

Consider it all Joy

- *In James 1:2-22 there are seven things we need to consider when we find ourselves in the midst of trials.*
- *If we carefully consider these seven principles when we go through times of testing and hardship we will develop a special delight and intimacy with God that will deepen our relationship with Him for all eternity.*

THE FIRST POINT: COUNT IT ALL JOY

James 1:2-4 (NKJV)

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,
³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.
⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

- *The Greek word translated here as “count it” means “to consider, deem, account, to think.” It denotes a belief resting not on one’s inner feelings or sentiment, but on the due consideration of external grounds and the weighing and comparing of facts. It denotes a deliberate and careful judgment.*
- *This word suggests we’re not relying on our feelings but on carefully developed convictions.*
- *Many people react impulsively to the circumstances that confront them without considering the big picture and the ultimate consequences or outcome of their decisions.*
- *When one’s reaction is easily influenced and swayed by whatever circumstances they may face or whatever feelings may rise up within them they end up making rash decisions and blurt out things that later they wish they had never spoken.*
- *James began his epistle with the exhortation, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.”*
- *To consider it all joy requires us to carefully consider all the facts and prepare our minds and hearts to embrace the truth.*
- *This is more than just an act of praising the Lord in a moment of trial even though that is part of it. It is a deliberate consideration of the facts and truths of who God is and the reality of His faithfulness. These unchangeable truths provide the bedrock for us to be able to “consider it all joy” no matter what trials we face or what hardships we endure.*

- *To consider it all joy we must develop the right perspective and replace any false beliefs and concepts that we have unknowingly accepted.*
- *Abraham is a wonderful example of one who learned to become a man of faith with unwavering confidence in God. However, at the beginning of his faith journey he struggled with both fears and doubts that sometimes led him to make rash decisions and compromise the truth.*
- *However, in the end, Abraham became the quintessential example of a man of faith.*

Romans 4:17-22 NKJV

¹⁷ (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

¹⁸ who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.”

¹⁹ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.

²⁰ He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,

²¹ and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

²² And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

- *How was Abraham transformed from a fearful, double-minded man to one with unshakeable faith? He simply believed and walked with God every day.*
- *The way we develop this bedrock of unshakeable faith is by getting to know God through daily meditating upon His Word, spending time in prayer, and encouraging one another in Christian fellowship.*

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,”

- *The Greek word “fall into” denotes not simply facing a trial but actually being totally encompassed and immersed by the trial even as one may fall into a pit.*
- *The Greek word “various” means “multi-coloured” meaning that the types of trials and hardships we encounter in life can take on innumerable forms and intensities.*
- *We may face trials simply because we’re human.*
- *We may face trials because we’re Christians.*

- *Our response when we are faced with trials, hardships, and losses is not to just rejoice, but to fully rejoice with “all joy.”*
- *However, our joy is not because of the trials, sorrows, and painful circumstances in which we find ourselves. Only crazy people want to suffer. The source of our joy is in God, because we have confidence in His plan and purpose for the trials.*
- *Suffering and pain on its own is never good. However, when we turn to God in the midst of our pain and suffering He is able to transform us and our circumstances into something glorious. It is our response to God in the midst of trials that will determine if we will bear good fruit or bad fruit—we will either grow bitter or become better.*

Matthew 5:11-12 NKJV

¹¹ "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- *Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount reinforces the blessings and joy we are to have when we endure suffering and persecution for the sake of Jesus Christ.*
- *The Greek word “rejoice” means “rejoicing exceedingly.” The Greek word “exceedingly glad” means “to jump with joy.”*
- *The reason we are to rejoice for the sake of Jesus is because “great is your reward in heaven.”*
- *Our joy is because when we turn to Christ in the midst of our trials and persecution, God does a work in our hearts that will bring great glory to Him.*
- *My greatest desire and joy is when I stand before Jesus to hear Him say, “Well done good and faithful servant.” (Matthew 25:21).*
- *However, my greatest delight will be to see Jesus smile and know that I have brought pleasure to Him through my life.*

James 1:2-4 (NKJV)

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

- *James explains why we need to count it all joy when we find ourselves in various trials—because through these trials our faith is tested and purified and the Holy Spirit will shape us into the image of Jesus Christ. We will be perfect and complete and lack nothing.*

James 1:2-4 (Williams Translation)

“You must consider it the purest joy, my brothers, when you are involved in various trials, for you surely know that what is genuine in your faith produces the patient mind that endures; but you must let your endurance come to its perfect product, so that you may be fully developed and perfectly equipped, without any defects.”

James 1:2-4 (Phillips Translation)

When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends. Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed and you will find you have become men of mature character with the right sort of independence.

- *If we fail to see things from the eternal perspective then times of loss, sorrow, and trials will overwhelm us. However, when we see things from the point of view of Heaven, we will be able to look past the temporary suffering and see the eternal glory.*
- *The Greek word for Gospel means “The Good News” and in some languages it is translated as the “news that makes one happy or smile.”*
- *To an unbeliever, the New Testament would read like a tragedy. Nearly all of the apostles suffered great persecution and all them were put to death, many in very painful and horrible ways. Only the apostle John was not martyred, however, in his old age he was imprisoned on the island of Patmos.*
- *Even the Messiah Himself was put to death in the most horrible unimaginable way.*
- *But when we read the New Testament it is a book that exudes inexpressible love and joy.*
- *How is that possible? Because it looks past the temporary suffering to see the eternal glory!*
- *The reason we can consider it all joy is because “He is Risen and Lives for Ever More!!!”*
- *If one discounts the resurrection of Jesus Christ then the New Testament reads like a tragedy. Not only does everyone die, but many died violent deaths at the*

hands of wicked men. Even worse, sincere and heroic people threw their lives away for something that was not even true.

- *However, the New Testament doesn't conclude at death. True life begins at the resurrection as we spend eternity in unbroken fellowship with God and our fellow believers.*

Revelation 22:17 NKJV

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

- *The last chapter of the last book of the Bible, Revelations 22, summarizes the heart of God and the theme that runs from Genesis to Revelation.*
- *It is a wedding invitation; however, God is inviting us not to be one of the guests but to become His Bride!*

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NKJV

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Romans 8:18 NKJV

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

- *What excitement and wonder to see Jesus face to face and enjoy fellowshipping with Him forever!!!*

THE SECOND POINT: "GOD'S GENEROSITY TO GIVE US WISDOM"

James 1:5

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

- *The thought found in verse 5 is not disjointed but really flows with the previous verses. Another reason we can "consider it all joy" when we go through trials is because we can be confident that God is faithful to give us the wisdom we need to make the right decisions.*

Nehemiah 2:4

⁴ Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

- *This verse in Nehemiah beautifully illustrates the immediacy of God and His faithfulness to give us wisdom when we simply turn to Him and ask.*

THE THIRD POINT: “DON’T BE DOUBLE-MINDED”

James 1:6-8

⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- *Double-mindedness will produce great fear and confusion in our hearts when we are going through times of trials.*
- *The enemy will cause us to question God’s faithfulness. He will put thoughts in our minds like, “Where is God?” “Doesn’t He care for me?” “Why did He allow this to happen?”*
- *To ask in faith is to be completely confident that God hears every one of our prayers, even our quietest whispers, and He delights to respond and answer us.*
- *When it says a double-minded man will not receive anything from the Lord, this is not saying that God is ignoring him, but when someone is double-minded they are unable to receive.*
- *Every time the Lord tries to show them something they continue to question, “Is this really from God?” The end result is that they fail to act on anything God shows them and they fail to walk through any door God opens for them.*

James 1: 7-8 (Williams Translation)

“Such a man indeed must not expect to get anything from the Lord a person with two minds unreliable in every step he takes.”

- *Double-mindedness leads to instability and unreliability. One day they want to walk with Jesus and the next day they don’t feel like seeking Him.*

THE FOURTH POINT: GLORIFY GOD WHEREVER HE PUTS US

James 1:9-11

⁹ Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

¹¹ For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

Philippians 4:12-13 NKJV

¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

- *Many times Christians fail to shine for the glory of God because they are waiting until things are the way they wish them to be.*
- *But Jesus says we are the light of the world and we are to rejoice with great joy independent of our circumstances. In fact, the light of Christ shines most brightly through us when we rejoice and are thankful in very difficult or painful situations. The light of Christ also shines brightly through us when we worship Him in the darkness of trials.*

THE FIFTH POINT: CONSIDER THE RESULTS OF THE TRIAL

James 1:12

¹² Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

- *The purpose of trials is to bring forth an enduring reward. As we pass through trials it does not produce death but results in abundant life. The crown of life does not refer to salvation but the overflowing, abundant life that Christ is offering all God's children.*
- *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation."*
- *There is a blessing in experiencing temptation.*
- *The Greek word blessed "markarios" is used precisely 50 times in the New Testament. The number 50 in the Bible speaks about the year of Jubilee, where those who were in debt, bondage, or enslaved were set free and received back all they had lost.*
- *We need to take note each time the New Testament uses the word "blessed." God has many blessings He desires to bestow upon His children but we must position ourselves with obedience and open hearts of faith to receive His blessings.*

- *One of the blessings is to those who endure temptation. In the midst of temptation there is a potential source of great blessing that God wants to impart to us—the crown of life.*
- “When he has been approved he will receive the crown of life”
- *The Greek word “approved” means “to prove as genuine, honoured on the basis of proven worth, judged worthy, considered good.”*
- *“He will receive the crown of life” The result of passing through trials or temptations is to experience the abundant, overflowing life of Christ in our souls.*
- *What is the key response that God is seeking from us as we go through temptations? Is it courage, wisdom, faith, or endurance?*
- *These are all wonderful characteristics we must develop but the foundation from which all of these spring is love.*
- *“which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”*
- *The strongest motivation for us to persevere, serve, and obey God is love. “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (John 14:15, NASBS).*

Revelation 3:21 NKJV

²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

- *What a wonderful invitation to those willing to respond and co-labour with the Holy Spirit to bring forth the overcoming life of Jesus Christ that is in our spirit into our souls. What should stir us to want to overcome is our love for Him and our desire to be as close to Him as possible.*

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 NKJV

¹⁹ For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;

²⁰ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;

²¹ to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;

²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

²³ Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.

- *Apostle Paul was willing to suffer any degree of hardships and trials in order that people might come to Christ and be saved. “I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”*

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NKJV

¹⁴ For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

¹⁵ and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

- *Apostle Paul’s longing to see people come to Christ went far beyond a deep desire. It was a compulsion that drove him forward in the face of impossible opposition and suffering. The source of Paul’s compulsion was Christ’s love. — “For the love of Christ compels us.”*
- *Paul willingly laid down his life to go through any trials he faced so that Christ’s life and love could be manifest to those around him.*

THE SIXTH POINT: GOD HAS THE BEST FOR US

James 1:13-18

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

- *Verses 13 and 14 appear to almost contradict verse 12.*
- *Verse 12 says there is a blessing when we endure temptations, but then the next verse warns us not to say, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.”*
- *Verse 12 says it is a blessing to pass through trials and then verse 13 says don’t say that God is tempting you.*

Genesis 22:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

Genesis 22:1 (KJV)

¹ And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

- *Genesis 22:1 is just one of many times in the Bible when it says that God tempted or tested someone.*
- *What is the difference between the word “test” and tempt”?*
- *The idea of testing or tempting is the same.*
- *They are the same words in both Greek and Hebrew.*
- *How then can we bring together these two apparently contradictory thoughts found in James 1:13 and Genesis 22:1?*
- *“for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone,” but it is clear that God tested Abraham.*
- *God tested Abraham’s level of love and trust.*
- *God tests us in order to give us an opportunity to choose to do good.*
- *God does not tempt us to do evil. He tests us so we can choose to do good.*
- *The devil tempts us with sin in order to get us to do evil.*
- *The interesting thing is that both tests are taking place at the exact same time.*
- *In Abraham’s time of testing, God was rallying around Abraham to see him overcome and choose to do good. God was in Abraham’s corner encouraging him to win.*
- *At the same time the devil was trying to attack Abraham with doubts about God’s goodness and faithfulness hoping he would falter and fail.*
- *In the crucible of the fiery furnace of the test where we are not able to see the outcome with our natural eyes we are to look with the eyes of faith to see God’s faithfulness.*

- *It doesn't matter how many times Abraham failed in the past; what mattered is that Abraham finally passed the test.*

¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

- *The source of our desire to sin is found in our flesh which contains our own sinful habits which the devil tries to exploit.*
- *Our inner desire to resist sin and seek God is the Holy Spirit stirring our hearts with love so that through the life of Christ in our reborn spirits we can overcome temptation.*
- *There are three reasons why we may experience temptation:*
- *1. God allows the devil to tempt us because the Lord knows we have enough strength by His grace to be victorious, overcome, and become stronger.*
- *2. There are areas in our hearts that still have bondage and darkness that we are unaware of, so God allows temptations to reveal them to us so we can turn to Him in repentance and receive forgiveness, cleansing, and freedom.*
- *3. We have disregarded the warnings found in Scripture, the warnings that the Holy Spirit has been speaking to our hearts, and the warnings God has spoken to us through Christians who God has placed in our lives and we made choices that opened the door for unnecessary temptations.*
- *When we put our hand in God's hand and allow Him to lead us, He will not lead us astray. However, there are times when He will lead us through dark and difficult times, but not to harm us but to cleanse, purify, and mature us.*
- *There are some things God can only do in our hearts when we go through the darkroom of trials so Christ's character can be developed in us.*

¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

- *However, the ultimate outcome that God is seeking to do in and through us is to bring forth His glory so we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creation.*
- *How marvellous are His plans and thoughts toward us!*

THE SEVENTH POINT: CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHAT WE SAY AND DO IN THE MIDST OF THE TRIAL

James 1:19-22

¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

²¹ Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

- “*Don’t lose in the darkness what you have gained in the light.”*
- *When we are plunged into the midst of a trial and it is very dark we need to remember what God has taught us in the light and not act out of the pressures of the moment. We need to consider the truths of the Lord found in Scripture. When God tests us, it’s an open book exam.*

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV)

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- *We need to look away from everything else and fix our eyes on Jesus.*
- *We need to meditate on His sacrifice for us.*
- *We need to meditate on His love for us.*
- *We need to meditate on all His wonder and glory and power.*
- *We need to be overwhelmed by His greatness, His holiness, and His love.*

Jude 24 (NKJV)

24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

- *We need to be confident that Jesus is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us pure and spotless before Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ where we can rejoice with unspeakable joy as we see Him smile in delight because of the life He lived through us.*
- *Trust God to turn our tragedies into triumphs and our trials into testimonies.*
- *Joy comes from knowing the outcome will be wonderful.*

Psalm 30:5 NKJV

⁵ For His anger is but for a moment, His favour is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.