

## The Wonder of Endurance

James 1:12

### Notes

True happiness is secured as we press on in Christ through the trials of life and experience the fullness of the love of God

#### I. Introduction

In the online edition of *Inc.* there is a story about a pair of ultra-marathon runners. An ultra-marathon is a 100-mile race, usually, through mountainous terrain and is only for the most hardcore runners.

“Killian Jornet is a legend. Even so, what he did at this year's rendition of the Hardrock 100 can only be described as superhuman.

The Hardrock is a 100-mile jaunt through Colorado's San Juan Mountain range. It boasts 33,000 feet of elevation gain with multiple steep ascents of 13,000 feet peaks. Many professional runners do not finish after succumbing to changing weather, altitude sickness or edema. It's known as the hardest race on the circuit.

... At mile 13, while running through a steep snow field he took a hard tumble. Dazed, he jumped to his feet 50 meters down the pitch only to realize he'd suffered a horrible shoulder injury. Using his other arm and the ground as leverage, he popped his badly dislocated shoulder back in place.

Medics begged him to drop out at mile 42, as the pain had advanced to the point of unbearable. Instead, he fashioned a homemade sling and continued up the trail.

Between mile markers 55 and 65, he encountered a brutal wind and hailstorm. Unbalanced due to the sling, he fell several more times, the shoulder barely hanging on. He was almost pulled from the course at mile 75 but managed to make it out of the aid station, undeterred.

All the while he battled American Mike Foote for the lead. In the final 11 miles, he surged forward outpacing Foote by 20 minutes....

Jornet commented after the race, "Yeah, I didn't think I could finish because at the beginning it was painful, then it was a bit better, but then the storm started and it was very painful," said Jornet in his post-race interview. "It wasn't easy. Yeah, I wasn't sure I could win at all..." (<https://www.inc.com/matt-given/this-runner-won-a-100-mile-race-with-a-broken-shou.html>)

I dare say that many of us have never and probably will never endure this type of difficult race.

But what about the race of the Christian life? What about battling temptation? Fighting pride, fear, greed, and anxiety?

What happens when the trial lasts longer than anticipated or is more difficult than we imagined?

What happens when we give in to temptation and fall and get all busted up because of our sin? Do we stay down, or by the power of God, do we get back up and keep going?

When the journey is steep, the woods are dark, the pressure just seems too much, and we feel overwhelmed what do we do? Do we stop the journey?

The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is one of the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith.

Those who are truly in Christ are securely in Christ.

For those who truly are in Christ, who have been forgiven and redeemed, there is no loss of salvation. If salvation could be lost because of our sin, then the cross of calvary was not valid.

When Jesus saves, he saves completely.

So today, as we continue through the book of James, we come to verse 12. Verse 12 is an interesting verse, because in context it looks like it should come after verse 4, but in reality, James places this verse in the chapter in just the right spot.

In this verse we are shown the wonderful glory and grace of God to sinners just like us, who by his power and grace, finish the race of faith and receive all the rewards of heaven.

*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him, (James 1:12).*

As I translated the verse, it reads like this, "Happy is the man who does not leave the faith during the difficult, but beneficial proving grounds of life, but instead stands the test and is proven true and acceptable; he will take possession of the victor's crown of abundant and eternal life from God himself, who promises to give it to all who have received and share his love."

As we look at the previous 11 verses, we come to understand the importance of trials in our lives and how we can be victorious through them.

In verses 2-4 we learn.

## **II. Trials are Necessary to Shave Off the Parts of Us That Are Not Genuine (1:2-4)**

James gives us the most peculiar recommendation. He tells us to rejoice, or to be joyful at trials when they come into our lives.

Why would he do that? Why would he tell us to rejoice at persecution? At a job loss? How can we be expected to see the beauty in the death of a loved one, the strain of an already fragile relationship?

You see, James knew the same thing Paul knew and discussed in 2 Cor. 4:17 when he said, "For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison."

Well, what is this glory? Is the glory a larger mansion in heaven? More rubies on our heavenly crown?

The glory Paul talks about is expounded on in James 1:2-4.

Yes, trials are difficult, that is the nature of a trial. When our faith is tested, we learn to endure and when we endure, the sinful, the flesh, the lust, pride of life, greed, fear, anxiety, and selfishness are shaved from our hearts, and we look more like Jesus.

The glory Paul talks about, the glory that is beyond all comparison is Christ!

Our trials make us more like Jesus! That is why James tells us we can rejoice.

When we are hurt, when we are in need, when we don't know what to do, or when we suffer what do we do as believers? We run to Jesus.

And the more time we spend with Christ, the more we resemble Christ.

Trials help to remove those parts of our hearts that are not genuinely Christian.

What is genuinely Christian? Oh, you know what I mean when I talk about genuine Christianity.

Genuine Christianity is authentic discipleship. Genuine Christianity is having Jesus continually remodeling our hearts and giving him full access to the basement of our motivations.

Genuine discipleship is following Christ, not for how it may benefit me, but because I am in love with Jesus.

Genuine discipleship is counting the cost of following Jesus, recognizing the culture will never go along with your decision, and standing firm in the face of opposition.

What about you? What is Christ shaving off your heart right now? What is he trying to teach you about himself?

Trials help us develop a strength in Christ we cannot obtain otherwise.

In verses 5-8 we learn.

### **III. Wisdom is Required to Endure Trials and Achieve Their Intended Purpose of Christlikeness (1:5-8)**

Pastor Haydon told us about the joyful blessings of verses 2-4 and Pastor Gene reminded us that wisdom is required to endure these trials and achieve their intended purpose of Christlikeness.

If you are going through a trial and you can't seem to understand its purpose, you maybe have lost sight of the goal of your discipleship, or you are just struggling in your walk, James instructs us to ask God for wisdom.

I talked about wisdom in this week's newsletter, and I encourage you to go back and read it.

What is wisdom? Wisdom is the correct application of knowledge. It is knowing what to do and applying the correct knowledge, at the right time in the right way.

We need wisdom to properly and completely endure the trials so that we have the intended results of the trial.

Pastor Gene reminded us of the necessity of gaining and receiving wisdom as we go through this life.

We, in ourselves and through our own strength, do not have the ability or capability to understand, interpret, and correctly apply biblical doctrine to our lives.

We must have the wisdom of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

And when we ask God for wisdom, for his power to endure the trial for his glory and our good, we are to ask with full faith believing he will answer.

And God will answer. God does not desire you to fall in your trial. He has specifically crafted your current trial, this season in your life, just for you. Everything about what you are going through is designed with absolute precision to remove a very specific part of you so that Christ may fill the void left in your heart.

Do you really believe your current trial; this season of life is for your ultimate good? Have you asked God for wisdom, for strength, for understanding?

We must ask for and we must believe that God desires our best when we ask. We ask in faith. We ask with dependence. We ask with urgency so that we can correctly apply the Word of God to our hearts and produce glory for God.

In verses 9-11 we learn.

#### **IV. During the Trials of Life, We Will Be Tempted to Take Our Focus off Jesus (1:9-11)**

If we take our focus off Jesus and forget that our final destination is heaven and that for all of eternity we shall be in the blessed presence of Jesus, we will get caught up in the temporary trivial pursuits of this world.

When we get caught up in the pursuits of the world, we lose sight of the main thing-the glory of God-knowing Christ and making him known.

We cannot be people who are overwhelmed with our needs nor can we be people consumed with our wealth.

For those who struggle financially, recognize that your low economic status perfectly positions you to encounter the fullness of the glory of Christ.

For those who are extra blessed with financial means, recognize your high economic status perfectly positions you to be used by God in amazing ways for his glory, but also that there is very real danger in relying on the strength and security your money affords you.

We are to unite in the gospel truth that has saved us and pursue the gospel call that each of us share in Christ.

We will be tempted to take our focus off Jesus, but the cost of doing so is too great.

These verses and truths lead us to the glorious promise of verse 12.

Verse 12 provides us with a few principles that, if we learn these and take these into our hearts, we can be victorious through our trials and receive the crown of life which the Lord promises.

## **V. Principles of Endurance:**

### **a. There will be Counterfeit Blessings**

The word James uses here for blessed is the same word Jesus uses in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.

This word means happy.

Look at how this connects to verse 2-4.

When you recognize your trials are only temporary situations that are meant to produce the eternal glory in Christ within you, you can endure the trails with joy.

Blessed and happy is the person who can endure a trial and even in the midst of their suffering, even through the tears, you can see, you know, you have faith and hope that this is not the end, that there is something greater coming.

But we know, oh how we know, that there are counterfeit blessings in this world.

Counterfeit blessings sell you the promise of happiness, but deliver a momentary relief of pain or stress, only to have the despair or danger return.

Worldly blessings have no eternal purpose or reward.

The world will tell you to seek your truth, your heart, your well-being, your happiness above all else.

I can tell you, person after person I have spoken with, and in tears, counseled that has pursued counterfeit blessings only to be burned by their pursuit.

Are you chasing counterfeit blessings right now?

Counterfeit blessings will tell you to do everything you can to avoid the trial because pain is not enjoyable.

No, pain is not enjoyable, that is why it's called pain and not pleasure.

As believers, may we recognize counterfeit blessings. We must know that godly trials are ultimately a blessing for our lives and if we seek God's wisdom in their midst, we will have the strength and patience to endure the trail and receive our blessing.

### **b. Perseverance is not Easy**

The next principle we see in verse 12 is that perseverance is not easy. That is why is called perseverance.

This word is a really unique word and means to abide under; to stay and not leave; to hold fast to the faith.

Perseverance is not easy because pain is not enjoyable.

When we experience pain, we seek to immediately rid ourselves of the pain, but every athlete knows the only way to grow, to win, to be a champion is to endure and persevere through pain.

This word persevere means to abide under.

I love this because it connects with Jesus' words in John 15:5 when he says, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

To abide means to remain and to be nearby. So let us connect these two ideas.

Perseverance is not easy, but if we remain near Jesus, connected to his vine, he will give us the strength to endure the trial and even in the midst of the trial he will produce the fruit of righteousness in our hearts and lives.

How amazing is this!

Are you in a trial this morning? Do you feel like giving up? Do you see one coming?

I want to encourage you this morning. You may be in a trial, or you may see one coming right around the corner.

I want to go ahead and admit with you. The trial will not be, is not easy.

The trial will be difficult, and you will question yourself and will wonder if you can make it through.

You will think about giving up and giving in. Don't give in. Instead turn to Jesus, draw close to him. Call upon for strength and wisdom and you will receive a power, understanding, stamina, and courage that shocks you.

### **c. Trials are Not Your Enemy**

We often think that trials or hardships in life are God's way of getting back at us. This is not the case.

James says the person who endures the trials, who struggles through to the end is blessed.

The word trial means a test, but a test with a beneficial purpose.

God gives us trials to bless us which is why James tells us in verses 2-4 to rejoice in our trials.

We are not to rejoice because of the trials, but in the trial because we know the trial is and will produce in our hearts, the righteousness of Christ.

So, don't go thinking God is trying to one up you if you are experiencing a trial.

I was talking with my daddy earlier this week and he made the statement, "It seems like you just get recovered from one hurdle and then we are thrown another one."

Well, you know what? Daddy wasn't wrong. We have observed time after time in our previous study on the Book of Judges that too much time of blessings and lack of hardship produces a lazy, complacent, and often idolatrous follower of God.

Trials are meant to drive us to Jesus and experience his mercy.

#### **d. Trials are not meant to isolate you**

The reason this is important is because trials often isolate us from the body of Christ and from God himself.

We allow the exact thing God doesn't want to happen, happen to us.

When we are struggling, we are often embarrassed, or we don't want to bother anyone with our issues.

Let me just say this right up front. That is not humility, that is pride talking. Get over yourself.

Everyone one of us struggle. Everyone one of us need the church. Everyone one of us are in need of wisdom and encouragement.

Everyone one of us needs a spiritual spotter in our lives, to help us with the load when it gets heavy.

The church of Jesus, blood bought saints of glory, are here to help one another. We are a church that is imperfect. We are a church that is filled with sinners. We are a church that often acts hypocritical in our faith.

We are also a church that is seeking to exalt Christ with everything in us. We are a church seeking to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. We are a church striving to engage the lost world with the gospel.

We are a church, filled with people who need a deeper and closer walk with Jesus and we desire to help you walk close to him also.

If you are struggling in a trial right now, reach out. Don't keep silent. Silence isolates you from the body of Christ and keeps you from the blessings of Christ.

#### **e. God fulfills his promises**

This principle is key.

You may be wondering where God is in all this. You may be asking yourself if it is truly worth the struggle.

James tells us a most glorious truth.

God himself has promised this crown of life to everyone, to all his children who endure this life in Christ.

Those who are approved are the ones who have not abandoned the faith and proven their salvation true.

This is not a lose your salvation issue, it is a parable of the soils issue. Those who are in Christ are eternally in Christ.

To “receive” means we will take hold of, take possession of this crown.

This crown is not a crown of kings, but of victors of the race. It is the crown given by the emperor to the champion. That is why Paul says in 1 Cor. 9:24 to run the race to win the prize.

This crown is no ordinary crown. It is the crown of life. And this life is no ordinary life. The life God gives is an abundant eternal life in Christ.

God, himself grants us the seal of this life on our hearts the very moment of our salvation and he hands us this eternal life when we enter heaven.

God makes this promise to all those who love him. This love is important because it speaks to the security of our salvation.

We can only love God because he first loved us. The love James describes here is agape love, a God-like love and only those who have personally experienced this love have the ability to share and give this love.

Are you struggling to believe right now?

This love is an eternal love that can never be forsaken.

I tell you all this so you can know and be encouraged.

That when the night seems to never end; that answer seems to allude you; the bank account is so dry you see dust when you check the account; when the relationship has fallen apart, and you see no reconciliation in sight-that you will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is hope beyond this moment and God has your good in mind and you shall be rewarded.

## **VI. Conclusion**

You may be struggling through a trial right now.

Your trial is meant for your good and God’s glory.

I want to let you know you are not alone. It does not matter if you are just entering your trial, or if you have found yourself knocked down.

You are not alone. There is an entire church of brothers and sisters, sinners saved by the grace of God, right here for you.

Find you a brother or a sister and ask them to pray with you and for you. Allow them to help you and bear your burden.

Don’t you dare for a moment think you are trouble for someone. When you reach out in Christ, the hand of the Lord already has a hold of you, and a hand of a brother or sister in Christ who loves you reaches back to keep you from slipping.

Remember, the wonder of enduring trials is finding an abundant and eternal happiness in Christ as you experience the majesty of his unfailing love.



If you recognize that sin, has you in a prison and you want to escape, I implore you to call out to Christ.

Jesus promises to save all those who call out to him.