

Don't Choke on Life's Bitter Pills

Text : **James 1: 2-8 ; I Pet. 4: 12-19**

S#1.

S#2.

A. We are living in a time when our whole nation is experiencing trials.

1. From the least to the greatest we are all experiencing difficulties.
2. This pandemic was thrust upon us by a nation that is the enemy of western society.
3. It is bringing devastation on at least 227 different countries.
 - a. Worldwide covid-19 cases 14,037,021
 - b. Our county 27 cases and 1 death

B. Much of the devastation in this country has been due to mismanagement.

1. Many leaders have taken drastic actions without sufficient information.
 - a. The lockdowns killed many people and crushed our economy.
 - b. Sending infected people back to nursing homes lead to the deaths of thousands.
2. The politicization of the pandemic has needlessly killed thousands.
 - a. Businesses remain shut down that should never have been closed.
 - b. Teachers' unions want to keep schools closed until the police are defunded.

C. Problems have always befallen mankind.

1. Famine, Drought
2. Earthquakes, Volcanos
3. Storms, Floods
4. Pestilence, Pandemics (*bubonic plague*)

D. With this lesson we want to see some things about life's troubles.

S#3.

1. We must develop a biblical view toward suffering.
2. Trials come from a wide variety of sources.
3. The Christian must develop a God honoring attitude toward trials.

I. What is the biblical view of trials?

S#4

A. **James 1:2** – Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, S#5

1. Notice ... Bro. James does not say it is “joy”; he said consider it joy.
2. “Joy” is the value the Christian is to place on suffering because of its benefit.
3. Note : this is the first of 54 imperatives in the 108 verses of James. (blk & wht)

B. People have many wrong attitudes toward trials.

1. They are God's judgment for sin. (*Jesus died to forgive the sins of the faithful.*)
2. They are a result of unbelief; if only we had more faith ... no trials.
* *Job was the most faithful man of his era, yet he suffered greatly.*
3. Trials are God testing us to see if we will sin.
 - a. This is inconsistent with the character of God.
 - b. **James 1: 13** – Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

C. Three things about trials.

1. Trials are unavoidable.
 - a. "When you encounter various trials." ("hotan" is also translates whenever.)
 - b. It is "when" not "IF."
 - c. **Job 5: 7** – For man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward. S#6.
2. Trial come unexpectedly and often through no fault of our own.
 - a. From "peripiptō" : totally surrounded by ... to fall into something that is all around
 - b. The "Good Samaritan" is a good example :
Luke 10: 30 – Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.
3. Trials are increased if one is a Christian / because one is born again.
 - a. **John 15: 20** – Remember the word that I said to you, ' A slave is not greater S#7. than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. **21** But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.
 - b. If you are sincerely dedicated to living for Christ, you will see trials.
II Tim. 3: 12 – Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. **13** But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse,

II. Trials come from a wide variety of sources. S#8.**A. Our bodies begin decaying while we are still in them.** S#9.

1. Aches, pains, diseases are the normal course of things.
2. Modern medical science keeps us alive to endure more trials than our predecessors.
3. The only way to escape it is to die young.

B. We all have or will deal with financial trials.

1. Unable to work because of sickness, disabling accidents or the economy.
2. We have accidents or the equipment upon which we rely breaks down.
3. Yielding to covetous desires enslaves many to their creditors. (**Prov. 22: 7**)

C. Associating with others creates trials.

1. Everyone with whom you have long term interaction occasionally hurts you.
2. Even family members hurt us from time to time.
 - a. People we love dearly die and leave us to deal with grief while trying to function.
 - b. Families give us emotional support and love, but also problems.
I Cor. 7: 28 – But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.
3. The saddest family problems are those that occur in our spiritual family.

D. Trials come unexpectedly and without warning, often at the worst times.

1. This current pandemic came when we were riding a wave of successes.
2. We all have unexpected struggles in life .. so .. we all “fall into” trials.
3. We are often hit with trials at awkward times :
 - a. Right after a victory. (*Time of major success, child gets sick*)
 - b. Series of trials when you think it is over ... more problems come.

III. The Christian must develop a God-honoring attitude toward trials.**S#10.****A. James 1: 2 – Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.****S#11.**

1. Again, it is **NOT** joy, but we are to place a value of “**Joy**” placed on it.
2. The word “**Consider**” is a command. (*aorist imperative ... adapt and maintain*)
 - a. hégeomai : to consider, deem, account, think: suppose, am of opinion
 - b. An imperative command (one of 54 direct commands in the book)

B. “My brethren”

1. Only a Christian can develop a right attitude toward the trials he faces.
2. “**My brethren**” is used 17 times in the book ... *indicating shared struggles*.
3. Only Christians trust that God has a wise and loving purpose for our trials.

C. Rom 8: 28 ... Only a Christian has the promise that things will work out.

1. We trust God to be in control of our ultimate destiny.
2. Facing problems as joys must be our lifestyle.
3. Doing so demonstrates that our emotions are under our control.
 - a. **Heb. 10:34** – For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. **35** Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. S#12.
 - b. Suppose that antiabortion bumper-sticker on your car caused you to be charged with a hate crime and you are fined \$10K.
 - 1) What is your attitude ?
 - 2) Could you consider it joy ?

D. Do you have the ability to feel blessed when you are persecuted.

1. Jesus taught us the persecutions bring spiritual rewards.

Matt. 5: 10 – Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11** "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. **12** "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. S#13.
2. Jesus did as we are instructed to do ... He looked past the suffering to see Joy.

Heb. 12: 2 – ... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. S#14.
3. Peter and John counted it joy to suffer for the Lord.

Acts 5: 40 – They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. **41** So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. **42** And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. S#15.
4. Paul and Silas counted it joy to suffer for the Lord. S#16.

Acts 16: 23 – When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; **24** and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. **25** But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;

E. Place a value on trials as being “all” joy.

1. “All” is unmixed JOY ... not something about which one’s feelings are mixed.
2. It cannot be one is pretending **or** imagining that a trial is joy.

F. If valued as all joy, a trial is an opportunity.

1. It is an opportunity to glorify God. *It’s the shining of your bright light.*
2. It is an opportunity to mature spiritually ... *Developing ability to stand.*
3. It helps one to become more Christ like.

CONCLUSION :

A. **James 1: 2** – Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. S#17.

S#18.

B. Remember when the teacher would say, put your books away and get a pencil.

1. Some students were excited because there was a pop quiz and others moaned.
 - a. Why was that ? Some students kept up to date with their assignments, but others ..
 - b. Who were the ones that were pleased when there was a test ? Those who studied.
2. Those who do the work to build their faith have no problem when their faith is tested
 - a. They trust both their present and their future to God’s providential care.
 - b. They trust God’s promise :
Rom. 8: 28 – And we know that God causes all things to work together for S#19.
good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
3. There is nothing so evil that God can’t make something good out of it.

C. Are you a child of God ?

1. If you are, God has made something good out of you.
2. If you are not ...
 - a. You are lost in sin.
 - b. You have “**no hope**” and are “**without God in the world.**” **Eph. 2: 12**

INVITATION :

The good news is Jesus died to save you. S#20.

If you will surrender to Him, HE will secure your soul for eternity.

Lesson Text :

James 1: 2-8

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. **4** And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **6** But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, **8** being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

I Peter 4: 12-19

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; **13** but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. **14** If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. **15** Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; **16** but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. **17** For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? **18** "and if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?" **19** Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.