



LESSON 2 - JAMES 1:2-8 (STUDENT)

The testing of a Christian's "Personal" Faith

1. Read James 1:2-8 silently and then again out loud.
2. According to verse 2, what proper attitude does James command the believers to assume amid the trials they will ultimately face?
3. Look up the verb "consider" (2233-*hegeomai*) in a Strong's Concordance, a Bible Dictionary, or The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament; what does this word mean?
4. Now look up the phrase "all" (3956-*pas*) and "joy" (5479-*chara*)." What is James communicating? How are we to consider these various trials? To get a fuller meaning, you may want to consult with some other Bible translations such as the English Standard Version, New Century Bible, or New International Version.
5. In our natural selves from day to day, in what do we tend to find joy?

10. Does James indicate that we are to consider it all joy *if* we encounter trials or *whenever* we encounter trials? To better understand what kind of trials he has in mind, look up a couple of scenarios in the Bible (Luke 10:30; Acts 27:41).

When are these trials coming?

11. Look up the word faith (4102-*pistis*) in a Strong's Concordance or a Bible Dictionary. What "faith" is being tested, and what valuable result does it produce in the believer (cf. 2:1)?

12. Read 1 Peter 1:6-9 to discover the value of encountering various trials in our lives.

A. What two results can trials accomplish in a believer's life? (v. 7)

1. It p_____ one's f_____, (much as gold is refined by fire when the dross is removed) and,
2. It proves the reality of one's f_____. (Stress deepens and strengthens a Christian's faith, allowing the reality of that faith to be displayed).

B. What should be the focus of a believer's faith? (v. 8)

C. Even though believers here on earth cannot see Jesus now, what are they presently receiving (v. 9)?

D. In what way can Christians "prove" that their faith is genuine?

E. How does faith in the One whom we have not seen make a difference when we encounter various trials?

13. What does this testing of our faith continue to produce (Romans 5:3; James 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4)? Consult a Bible Dictionary or Commentary to look up a definition and thus to gain a richer meaning. Pay attention to the tense of the verb, "produces."

14. How does triumphant faith find power to persevere? (See Hebrews 12:2).

15. What is the exhortation that James gives us in verse 4?

16. What are some sinful attitudes that you commonly fall into when you encounter various trials, thereby hindering endurance from having its perfect result?
17. The command to "Let endurance have its perfect result" is a present imperative. What it means is that we are to continue to enable endurance (perseverance) to finish its work, to achieve its perfect goal. Is there something in your life right now that you would define as a trial or a test? What has made it hard for you to be joyful? What is hindering you from enduring through it?
18. According to verse 5, what does the believer need in order to see his trials in a true light and to profit spiritually from them? Who should he ask at once?
19. James assumed his readers would have the need for wisdom, not just knowledge. How does wisdom (4678-*sophia*) enable a believer to meet life and its trials with decisions and actions that are consistent with God's will (see 3:13, 17)?

20. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). The wise man recognizes that he is morally accountable to God for all his decisions in life. But when we fail to ask God for wisdom, what does that imply about us? How does it relate to James 4:6?
21. According to verse 5, God promises that He will not fail to respond to a believer's request for wisdom when we turn toward Him in prayer.
- A. What should the attitude be of every believer when he turns to God in prayer and asks for wisdom, according to verse 6?
- B. How is a believer portrayed who *does not* ask for wisdom with the right attitude, according to verses 6 through 8?
- C. According to verse 7, what should this doubting man expect to receive from the Lord?

APPLICATION:

22. Verses 6 through 8 give us a vivid picture of how people respond to trials. One is turned God-ward, while the other is turned toward the world; the one believes God, but the other disbelieves. The one goes to God in prayer with faith and without doubt; while the other is literally "two-souled" and unstable.

A. Take a moment right now and pray to God. Ask Him to examine your heart and help you to see how you been responding to the various trials God has sovereignly brought into your life.

B. What do you need to repent of?

C. What commitments do you need to make to God today?

EAGER BEAVER:

The linking of joy with trials, suffering, and persecution is an established element in the New Testament, rooted in the teachings of Jesus. Look up Matthew 5:10-12 and Luke 6:22-23.

A. What does Jesus say is inevitable when we follow Him?

B. What are some of the results of being persecuted for doing good?

C. What is the attitude that we are to assume when we are being persecuted?

D. What motivation does Jesus give to assist us in being full of "all joy" during these times?