

LESSON 2

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH . . .

JAMES 1:2–12



1 Describe a moment of pure joy in your life. What did you do? What happened? How did you react?

2 When have you had to persevere to reach a goal? What kept you going? How did this experience change you for the better?



Read James 1:2–12 and the following notes:

☐ 1:2, 3 ☐ 1:2–4 ☐ 1:5 ☐ 1:6 ☐ 1:6–8 ☐ 1:12

3 How can trials be helpful to us (1:3, 4)?

4 What kind of help does God provide for Christians when they endure trials (1:5)?

5 How is a trial different from a temptation?

6 If trials can be so beneficial, why don't we look forward to them?

7 Why is it difficult to respond to trials with joy?



James teaches that God's purpose is to develop Christians who are mature and complete. If it were up to us, that process probably wouldn't include times of stress, hardship, or testing. But God knows us well, and as our loving Father he knows that our faith and character are developed only through trials and testings. The apostle Paul's teaching in Romans 8:28 makes such a practical difference when we face difficult trials. "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Although we might be tempted to turn away from God and run from him during our trials, knowing God's love and remembering his purpose in them can help us to trust him even more.

8 List some typical kinds of trials in the life of a Christian. Be careful to distinguish between a trial and a temptation.



9 Describe the difference between having a short-term and a long-term perspective on trials.

10 Think of someone who has had a difficult life. What has helped that person persevere? What did that person learn through it? What did that person's experience teach you?

11 When did you experience the most difficult period of your life? What kept you going through it? What did you learn through it?

12 What trials are you currently facing?

13 What would help you respond to your trials with real joy?

14 Responding to trials can be difficult when you are alone. Who could meet with you regularly to help you and pray for you during a difficult time in your life?



15 Think of a specific trial you are facing right now. Write down several possibilities for how God may be using it in your life. Ask God for the ability to respond to the trial with trust in him and in his plan for you.

A What does 1:9–11 have to do with the theme of enduring trials? How could having an eternal perspective on trials help you bear your struggles?

B James wrote that the crown of life is given to those who persevere. How does perseverance relate to salvation through faith? What is the relationship between faith and deeds?

C James says that the promise of a crown of life is an incentive to respond to trials in a positive way. How does this promise of future blessing really make any difference for us?

D Abraham faced a great test of his faith when he was asked to sacrifice his only son. Why does God test the faith of his people? How has your faith been tested?

E What does it mean to ask without doubting (1:6–8)? How is this different from humility and uncertainty?

MORE
for studying
other themes
in this section