



# **Our Precious Faith**

**James 1:1-4**

**Proverbs 9:10 NLT** Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

- **NIV** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
  - Fear means to respect, honor, awe or tremble before that which you are focused on

**Proverbs 9:10 NLT** Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

- Whatever you are fearing produces an effect in your lives
  - If it the Lord, then there are positive results of wisdom which produces knowledge which leads to good judgement
  - The ability to make blessed decisions in your life regardless of the pressure applied

**Proverbs 9:10 NLT** Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

- We can also respect, honor and tremble before failures, diseases, bad circumstances, what ifs of life
  - This produces not blessing but overt fear, anxiety and normally bad decisions
- What if we altered the word fear with faith

## Our faith is a gift from God

- **Ephesians 2:8 NIV** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God
  - Faith is the gift from God which produces salvation within you
  - The gift of faith is precious and is to be protected and allowed to mature

## Our faith is a gift of God

- **1 Peter 1:6-7 NLT** 6 So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. 7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold.

## Our faith is a gift of God

- We need a proper perspective, attitude toward trials and hardship in our lives that will produce fear or faith
- The one produced in you, will come from what you are respecting and honoring in your life
- **James 1:1-4**

## **Picture in your mind's eye John the Baptist and Jesus in the Jordan river**

- See the Spirit come down and lead Jesus not to the crowds, but the desert for testing
- The proclamation of who Jesus is had to be tested to see if it is true

**We as Christians have received the gift of salvation from Christ, followed Christ in baptism, received the blessing of the Holy Spirit and have been called God's children by adoption**

- But we often forget that the faith-gift that saved us will continually be put to the test by trials and hardships
- Tested for truth, growth, maturing faith

## **The main theme of the book of James is that real faith produces genuine works**

- Real faith produces genuine stability
- Real faith produces genuine love
- Real faith produces genuine humility
- Real faith produces genuine patience

## **The main theme of the book of James is that real faith produces genuine works**

- James begins by telling us that we must have a proper attitude when it comes to hardships and trials
- Respect, honor, be in awe of what they will produce rather than the hardships and trials themselves

## **James' first word to those struggling is – rejoice**

- James is writing to Jewish Christians that have been scattered like seed among the Roman nation
  - Their homeland was taken from them as they are no longer wanted in Israel
  - All their earthly possessions were taken by the Roman government
  - They had to run from the persecution following them

## **James' first word to those struggling is – rejoice**

- They are struggling to walk the Christian path
- Many Jewish believers had begun to grow weary, tempted to either to turn back to their Jewish faith or defect from their faith in Christ
- The reality of suffering creates within us questions regarding God's justice and life's purpose

## James' first word to those struggling is – rejoice

- James' first word is Greetings which literally means “**to rejoice**”
  - Like a friend you haven't seen in a long time coming through the door to your home full of excitement
- He is speaking to them not as an overt authority, but a close trusted friend hurting from them and wanting to encourage them

## **James' first word to those struggling is – rejoice**

- He is not judging them, but he desires for them to lift up their eyes to the Lord Jesus Christ
  - Look at James' introduction
  - I'm just a bond servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ
- The natural human question is – WHY?

**You can rejoice because your precious faith is being matured and made stronger as a result of your trials**

- James tell us a couple things about trials, hardships
  - They are inevitable, James uses the word when not if
  - They are many or various

**You can rejoice because your precious faith is being matured and made stronger as a result of your trials**

- The Greek word means diverse, many-colored or a kaleidoscope of trials, hardships,
  - They come in all shapes and sizes and you have no idea what form they will take or when they will arrive
  - Hard to get ready for something you can't see

## **You can rejoice because your precious faith is being matured and made stronger as a result of your trials**

- James then pulls back the veil and lets us see the inner workings of trials, what their true purpose is from God's perspective
- The testing of your faith produces endurance or perseverance
- This is the Greek word for authenticating something
  - Testing to see if something is real like gold

**You can rejoice because your precious faith is being matured and made stronger as a result of your trials**

- So, our testing has purpose and meaning – It is assessing and developing your faith
- Note the object of God’s testing is “your faith”
- James notes the testing of “your faith” develops perseverance or endurance

**You can rejoice because your precious faith is being matured and made stronger as a result of your trials**

- The goal of God is not to snap our faith muscle, but to stretch and strengthen it
  - It is sort of like a physical therapist

## **You can rejoice because your precious faith is being matured and made stronger as a result of your trials**

- Perseverance or endurance is two Greek words literally meaning to “abide under”
- We might say to “hang in there or don’t give up” today
- When hay season started that first week was miserable
- Endurance or perseverance has an even greater purpose

**You can rejoice because through endurance, your faith is being perfectly and fully developed through your testing**

- **Vs. 4** Perseverance or endurance must finish its work
  - There is a work in your life that can only be accomplished once perseverance or endurance has had its appropriate time
  - You don't learn this quickly, different for everyone
  - There are many stumbles, starts/stops, times you will question yourself and God

**You can rejoice because through endurance, your faith is being perfectly and fully developed through your testing**

- But when you finally get to the point you no longer want to fight; you will simply let go and let God
- It took Moses 40 years, Paul 3 times and John Mark at least once
- Just as a potter uses their fingers to mold a work of art, God's fingers work through various circumstances to bring about His perfect result of maturity and completeness in His people

**You can rejoice because through endurance, your faith is being perfectly and fully developed through your testing**

- The language here carries the idea of cooperating with God's work
- **1st Peter 5:6 NLT** So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.
- Take whatever God allows into your lives, carry it, allow it to transform you

## **You can rejoice because through endurance, your faith is being perfectly and fully developed through your testing**

- When He says it is time, he will honor your faith in Him as He brings a completeness, solidness, strength to your faith in Him
- James says it like this, “You will not lack anything”
  - No double mindedness, sense of being out-of-control, not even overcome by fear and anxiety
  - That’s called peace that passes all understanding

**The question is, “How can Christians, neck-deep in troubles, rise above their situations without dropping out, giving in or falling short?”**

- What can we do to handle the various trials that come our way?
- James gives them three things to do in these verses

**The question is, “How can Christians, neck-deep in troubles, rise above their situations without dropping out, giving in or falling short?”**

- Consider (**vs. 1:2**) – comes from a root word which means to lead or guide
  - Our leading thought should be joy, behind which all other attitudes and actions fall in line

**The question is, “How can Christians, neck-deep in troubles, rise above their situations without dropping out, giving in or falling short?”**

- Know (**vs. 1:3**) – It is James’ way of telling his readers how to stay joyful, positioned, even calm in the midst of trials
  - By knowing that God has a greater purpose in the testing, the believer is able to “consider it all joy or pure joy”

**The question is, “How can Christians, neck-deep in troubles, rise above their situations without dropping out, giving in or falling short?”**

- Let and have (**vs. 1:4**) - carries the idea once again of cooperating with God’s work
  - **NLT** So let it (endurance) grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

The question is, “How can Christians, neck-deep in troubles, rise above their situations without dropping out, giving in or falling short?”

- Let and have (**vs. 1:4**) - carries the idea once again of cooperating with God’s work
  - **NASB** And let endurance have its perfect result (work), so that you may be perfect (mature) and complete, lacking in nothing.

**The question is, “How can Christians, neck-deep in troubles, rise above their situations without dropping out, giving in or falling short?”**

- Chuck Swindoll, “So, how do believers rise above troubles in everyday life? They face them with a deliberate attitude of joy, calling to mind the process that God is working out in their lives, and cooperating with Him throughout the entire process.”



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