

# James the Just: Try Me

How many of you have said the phrase “Try me” before? What were you trying to accomplish with that? You wanted to prove something, right?

There are times in life when we want to be tried. If you know everything about baseball and someone challenges you and says you don’t....you might say ”Try me”. They ask you questions, you answer them all, proving you know everything about baseball.

I think of a parent telling a child some guidelines or consequences. Maybe something like, if you don’t get your chores done, then no electronics tonight. The child might say, “NOOOO! You can’t take my electronics away!”. The parent might say “Try me!”

For various reasons, people challenge others to “try them” all the time. It’s how you prove something.

You can also think about court, when someone is accused of a crime, and they are taken to court, they are sometimes put on trial. This is to prove something, either they are innocent or they are guilty. A case is made from each side to provide proof one way or the other.

That kind of trial you probably hope to avoid but if you know you are innocent, you might say “try me” knowing that you will be proven right!

How about with God? How many of you say to God “try me”? Probably not many of us! Most people do not want to be tried in that way!

When we think of trials or difficulties in this life, how many of you think those are good things? Again, probably not many of us! Why?

Because they stink when we are going through them. They are painful. They are tiring. I told Ben just Wednesday night I should make a shirt that says “Life stinks, Jesus doesn’t”. That’s how I feel sometimes!

Now that shirt is not theologically sound because without Jesus you don’t really even have life, but the point is that living without Him stinks, but yet when we are in trials sometimes our mindset is the same as one who is without Christ.

We are going to take a look at what James says about trials and how we are to view them.

PRAY

James 1:2-4, I like the heading in the NKJV - Profiting from Trials. How can we take these trials, these difficulties, and profit from them? How can we benefit from trials or take advantage of trials?

### **James 1:2-4**

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

That sounds wonderful.....perfect and complete, lacking nothing! Sign me up for that! How about you? Do you want that? Let's see some hands for those who want to be perfect and complete, lacking nothing!

James says you can have that! But first you have to go back to verse 2, it starts with our response to trials.....

James says count it all joy when you fall into various trials. That's a command to brothers and sisters in Christ.....COUNT IT all joy!

In other words, consider it or think about it when there are trials. Your natural response is NOT to rejoice, it's NOT to be joyful.

We as believers in Christ have to make a commitment to face trials with joy. It's a choice that we make in how we are going to handle trials. I realize it's not as easy as it seems. It takes may even take constant reminding.....

### **Philippians 3:1**

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

Paul says to the Philippians, REJOICE in the Lord. Then he says I keep writing this to you over and over which is no problem to me because it's for your safety. He does it so they will remember to rejoice in the Lord! It's worth it to keep telling them.

Remember that if you are encouraging someone, it's worth it. Even if it's something you have done over and over, remind them to walk in the joy of the Lord!

Maybe you are one who is always needing reminded and you say "I tried, I can't be joyful in the midst of trials!".....You are to count it all joy!

Another part of the definition of the Greek word that was used for "count it" is to rule, command, to have authority over. That means YOU have command, you can have authority over how you respond to trials.

You know the key? JESUS! I find that I don't have joy when I try to handle trials by myself. JESUS has overcome the world, if you face it with Him in mind and leading the charge, you can take joy that HE has already overcome it!

Trials WILL come your way. James doesn't say they might come, he says "WHEN you fall into various trials."

It doesn't matter what you do, you will have trials. No matter if you are a believer or not, you get trials either way so expect them!

Not only does James say that we will have trials but that there will be many... "when you fall into various trials". Fall into means to be encompassed or surrounded and not just one kind of trials but various, many kinds, sizes, shapes, and forms!

We WILL face many trials.....but.....It's gonna be worth it (song)

### **2 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)**

17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

I realize that seems pretty harsh when you are going through a trial. Our "light and momentary troubles" may not feel light and momentary at all, they might seem pretty heavy and long lasting. But Paul is not saying this only applies to those little things.

This is coming from a man that was stoned, shipwrecked, whipped, robbed, beaten, starving.

What Paul is saying is that in comparison to the eternal glory....all trials are light and momentary.

### **Romans 8:18**

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

You may be thinking "I understand trials will happen but why do I need to count it all joy when we fall into these various trials?"

As you consider trials, you can count them as joy knowing that God Almighty is doing a work in you!

### **James 1:3**

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

Trials are an experiment or attempt to prove something.....your faith. So if we KNOW that trials test and prove our faith (belief, trust, confidence in Christ) we should count it all joy!

God tests us to bring out our best, unlike satan who tempts us to bring out our worst.

**Job 23:10**

10 But He knows the way that I take;  
When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.

The kind of tests from the Lord are to make our faith genuine.

The testing of our faith by trials and difficulties result in patience. Who in here needs patience today? I know I sure do!

Patience is so much more than being calm and able to wait or handle delays. Patience includes perseverance and steadfastness, being firmly fixed, firmly established, unwavering. That is what is produced by the testing of your faith!

Patience, perseverance, steadfastness! Steadfastness is important. It shows a life of faithful endurance during troubles and afflictions.

**Luke 21:19 (NIV)**

19 Stand firm, and you will win life.

Who doesn't want to win life??? You need steadfastness which is part of patience. THEN....

**James 1:4**

4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

THERE IT IS.....what you have all been waiting for! The work of patience (which is the result of trials) brings you to a place where you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Perfect and complete does not mean sinless, they mean mature and whole. God wants you to mature!

How does a person naturally mature? Life experience. Right? Children do not just mature because they get older? Now hopefully they do mature AS they get older but it's not always the case.

If you have a child in a car while you are on a long trip, let's say it's a four hour trip or longer. How many times are you going to hear "Are we there yet? How much further? Why is it taking so long?"

As they gain more and more life experience they tend to ask those types of questions less and less. We have traveled to the Florida panhandle every year (some years multiple times) for our kids' entire life. Marissa is to the point where she rarely asks how much further and she never says "are we there yet?".

Xander on the other hand, asks those questions less than he did a few years ago but still does more than Marissa.

Ben and I took a four hour trip a few weeks ago and I didn't ask him those questions at all!

It's maturity from life experiences.

Just the same, spiritual maturity comes from spiritual growth from experiences...like trials! God allows trials to prove our faith to us, to grow us to spiritual maturity! That is what He wants for you!

Trials...they should be expected. We should consider it pure joy, when we experience many trials and all kinds of them.

Yes it's great that trials produce steadfastness and that produces spiritual maturity....but what if you still just can't consider it pure joy to have trials in your life?

James has an answer for that....

#### **James 1:5-8**

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

If you want to understand trials and obtain growth and maturity, you can't do it on your own, you need help. Not help from man, help from God.

The first thing you do is ask! If you don't know why you have trials, or you don't know how to handle these trials, maybe try asking Jesus! After all He is the source of wisdom!

Wisdom is a gift from God. Unlike maturity you don't just get wisdom from experience, you get it from God.

### **1 Corinthians 1:25**

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

### **1 Corinthians 3:19**

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"

James says if you lack wisdom, ask God and he will give it to you. To lack wisdom means to leave behind the ability to make right use of knowledge.

Sounds like something I've done before when dealing with trials! If you let emotions get the best of you, you let your guard down, you focus on the problem instead of Jesus, you also might leave behind the ability to make right use of knowledge.

We have probably all done it. But all we have to do is ask. PRAY! Asking for wisdom is a necessary part of your prayer life! James says that if you do, God will give it to you liberally (meaning openly, frankly, sincerely) and without reproach (no matter if you deserve it or not)

Yes, even if you leave wisdom behind, God will give it to you again! How amazing is that?

The second thing we must do is ask in faith. If you need wisdom in trials, ask! But ask in faith!

### **James 1:6**

6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

Faith, remember is a trust and confidence in God, based on His character and promises. We are to ask with that trust and confidence that He will give us wisdom.

We must do so with no doubting. That's hard, how many of you have not asked God because you knew you had some small level of doubt so you didn't even bother?

This is not referring to uncertainty of whether or not God will answer your prayer. Here doubting suggests a critical state of mind swaying between God's will and self will. Like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind....

If you are asking God for His help, yet you are not even certain that you want it, wouldn't that possibly interfere with God's willingness to answer?

A doubting mind is one that is not convinced that God's way is the best! A doubting mind treats God's Word like any other advice, reserving the option to disregard it or disobey it.

**James 1:7-8**

7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

The doubting man is unstable, inconsistent, restless in all of his ways. Do you have inconsistency in your prayers? Are you praying in belief and faithfulness?

**Matthew 21:21-22**

21 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. 22 And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

We usually do not doubt because the lack of a clear promise from God but because of low thoughts about God.

We are unable to receive the needed discernment about life if our goals are self centered instead of God centered. Divided praying finds that heaven is a brass canopy. Don't make light of your wavering commitment to God. Because God doesn't.

In an unstable world we can't afford to have an unstable prayer life. We must surrender all to Christ, it's the only way to not be double-minded.

We must stop asking God for things and at the same time doubt His ways!

Some of you while you are praying for something, you are already trying to come up with a plan to take care of it yourself in case God doesn't come through....

Doubt leaves you unsettled and restless like the waves. Today if you want to stop being tossed around and getting nowhere in your spiritual life, you must trust Jesus.

As for wisdom, and trust that He will give it to you. Let Jesus lead you by His Spirit!