

BEARING UP UNDER TRIALS
(James and 1 and 2 Peter)

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. The Way In Which We Understand Trials Will Determine How We React To Them.
1. Consider some of the trials you have experienced and your attitude toward them. (Class participation encouraged.)
 2. Many books have been written to help those in search of happiness and peace to find it. The conclusion reached by every author with whom this writer is familiar, is that one cannot live without trial, temptation, disappointment, suffering; therefore one must have a proper attitude toward life's difficulties.
 3. The Bible supports this concept. In fact, the Bible is the source of the concept of "rejoicing in trial."
- B. How Do You View:
1. Christians being oppressed by civil, religious and social pressure?
 2. The birth of a grotesquely deformed child to Christian parents?
 3. The physical pain and disease suffered by Christians?
 4. The loss of a loved one in the prime of life?
 5. Difficult times with your children, mates, jobs, etc.?
- C. Your Ability To "Bear Up," To Stand And Not Be Crushed Down By The Trials Of Life, Is Dependent Upon Your Understanding Them In Relation To Biblical Teaching.
1. "Fools for Christ's sake" must know how to be - and like it! (1 Cor. 4:9-13 esp. ver. 10)

2. How may we be "handicapped on all sides, but we are never frustrated." (2 Cor. 4:8 Phillips)
The Bible has the answer.

II. AIM.

- A. To Examine The Letters Of James And Peter In Search For The Reasons Why Christians Undergo Trials.
- B. To Understand And Receive God's Encouragement To Endure All Trials And Temptations That Shall Come Our Way.

III. OUTLINE.

- A. TRIALS ARE TO BE EXPECTED EVEN BY THOSE WHO ARE CHILDREN OF GOD. (James 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:6; 2:12, 19-24; 3:14-18; 4:1, 12-19; 5:8-10; 2 Pet. 2:8-9)
STUDY THESE PASSAGES.

1. Trials and temptations defined.

a. Trial.

- 1) Dokimē (δοκιμῆ) "Proof, test, experience."
(2 Cor. 8:2)
- 2) Peira (πειρα) "A making trial, an experiment, an assault, attack, an attempt on one's life or property." (Heb. 11:29, 36)
- 3) Purōsis (πυρωσις) "To set on fire, signifies (a) a burning; (b) a refining, metaphorically in 1 Pet. 4:12, "fiery trial," or rather "trial by fire," cf. 1 Pet. 1:7 - referring to the refining of Gold.

b. Temptation.

- 1) Peirasmos (πειρασμός) - Trials with a beneficial purpose and effect (a) divinely permitted or sent. (Luke 22:28; Acts 20:19; James 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:6) (b) trials designed to lead to wrong doing. (Luke 4:13; 8:13; 1 Tim. 6:9)
- 2) No matter whether the trial/temptation is external or internal consider it as a test or a trying of one's faith.

2. The words "trial and temptation" are used interchangeably to mean the adverse circumstances of life.
 - a. We normally think of temptation as used in *James 1:13*, as indicating the inner solicitation to evil. (*Cf. Mark 7:20-23*) In *James 1:1-12*, the word temptation is dealt with from the viewpoint of outward trials.
 - b. Understand the distinction in the usage of these words to prevent confusion when studying *James 1:13-15, etc.* (See Note: W. E. Vine, Expository Dictionary, under "Tempt").
3. Christians are not immune to trial and suffering by some spiritual vaccination.
 - a. Jesus told His disciples to expect it. (*Matt. 5:11; John 15:19-20*)
 - b. Their expectations were realized. (*Acts 7:58-60; 12:1; 2 Cor. 11:23-28*)
 - c. "For hereunto were you called." (*Cf. 1 Pet. 2:21-22; 2 Tim. 3:12*) The call to suffer for righteousness sake. Christian, expect trial!

B. TRIALS ARE ESSENTIAL IN PERFECTING OUR CHARACTER AND PROVING OUR FAITH. (*James 1:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:3-7*)

1. Trial and temptation give us experience. The trial of our faith does something to us.
 - a. A tested faith proves its genuineness. (*1 Pet. 1:7*)
 - b. It works patience. Do not think for one moment that trials are useless for they leave you with this excellent Christian virtue - patience. (*Cf. Rom. 5:3; 2 Pet. 1:5-6*)
 - 1) Patience (Greek *hupomonē* - ὑπομονή) *hupo* - "under" - *mone* - "to stay or abide, to stand fast" (in its verbal form). It is the picture of one under pressure and instead of trying to escape stands fast.

- 2) Patience then has a work to do.
(James 1:4) Patience is not passive, it is active - IT WORKS!
Even under heavy burdens, don't become stationary, move toward the goal.
 - 3) The goal of patience is perfection.
(Cf. Matt. 5:48; Phil. 3:15; Eph. 4:13) - Full-grown, mature, as opposed to babes in Christ. A Christian with no trials of testing will not be mature.
2. This point is graphically illustrated in the life of Abraham. God did prove his faith.
 - a. Gen. 22:1ff - The story of Abraham's faith being tested.
 - b. Heb. 11:17-19 - Abraham's faith - an example of: "Faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen."
(Heb. 11:1)
 - c. Abraham, through the fires of trial, was perfected and became the father of the faithful. (Rom. 4:11)
 3. Remember the patience of Job. (Cf. James 5:7-11)
 - a. Job's trials were severe. (Job. 1:13-19; 2:7)
 - b. His attitude is an example of patience.
(Job 1:20-22; 2:8-10)
 - c. Job's character (1:1) was tried and proven to be genuine. Through his example, we can learn how to "bear up under trials."
 4. James uses the expression (1:4) "entire, lacking in nothing."
 - a. Entire - Greek holoklēroi - holo - which means "whole, complete, all its parts" and kleroi, meaning "lot," that which is "assigned or allotted," comes from the same root from which we get our word "inheritance."

1) *1 Pet. 1:4* - "...inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away..."

2) Our completeness is in Christ. Let the trials come, they can in no way take anything away from us. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

b. *1 Pet. 5:10* - Suffer and be made perfect. Suffer and be established. Suffer and be strengthened. (Cf. *2 Cor. 12:9-10*)

C. TRIALS ARE TO BE WELCOMED AND RECEIVED JOYFULLY.
(*James 1:2, 12; 1 Pet. 1:3-6*)

1. The Christian should not separate his experiences into pleasant and unpleasant ones. All experiences (trials) which God permits in our lives should be sources of great joy.

2. Joy under all circumstances should be the Christian's goal. But, neither James nor Peter say that trial is all joy.

a. *James 1:2* - "Count it..." suggests the joy which follows a particular trial.

1) The temptation, the affliction, the unwanted experience comes into our life. While undergoing the trial, it is not joyful.

2) Joy comes with the victory. Joy comes when we have experienced God's power working in us. (Cf. *1 Cor. 10:13*)

b. *1 Pet. 1:6* - "Grief" is the present result of "manifold trials." (Cf. *Jesus, Luke 22:44, "being in agony."*)

c. "Today's Joy Was Born Of Yesterday's Sorrow"

*"...and every burden born TODAY
and every present sorrow
are but God's happy harbingers
of a joyous, bright TOMORROW."*

By Helen Steiner Rice

3. Our attitude in facing life's harsh and difficult circumstances is important.

- a. On the one hand, we have external pressure, and on the other hand, we have the internal attitude. The words in *James 1:2*, "count it" have to do with the internal attitude of our heart and mind which will cause our trials to affect us adversely or beneficially.
- b. The word (in the Greek, *heegeesasthe*, for "count it") should be translated "think forward, consider, regard." As you live in the present consider the future.
 - 1) Gloom now, but glory tomorrow. (*1 Pet. 1:7-8*)
 - 2) Trials are not long lasting. (*2 Cor. 4:16; 1 Pet. 5:10*)
 - 3) "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (*Psa. 30:5*)
 - 4) Tribulation now, but victory assured. (*John 16:33*)
 - 5) Endurance brings the crown. (*James 1:12 cf. 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 2:10*)
- c. Let joy lead the way through every trial of life and it will see you through. Let your faith (trust) in God, like Job of old, bring you through the severest of trials even though you do not understand them. Job didn't understand why the righteous suffer. (*Cf. Job 42:3-6*) The answer to suffering is to trust God. The results, *Job 42:12ff.*

IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. Understanding The Purpose Of External Trials Will Help Us To Have The Proper Attitude Toward Them.
 - 1. Consider your trials as stepping-stones toward maturity. (*James 1:4*)
 - 2. Consider your trials as a test of your Christianity. (*1 Pet. 4:16*)
 - 3. Consider your trials as walking in the footsteps of Jesus. (*1 Pet. 2:21; 4:13*)
 - 4. Consider your trials as a challenge to prove

God's power to be alive in you. (Cf. 2 Pet. 2:9; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Pet. 5:10)

5. Consider your trials as a natural circumstance of living in this world. (John 16:33)
6. Remember, it was necessary for Christ to suffer to bring us to God. (1 Pet. 2:24-25; 3:18)
Is the servant greater than his master? NO!
(John 15:20)

B. Bearing Up Under Trials Is A Challenge To Your Faith.