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## A Faith That Endures

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| <b>Reading</b> |
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**James 1:2-4:** “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

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| <b>Consider It All Joy</b> |
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**James 1:2:** “Consider it all Joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trails.”

“Choice”

1. Joy is not a suggestion, but a deliberate act of allowing the Spirit to come in (joy comes from the filling of the Spirit and this transforms us).
  - a. **2 Corinthians 3:18:** “We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from 1 degree of glory to another.”
  - b. Consider - Ponder, think carefully.
  - c. Joy – a choice, not a feeling
  - d. Before survival instincts, but as a believer I choose different thoughts or actions.

- e. I let the spirit take over or I let the flesh. **Galatians 5:16**: “Walk in the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”
- f. “I” would choose the flesh, The spirit guides me to the light

## 2. Higher Perspective:

- a. Trails are not meaningless interruptions
- b. My eyes see world, Spirit sees Light (**Psalm 119:105**: “Your Word is a Lamp to My Feet”).
- c. God’s work in me – us. **Ephesians 2:10**: “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for the good works.”
- d. Result of the spirit working through us
- e. Wasted time! God has endless time and it’s not wasted on the faithful

## 3. Denial of Pain

- a. Pain & Grief & Hardship are real (we remember pain, hot stove)
- b. Joy isn’t absent in pain (perseverance to purpose; *joy is available in the pain*)
- c. Ex; A marathon runner, doesn’t enjoy the training pain, but joy of the win. **2 Timothy 4:7** “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

Don’t you want to finish the race? I do!

But how do we do that?

Well, **Hebrews 12:1** gives us some help:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [all of the believers and martyrs who have gone before us], let us also lay aside every weight [maybe sins, maybe just distractions], and sin which clings so closely [that specific sin that wraps itself around our leg; we all have one and it’s different for all of us], and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us ...”

- d. Church, we endure the trial not because of the pain but for the JOY of the meaning.
- e. Action: Ask GOD, change my behavior, allow the spirit to choose righteous action.
- f. **Ephesians 2:10**: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”
- g. God’s workmanship, created for good works, God has a plan

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| <b>What’s the Reality?</b> |
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- 1. What’s the Reality / Certainty
  - a. When! not If, inevitable
  - b. Growing Faith comes from challenges through spiritual testing
  - c. EX: before my faith I choose to get around trials, now with the spirit I choose God’s work
- 2. Diverse / Various trials
  - a. Kinds of trials
  - b. Physical – health

- c. \$
- d. Unwarranted persecution or spiteful opposition
- e. Family / Friends
- f. Spiritual Dryness / **Matthew 5:6**: “blessed are those hunger and Thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”
- g. No 2 believers ever walk the same path. As we heard, “our cup, Poterion”

Someone said:

“Watch your thoughts, they become words;  
Watch your words, they become deeds;  
Watch your deeds, they become habits;  
Watch your habits, they become your character.”

### 3. Unexpected, DUH!!

- a. Ambushed / Bamboozled. **1 Peter 4:12**: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.”
- b. No preparing or explanation

### 4. Trails Reveal FAITH

- a. GOD exposes faith to us or we expose our lack of faith
- b. **1 Peter 1:7**: “... so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

- c. Gold is refined by fire, trials prove the reality of faith
- d. The Greek word translated “tested genuineness” is δοκίμιον (doe-kee-ME-on), which means, ‘*something proved genuine by testing.*’
- e. EX; Sponge squeezed reveals what’s inside
- f. Trials squeeze the heart & what comes out shows what fills it

## 5. Action

- a. Being surprised is going to happen, “PAUSE!” & remember your faith.
- b. Remember that you are not abandoned. Matthew 28:20: “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- c. Recognize the trial for what’s it worth
- d. Ask yourself, “How am I going to let this trial teach me, mold me, & best yet, change me?”

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| <b>Producing Endurance</b> |
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1. **James 1:3:** “Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”
  - a. Exercise makes us stronger
  - b. Stronger makes us resilient / staying power, Standing in faith
  - c. EX; have you had more than 1 trial at a time? Of course!!!!
2. Maturity, **James 1:4:** “And let endurance have it’s perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

- a. When learning from our trials it makes us Mature in faith
- b. Using pain to turn us more like Christ.
- c. Becoming whole – Growing & shaping

### 3. Character over Comfort

- a. World says comfort
- b. God says character, **Roman 5:3-4**: “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character [Christlikeness], and character produces hope [absolute confidence].”

**SUFFERING → ENDURANCE → CHARACTER → HOPE**  
 (trials) (perseverance) (Christlikeness) (confidence)

- c. Our thought is for removal, but God answers “How will I use it”
- d. He molds us, IF WE LET HIM!!!
- e. God’s greatest work isn’t done around us but IN US.

### 4. We gain confidence from enduring in our trials.

- a. JOY comes from letting the spirit produce his fruit. **Galatians 5:22-23a**: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control ...”
- b. What we know; Temporary, Purposeful, Producing growth

### 5. Christ is the Example!

- a. He suffered for our gain

- b. Was it easy for him? Was it easy for us to watch? NO
- c. Jesus knew the result.

Isn't that what **Hebrews 12:2** says?

“Looking to Jesus [and Jesus alone], the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him [the joy was US!] endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Again, Jesus knew the result of His suffering!

We need to know the result of ours too – and that's the glory of God.

**2 Corinthians 4:17**: “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”

- d. **Luke 4:2**: “For forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days, and when they ended, He was hungry.”

Have you ever been tempted by the devil to walk away from God?

For 40 minutes, 40 hours, 40 weeks, 40 months, 40 years?

That's what the devil loves to do!

But Jesus was victorious over Satan and His temptations – and, with His help, we can be too!

- e. It is not the pain, but the purpose of our trial – to “glorify God”

## Conclusion

1. Church, joy and suffering can coexist!

And when they do, beautiful things can happen within our hearts!

Again, **Roman 5:3-4**: “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character [Christlikeness], and character produces hope [absolute confidence].”

2. Let me leave you with this beautiful promise from **James 1:12**: “Blessed is a 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.”

Amen!