

**Faith that Works**  
**“When Faith is Tested”**  
**James 1:1-2**

**Introduction** - The book of James has been called “*The Epistle of Applied Christianity*.” The theme of this book is “*Faith that Works*.” It’s a book for those who are long on theory, but short on practice. Throughout his epistle, James integrates true faith and everyday practical experience by stressing that true faith “works.”

The first place that true faith works is in the trials and hardships of everyday life. What good is your faith if it doesn’t help you be joyful, victorious, or endure trials? We learn to turn our trails into triumphs!

The background and setting:

- A. Who was James?
- B. Who are the Twelve Tribes?
- C. Why did he write?

Five things I need when my faith is tested:

**I. A Joyful Attitude**, vs. 2.

- It’s trials, not temptations.
- Trials are diverse.
- What should my attitude be when my faith is tried?
- “Count it all joy”

It sounds irrational. How can this be? It’s not enjoy your trials (Heb. 12:11), the key word is the word “*count*.” It’s a financial term. It means to evaluate. “*Our values determine our evaluations. If we value comfort more than character, then trials will upset us,*” Warren Wiersbe.

**Note:** This is an imperative. God will give you the strength. **Illus.:** Jesus said, (Matt. 5:11,12) “*Blessed are ye....*” Acts 5, the apostles. Paul, Rom. 5:3, “*We glory in tribulation.*”

You say, “*I don’t know how, it seems hard.*”

## II. An Understanding Mind, vs. 3.

The key word is “knowing.” What do I need to know?

1. Trials are designed by God to purify your faith, vs. 3a.

**Illus:** God tested to determine its true value. Also, Job said, “I know...”

2. Trails are designed by God to produce patience, vs 3b.

“Patience” - it’s not a passive resignation to an unpleasant situation. It’s *steadfastness* or *endurance*!

**Illus.:** “Story of young man going to his pastor for prayer.”

-Warren Wiersbe

**Illus.:** Freeing a butterfly from its chrysalis!

Trials are not only designed by God to purify your faith, produce patience and endurance, but also perfect Christian character.

## III. A Surrendered Will, vs. 4.

James calls on his readers to “*let patience have its perfect work;*” or “*let it produce its full and proper fruits.*” So don’t resist God’s working in your life, rather let him have his way.

“O if you only knew what peace there is in an accepted sorrow.”

James gives us two reasons we should let patience run its full course.

1. It will make us “perfect” or “mature.”
2. It will make us “entire”, it’s perfectly equipped. **Note** - “wanting nothing” or “lacking in nothing” or “without any defects.”

It’s not in an absolute sense, that will not happen until heaven. “But trials patiently borne will bring us well along the way.”

**Illus.:** Like a babies that refused to be weaned.

#### **IV. A Prayerful Heart**, vv. 5-8.

The most important thing to do when faith is being tested is to pray.

What do we pray for?

1. To escape.
2. To endure.
3. To enlist.

See also James, vs. 5 “pray for wisdom.”

Wisdom - to learn lessons God is trying to teach us.

Three encouragements to prayer given by James in verse 5.

1. “He gives to all men liberally.” He’s a giving God.
2. “He upbraideth not.” He won’t rebuke you, he’s a kind God.
3. “It shall be given him.”

James tells us how to pray, vv. 6-8. “In faith.”

#### **V. Keep Your Eyes on The Prize**, vv. 9-12.

James gives us two examples of test.

1. The test of poverty, vs. 9. The rich poor.
2. The test of prosperity, vs. 10-11. The poor rich.

Rich or poor, trials have a way of teaching us the “brevity” and uncertainty of life and the universality of death.

Jesus, “the rich fool...”

Note:

1. It’s not just trials, it’s “endureth.”
2. It’s not for salvation.
3. What’s the crown of life?
4. It’s promised.
5. Love

Key, “love” Him, vs. 12. Do you love God?

If you love God, you will.....

1. Count it all joy, vs. 2
2. Knowing, worketh steadfast endurance, vs. 3.
3. Let God have his way, so mature, vs. 4.
4. Ask God for wisdom, vv. 5-8.
5. Love God with eyes fixed on eternity, vv. 9-12.

An unknown author of another century wrote this timeless poem:

*My life is but a weaving,  
between my Lord and me;  
I cannot choose the colours.  
He worketh steadily.  
Oftimes He weaveth sorrow  
and I in foolish pride,  
Forget He see the upper  
and I the under side.  
Not till the loom is silent  
and the shuttles cease to fly,  
Shall God unroll the canvas  
and explain the reason why,  
The dark threads are as needful  
in the Weaver's skillful hand,  
As the threads of gold and silver,  
in the pattern He has planned.*

Salvation. We love Him because He first loved us!