

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**James: A Sermonic Call Unto Practical Godliness**  
**Part II: Godliness In Relation To Life's Trials, James 1:2-18**  
**A. The Godly View Of Trials Themselves**  
**(James 1:2-4)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. Trials in the Christian life are not themselves enjoyable, so the command for us believers to "count it all joy" when we face them in James 1:2 seems to contradict the most basic of our human instincts.
- B. Actually, James is not commanding us to be happy about the trials themselves, but to hold to God's purpose in them that we might see them work in our favor and for our blessing as described as follows:

**II. The Godly View Of Trials Themselves, James 1:2-4.**

- A. Starting his sermonic diatribe with the address, "My brothers" (James 1:2 NIV), James called believers in Christian love to "consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds," James 1:2 NIV.
- B. In view of James' own background where he had been publicly corrected from failing to believe in his half-brother, Jesus as the Son of God (our lesson on James 1:1), James reaches out to us readers in understanding of our weakness where he had once been, but, nonetheless, he does so with a "tough" love!
- C. Lest we think James calls us to rejoice at the trials themselves, we note that the word "face" (NIV) is better rendered "fall into," the Greek verb being *peripesete*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 820. This verb is used in the literal sense in Luke 10:30 to describe the man who fell into the hands of robbers, meaning it is an event that can occur apart from one's desire! (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., p. 655)
- D. Accordingly, James is **not** calling believers to rejoice *for* the difficult trials they face, but to rejoice *IN* them **regardless of the undesirable pain of the trials themselves**, *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T.
- E. This command naturally creates the question in the reader, "Why rejoice *in* the experience of having fallen into unwanted, painful trials?" and James explains the reasons in James 1:3-4 as follows:
  - 1. First, the trial of our faith in difficult trials into which we fall leads to perseverance in faith, James 1:3:
    - a. A difficult trial in the believer's life calls for him to trust God for the challenge he humanly cannot himself handle, so he must exercise faith in the Lord and in His Word, James 1:3a.
    - b. However, as with all great trials, they do not suddenly go away when we first exercise faith in God and His Word! Rather, we are required to **keep ON trusting** God and His Word until the trial is ever completed, and that calls for a **persevering** faith, the Greek word for the KJV's "patience" and the NIV's "perseverance" being *hypomonen*, meaning steadfastness or endurance, James 1:3b; *Ibid.*
  - 2. Second, such steadfastness or endurance must be allowed to "finish its work" (James 1:4a NIV), for there is great maturity in Christ that results from **pressured steadfastness**, making the whole program of trials in the believer's walk unimaginably valuable. James refers to that goal as "mature" (*teleoi*) and "complete" (*holokleroi*) in James 1:4b in the Greek Testament, and we describe these as follows:
    - a. A "mature" (*teleoi*) believer is one who is "perfect" in the sense of being "finished", meaning he has crossed over into a state of life he previously possibly only occasionally entertained in his sights, but now fully absorbs into his whole way of thinking and acting, *Ibid.*, p. 821. Thus, God allows stunning, humanly overwhelming trials to "nudge" us to cross over from one stage of our walk with Him to another more trusting, dedicated stage where we constantly cleave to Him and His ways!
    - b. A "complete" (*holokleroi*) believer is one who is "whole" versus being "partial," the picture being that of one who is "perfected all over or fully developed in every part," *Ibid.* This is a believer who sees God take his personality that has been stunted or warped by sin and its effects and, through the crucible of fiery trials, remelts it to form the balanced personality God wants him to have! All of us mortals suffer some personality malformation issues due to sin and its effects, so we must all experience some intense trials in the Christian walk for such a recasting of the personality to occur.

***Lesson:*** *Though we cannot rejoice over severe trials themselves, God calls us to rejoice IN them due to what He ACCOMPLISHES in our DISCIPLESHIP in such trials, getting us to trust Him with an enduring faith until He uses the trials to complete our maturity and wholeness as followers of Christ!*

***Application:*** *May we rejoice when God lets maturing crucibles of trials arise, and so keep trusting Him.*