

Seeing Trials from a God-Oriented Perspective

James 1:1-8

Rare are the times in our lives when we do not experience trials. They are simply part of life in this broken world. The question is not whether trials will come; the question is how will we respond when they do. Will trials cause us to doubt God's goodness and love? Or, will we choose to trust God when the hard times come? Today, as we start our journey through the book of James, we are going to see how faith in Jesus should work out in how we navigate the trials that come our way. We need to see our trials from a God-oriented perspective.

Opening Discussion: What are some of the trials that you are facing right now?

Read James 1:1-8

1. At an emotional level, how do you tend to respond to trials that come your way?
2. How do you understand the command to "consider it all joy" when you face trials (v. 2)?
3. Why does this make sense to consider trials as joy?

Brian said:

How do you think about your trials? Are you just bearing them with a kind of passive resignation? Is your focus on escaping from them as soon as you can? Are you maybe even mad at God because you know that as an all-knowing and all-powerful God, He could get you out of this thing if He wanted to and yet He hasn't? Or are you making the mental choice to have a God-oriented perspective and count it as joy because you know that you are facing an opportunity to grow in your character?

4. Honestly, how are you responding to your trials right now?

5. If we are struggling to see our trials from a God-oriented perspective, James tells us to ask for wisdom (v. 5). What is promised? What is the condition of receiving?

Brian said:

The word that James uses for doubt has the sense of a divided or wavering mind. James is talking about the person who wavers between trusting God and not trusting God. This is a person who has not settled the issue of whom he or she will trust. This is a person who has an internal conflict of divided loyalties. They are like the *surf of the sea*. They are up. "I believe. I trust God." They are down. "I doubt. I don't trust God." Up and down. Trust and doubt.

6. Have you genuinely settled this issue about trusting God regardless of the trials that may come?
7. If we are struggling with this, how can we get there? How can we become convinced in our hearts that it makes the most sense to trust God even in the hardest of things?
8. How might reflecting on the what Jesus did on the cross help us settle this issue?
9. What is the main thing that you sense God is saying to you through this passage?



Prayer suggestion: Spend 5-10 minutes each day in silent prayer. In these moments, ask God if there is anything He wants to say to you about the trials you are experiencing. Ask Him to help you genuinely settle the issue of whether or not you will trust Him.



To read and meditate on for the week ahead: James 1:9-18