

“Greeting Team”

For Sunday, August 14th

Remember: Meet in the coat room @ **10:30 am** for brief prayer & then go “welcome” people! **NOTE:** Keep an eye on the auditorium for those who slipped past!

Greeters this week:

Justin Taylor Sunday Night

- 1st— Erickson Thursday PM:
Jen Hagler Thursday PM
- 2nd— Justin Taylor Sunday Night;
- 3rd—Randy Ehlers Sunday Night;
- 4th—Curt Mastbergen Sunday Noon;
Tackett Sunday Night

Small Groups @ MBC

Meet A Minimum Of
2 Times A Month

Announcements

1. “Men’s Retreat”—
September 16-17 at
Camp Assurance! Sign-up @
the Welcome Desk
2. “Servant Equipped”—begins
Wednesday, September 21.
Look for more information to
come!

Joy In Our Trials!

In James’ introduction to his epistle, by the same name, the Spirit of God prompts him to write: *“Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials”* (1:2). Say what? Did he just say that we ought to consider it “joy” whenever we’re facing trials? Yup, sure did! So, what are some of our natural responses to difficulties and problems? Not very joyful are they? Because of our sinful flesh, our natural response is never going to please God, is it? Our flesh always wants to please our flesh. A spiritual response of “joy” is counter-intuitive for us! It’s NOT natural! It’s God’s work in us! That phrase, *“...whenever you experience various trials...”* is interesting. It literally means that it’s an “unavoidable” situation! It’s not “IF” you will experience trials; but, “WHEN.” In other words, you cannot prevent it! You cannot control the various trials of life. I fear that some of you have gone through life feeling a great sense of guilt. You’ve convinced yourself that the reason you’ve had that crisis in your life is that you’ve done something wrong, and God is getting back at you for it! That He’s out to get you! That’s not the case! That’s not the loving, gracious, merciful God who eagerly forgives our sin when we confess it; and cleanses us for our unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-10). When James uses the word “consider” in that verse, he means for us to make a conscious commitment. We have to make a conscious commitment that whenever trials or tests or troubles come that we’re going to count it “joy” because it means that God is working in us! He’s using us for His purposes! If this becomes a struggle for you, let me offer you some Scripture to put to memory! When you memorize Scripture, you give God’s Holy Spirit the tools He uses to strengthen your faith and correct your walk with God! The Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in the Church of Corinth: *“But thanks be to God, who always puts us on display in Christ and through us spreads the aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For to God we are the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing”* (2 Cor. 2:14-15). God uses the tests & trials in your life to put you on display! *“Here’s Jesus in the flesh,”* He tells the unbelieving world. He’s announcing to everyone around you! He wants to show the world, by your response to the testing, that Jesus is more valuable to you than a perfect life without struggles that you still pursue Him despite your trials!



Spiritual Maturity—

James is teaching his readers to let God use the testing to produce spiritual maturity in their life. It’s *“...the testing of your faith...”* he says in v.3 that produces “endurance.” One of our former members, who’s moved away, runs marathons. A marathon is 26.2 miles. He didn’t just start running marathons one day. In fact, if you ask him how far he could run when he started, he’d tell you he wasn’t able to get past the 1-mile mark. But, he kept running, stretching it out to 5 miles; then 10, 15, and 20. Until he could endure 26.2 miles. That’s what the testing of our faith produces is endurance, James says. When you’re a new believer you get tripped up easily over every little test in life. But, God uses it to build spiritual endurance in us! That’s why we consider it joy! We don’t consider it joy because we enjoy the trials. Rather, we face the trials with a joyful heart because we know that God is using those things to produce spiritual endurance in us.