and submitted Himself fully to Jesus authority, not just as his older brother, but as His Lord and His Savior.

James 1

1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...

Here in verses 9 and 10, James brings to our attention, the proper view we should have of ourselves, whether we are rich or poor...

James 1

9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,
10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away

It makes no difference whether this morning you woke up sleeping on the floor or sleeping on a \$3,000 dollar mattress, whether you have no money, or millions of

dollars, when your heart beats it's last time and you leave this earth, you are going with nothing that you have in your life right now.

- ☞ **So you tell me**, if all of the stuff you have worked so hard to get, all of the stuff that you worry so much about, is staying here when you leave, what does that tell you about the material things you have?

They are not yours! If they were yours, then when you left this earth, we would see a caravan of U hauls behind your Hearst as you made your way to the graveyard.

1 Timothy 6:7

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

So why is it then, that when people have money or lots of stuff, that they act as if this makes them a higher quality human being than someone else?

1 Corinthians 4:7

What makes you better than anyone else? **What do you have that God hasn't given you?** And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own?

There is something that happens to the heart of every person that acquires wealth or possessions.

- ☞ **We begin to believe** that it makes us better than other people.
- ☞ **We begin to expect** that we are entitled to something more than other people are entitled to.
- ☞ **In a Word**, Wealth, Position in our Work, or Possessions, causes Pride to swell up in us.

One of The Greatest things I have seen in a person is that despite their tremendous power, position or wealth they have achieved, they still maintain a great sense of Humility before other people.

There is a story of the man who founded the XXXXXXXX company, how he tithed back to the Lord throughout his lifetime 90 percent of everything the Lord gave him, and yet he was still one of the wealthiest men that ever lived.

- ☞ **We can tell in our own life, just who we believe owns all that we have**, us or the Lord, by whether or not we make Him the first priority in all our finances.
- ☞ **If the Lord gets the first part of all we make**, it is for certain that He is also Lord of all of the other parts of all we have.
- ☞ **But If we just give to the Lord** what is left over or what we think we can spare, then it speaks volumes of how much we still believe all we have is really ours

If you are wondering why the Lord doesn't answer your prayer to let you win that 100 million dollar lottery, it is simple, He knows that it would ruin you.

☞ **Take a good look at every person** who has won the lottery, and all but just a few, it has completely ruined their life.

Unless Jesus is your complete first love, and you have a correct humble view of who you really are before a Holy God, we would not be able to handle great wealth.

Unless we have learned to be faithful to the Lord in the Little He has already given to us, then He will not give us more.

Matthew 25:14-29

14 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, (**Jesus**) who called his own servants (**Us**) and delivered his goods to them. (**Our Money/Possessions**)

15 And **to one he gave five talents**, to another **two**, and to another **one**, to each **according to his own ability**; and immediately he went on a journey.

16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.

17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.

18 But **he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. (Notice that it is "The Lord's Money")**

19 **After a long time** the lord of those servants **came and settled accounts with them.**

20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'

21 **His lord said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'**

22 He also who had received two talents came and said, "Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.'

23 **His lord said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'**

24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

26 "But his lord answered and said to him, **'You wicked and lazy servant**, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.

27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.

28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

29 "For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away

Each one of these servants only received a small amount from their master, but what made the difference was what they did with what they were given.

- ☞ **The Two** who took what the Lord had given and **used it for Him**, He told them “*Well Done*”.
- ☞ **The One** that took what the Lord gave them, **but did nothing with it**, had even that taken away from them.

The principle is simple, Nothing we have, we earned, We received it because the Lord gave it to us, therefore it doesn't belong to us. If you give it back to him by using all of our money and possessions for Him, then we will be called by Jesus, A Good and Faithful Servant...

[James 1](#)

9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away

Next Sunday, we will take part 2 of James Chapter 1, where we will learn how to deal with Temptation, anger, and what the difference is between Believing in Jesus and just having Religion.