

James 1:2-8
Be Joyful in Trials (part 1)

Introduction: James has not discovered the secret or key for Christian living that he wants to share with us. These are commands (highlighted) to be obeyed.

1) I need to obey two important commands—1:2-4

- a) Command # 1: ² **Count it [h`ge,omai] all joy**, *my brothers*,—1:2-3
- i) When? *when you meet* (unpredictable and hazardous) *trials of various* (variegated, diverse) *kinds*, (note the alliteration [peirasmo,j peripi,ptw poiki,loj])
 - (1) Trials are not punishment or a curse for the believer.
 - (2) Trials we encounter include sickness, loneliness, grief, disappointment, discouragement, financial setbacks, etc.
 - ii) Why? ³ *for you know that the testing [doki,mion] of your faith produces steadfastness/endurance/fortitude/perseverance [u`pomoh,].*
 - (1) Trials reveal the quality of our genuine faith and produce spiritual stamina. (MBC)
 - (2) Douglas Moo writes: “The difficulties of life are intended by God to refine our faith: heating it in the crucible of suffering so that impurities might be refined away and so that it might become pure and valuable before the Lord.”
 - iii) We can count trials (a thought, not an emotion) as joyful because they lead us to wisdom to glorify God by trusting Him during the trial.
 - iv) Joy is not our only response to trials (we get sad, etc.), but it is a necessary one.
 - v) As valuable as it is, perseverance is not the final goal of our testing. (Moo)
- b) Command # 2: ⁴ **And let steadfastness/endurance/fortitude/perseverance [u`pomoh,] have its full [te,leioj] effect**,—1:4
- i) Why? *that you may be ...*
 - (1) **Positive:** *perfect [te,leioj]* (mature) *and complete [o`lo,klhroj]* (have all your necessary parts),
 - (2) **Negative:** *lacking in nothing.*
 - ii) Moo writes: Testing, James suggests, is intended to produce, when believers respond with confidence in God and determination to endure, a wholeness of Christian character that lacks nothing in the panoply of virtues that define Godly character.
 - iii) In a day characterized by fragmented, broken people, what a difference God’s grace can produce.

2) I need to pursue wisdom from God through prayer—1:5-8

- a) **If you lack wisdom, pray—1:5**
- i) Assumed situation: ⁵ *If any of you lacks wisdom*, (addressed in 3:13-18)
 - (1) Do you lack the desire or the ability to live skillfully?

- ii) Command: *let him ask God*
 - (1) **Positively**, God gives without deception: *who gives generously/with single, undivided intent to all*
 - (a) God is not a miserly scrooge or deceptive huckster.
 - (i) Prov. 2:6
 - (2) **Negatively**, God gives without reprimanding: *without reproach*,
 - (a) God is not a fault-finding, scolding critic.
 - iii) Promise: *and it will be given him.*
- b) **But pray in faith**—1:6-7
 - i) Command: ⁶ *But let him ask in faith, with no doubting/uncertainty*,
 - (1) Ask with single, undivided intent, just as God gives.
 - (2) Ask without doubting the character of God.
 - ii) Purpose: *for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.*
 - iii) The doubter: 1:7 ⁷ *For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;*
- c) **Beware the instability**—1:8 ⁸ *he is a double-minded man (cf. 4:8), unstable/restless in all his ways.*
 - i) The person who wavers between the only two options (God's wisdom vs. man's wisdom) is unstable. This instability shows up in every area of their life.
 - ii) This is not perfection of faith, but consistency and integrity of intent.

3) **Something I need to remember:**

- a) To have the right attitude in trials, one must see the advantage of trials, but if it is difficult to see the advantages, one can ask for aid and, if one asks correctly, God will give him the right attitude in trials. (J. Ronald Blue, BKC)