

Stress, Distress, and the Purposes of God

James 1:1-12



A study for the Bible students at West Side Baptist Church
and the Free Grace Bible Institute

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(KJV version)

Student name _____

Before you begin.....

If you do not know for sure about where you will spend eternity, the first issue for you is to place your faith alone in Christ alone and receive eternal life.

John 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

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John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 11:25-26 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

To believe is simply this: to be convinced that it is true. To believe in Jesus is to be convinced that it is true that He alone is the only one who can give you the gift of eternal life. Eternal life, first and foremost, means that one lives with God forever after this life is ended. Jesus Christ, who is God come in human flesh, died on the cross as our substitute bearing the penalty for our sin. When a person knows they cannot qualify for eternal life through the good works of self-effort or the rituals of any church or religion, and when a person knows that eternal life comes from believing in Jesus alone for that life – that is, believing His promise of unconditional eternal life - at that moment they receive eternal life absolutely free. This life can never be lost for any reason.

If you have received the gift of eternal life through faith alone in Christ alone, having believed His promise of eternal life, then before you begin any Bible study you must be sure you in fellowship with God and filled with the Holy Spirit. The method for this is to simply follow 1 John 1:9:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our [known] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [any other sins we fail to recognize as sin or have forgotten about].

Failure to be open and honest in naming and citing our sins means we cannot be transformed by Bible Doctrine and advance in the faith to spiritual maturity.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Enjoy your time in God's Word!

Stress, Distress, and the Purposes of God

Questions to ponder

Is it possible to experience “stress” without either blowing up or breaking down?

Is it possible that the stress of life can be experienced with the outlook of *joy*?

If God really loves me *how come there is so much stress in my life?*

Welcome (NOTE: there is more materials in these notes than in the seminar audio teaching)

James 1:1-12

Welcome to an exciting (but all too brief!) study of one of the most important passages in the New Testament for the believer’s steadiness in the faith, advancement to spiritual maturity, and arriving home in Heaven as a winner believer. If learned and applied these critical lessons will bring a spiritual strength that will sustain the believer even in the most difficult challenges in life. The book of James teaches us about a vital, living Christian faith that wonderfully works in every detail of life. The Holy Spirit through James teaches us that the stress of life does not have to become internal distress that will make our life miserable and a spiritual failure; rather, we can go through all manner of both negative stress and positive stress and be victorious thus bringing glory to our Lord Jesus Christ. This study will teach us how to decompress distress!

We are going to consider the basic principles to be gleaned from the James passage about the purposes of God in the pressures of life. We will learn the divine viewpoint of how our loving Heavenly Father desires us to go through trials with the mental attitude of joy. We will see that God has a plan and a purpose for everything we experience in life and how we must make the mental shift to the divine viewpoint if we are to be successful as believers in time. We will consider the biblical purposes behind such trials and God’s plan to reward you with the right to rule and reign with Him in eternity.

The stress of life looks different depending on your viewpoint and there are only two viewpoints: the human viewpoint and the divine viewpoint.

Definitions:

Divine Viewpoint (DVP): thinking based on the Word of God.

Human Viewpoint (HVP): thinking that is independent of the Word of God. It is also called worldliness.

Robert Dean and Tommy Ice explain “worldliness” they write:

Worldliness [non-biblical thinking, human viewpoint, cosmic thinking] is an organized and attractive system of ideas, concepts, attitudes, and methods that Satan uses to compete with God’s concept of how people should live on planet earth. Satan is the head and controller of this system of thinking. Whenever we think like the world, we are thinking exactly like Satan wants us to think...Worldliness is presented as something beautiful, desirable, and enlightening...The cosmic system is Satan’s window dressing, presenting evil in a way which seems like the good,

right, and proper thing to do. When a person is not trusting God's Word to direct him, it is very easy for him to be deceived into adopting worldly thinking. Because Satan is a beautiful creation of God, he is able to present evil as a beautiful thing. Thus, we see an affinity between human viewpoint, cosmic thinking, and satanic philosophies.ⁱ

The Basic Reality – Romans 8:28; James 1:3-4

God desires to take everything in your life and turn it into good – from His perfect vantage point - for you here in this life; further, He desires to give you rewards in the life to come for being a winner in time, one who lived pleasing to Him. James will guide us into how this can become a reality in our lives as we experience the many and varied pressures of life!

The Place to Begin

Where do we begin? By looking at the end. There is a Latin phrase that expresses this concept. It is *respice finem*: "Look back at the end" or "have regard for the end" or "consider the end." Generally, to the ancient Romans, it was a warning to remember one's death and to adjust one's life in time in the light of that ultimate reality. In our case, as born-again believers, it means we are to consider our evaluation at the Judgment Seat of Christ which will come in eternity after our life in time is ended. We too are to adjust our life in time as a result of carefully considering that ultimate reality.

James 1:12

Know this: It's not about here and now, it's about there and then! The Judgment Seat of Christ is in front of every believer and every moment in time should be lived in the light of this fact.

2 Corinthians 5:10 This is the evaluation given by the Lord Jesus Christ of the performance of believers in time. How important is this? Not even considering other Scriptures, five times over James will tie his admonitions to the Second Coming of Christ (phase one, the rapture of the church) and the believer's evaluation at Judgment Seat of Christ (1:12; 3:1, 5:7, 8, 9).

1:12: We will learn what the Crown of Life is later – but this ties the passage to the believer's rewards.



The absolute reality is that after the rapture of the Church all the Church Age believers will stand for this evaluation. Some believers will receive great rewards and other will be total losers with every level in between.

The spiritual maturity that results in obedience in time is the difference between winners and losers at this all-important evaluation.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

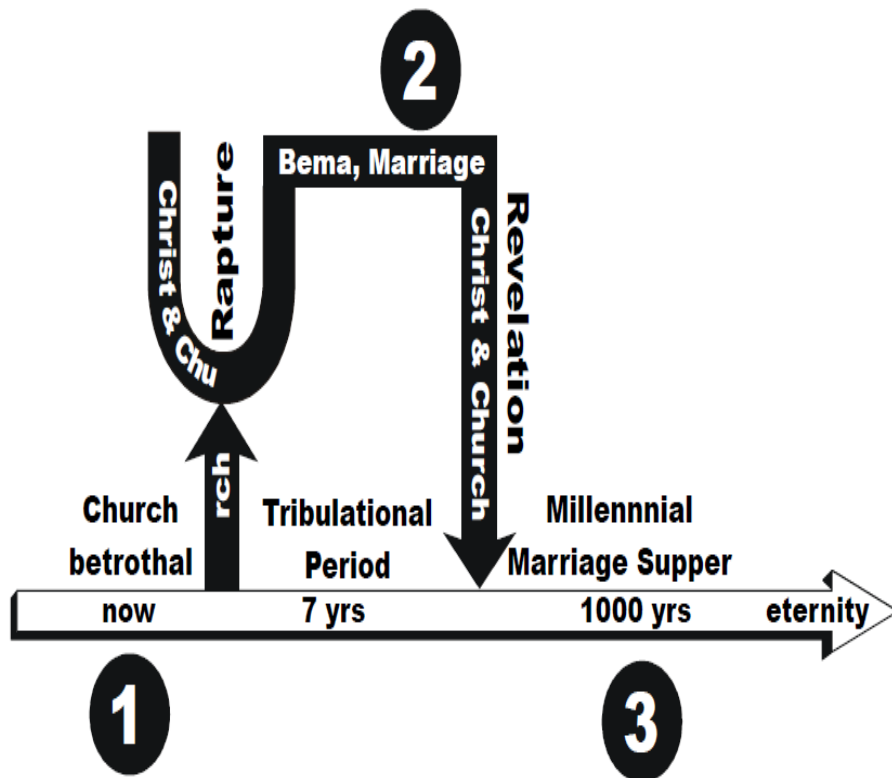


Chart from Marty Cauley, *The Outer Darkness*. Used with permission

James 1:12: “for when he is tried”: when he is evaluated and has passed the test. The test of what? **The test of stress or pressure in life**. In this James passage the questions we can deduce Jesus will be asking are these: “Did you, in time, through the power of the Holy Spirit, apply the doctrine learned while experiencing the pressures of life?” “Did you pass the tests of applying Bible Doctrine and advance in spiritual growth to maturity?” “Did your response to stress bring glory to God in time?”

This is “evidence testing” – not is there evidence you have eternal life; rather, evidence you progressed spiritually. Questions to ask ourselves: Can I maintain mental and emotional peace under pressure? Can I be courageous and cheerful under pressure? Can I have the experience of inner restful joy under pressure? Can I live life in obedience to James 1:2? My rewards will depend on it!

The Believer’s Tests in Time

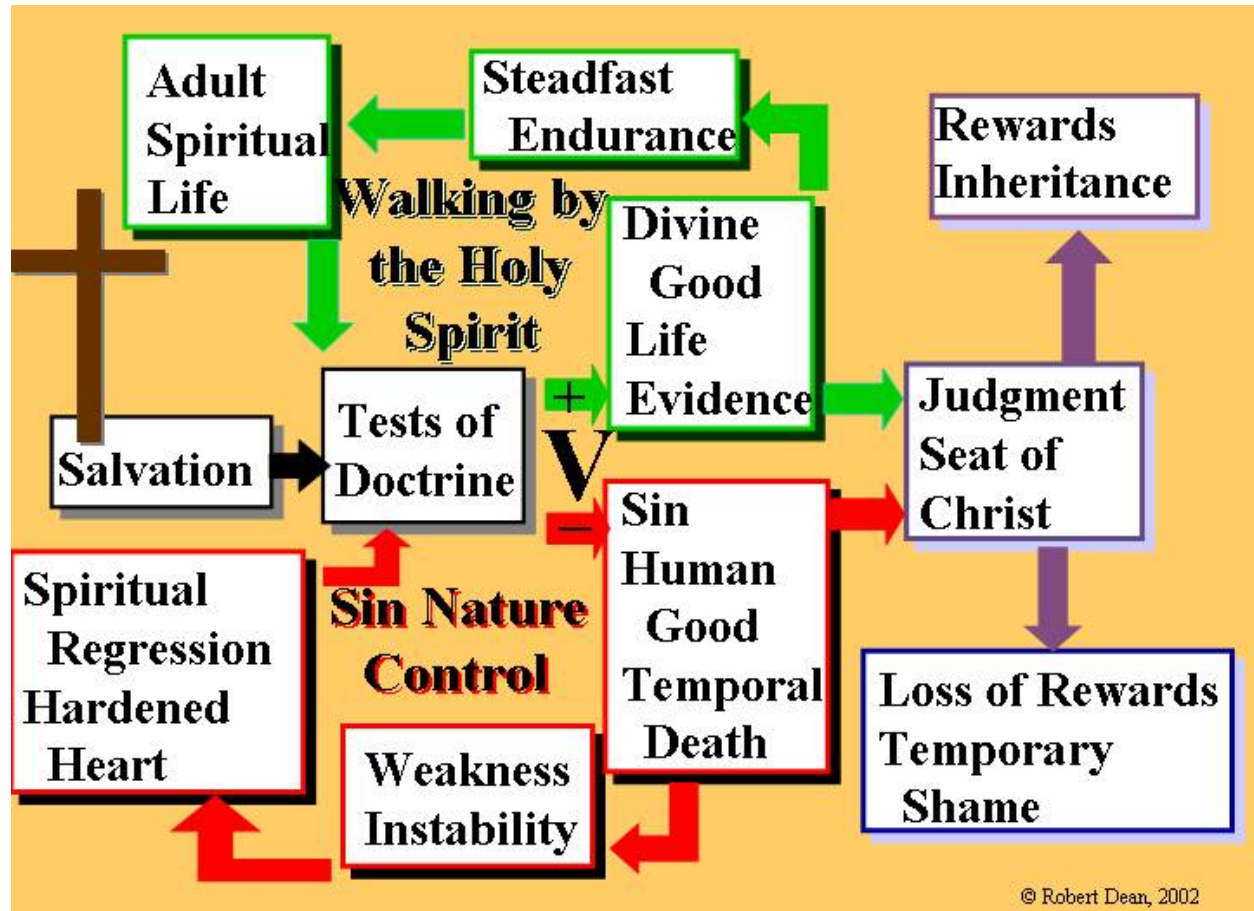
Every time we are in church Bible Class we are to be students who are learning the Word of God (Bible Doctrine) which is the divine viewpoint. Just as in any school there will be tests to see how much the student has learned so our loving teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ, administers tests to us so that it can be seen how well *we* can recall and *apply* what we learned.

The tests you pass successfully in life will determine your rewards in eternity. Yes, there is pressure to pass the tests of pressure! But this is our motivation to pass the tests for rewards means we have been pleasing to Him.

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2 Corinthians 5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of (well pleasing to) him.

The Doctrine of Spiritual Testing



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Chart by Dr. Robert Dean, www.deanbible.com

The diagram above shows the basic process of the believer's spiritual testing and the eternal results.

James 1:2 "consider" is a mandate (command) and thus it points to the believer's free will choice. The "V" in the middle of the chart above represents the believer's volition, or free will. When there is a stress-test the believer is free to respond with positive volition by applying Bible Doctrine; but, they can respond with negative volition to Bible Doctrine and apply human viewpoint. The believer's choice gives different results in both time and eternity.

"Consider it all joy" is one of some 54 imperatives (commands) given by the Holy Spirit through James to all believers in the church age. Know this: a command is always given to a person's mind (thinking) and volition (will).

KEY: God will never give the believer a command that He does not supply the means by which the believer can fulfill the command. **1 Corinthians 10:13:** The Word of God and the Spirit of God are the means He gives us to pass every stress-test!

This word “consider” or “count” means to lead or go before, to go first, to lead the way, to lead out before the mind, to think, or to regard in a certain way: “to add up all the facts and come to the right conclusion.” It was an accounting term where one adds up all the figures and obtains a correct answer. It means to make this that he is about to teach a standard part of your thinking; to let this be the measure of accuracy and truth in your dealing with stresses of all kinds. In other words, this teaching from James is to lead us in both our thinking and emotional responses.

What is the believer to “add up”? The Truth of Bible Doctrine! Bible Doctrine is defined simply as, “What the Bible teaches on any given subject.” You take the Bible Doctrine that you have learned, add it all up and then, based on thinking, come up to the correct conclusion about the stress (trial). It makes the standard of the Word of God the measure of the accuracy of our responses. Such correct thinking will lead the emotions rather than allowing the emotions to lead the thinking. See **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**.

Chart- The positive volitional response: this results in the production of divine good (that which is pleasing to the Lord) and it provides evidence of the believer’s spiritual advance. NOTE: such good works *do not* provide evidence that one is a believer as many believers respond with negative volition toward Bible Doctrine when under “stress.”

Such practice over time results in steadfast endurance and, eventually, spiritual maturity (adulthood). This is what it means in **Galatians 5:17** to “walk in the Spirit” (“in” has the meaning of “with, in, or by the means of” – this last translation is the best way to understand the meaning here).

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in (by the means of) the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (If we are in fellowship, applying doctrine, we will not fulfill the desires of the sin nature to operate independent of God and His Word.)

The results in eternity are rewards and inheriting the Kingdom (to rule with Christ) – the Crown of Life.

2 Timothy 2:12 If we suffer (*hupomeneo*, to await, bear up under, or endure), we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us

If we endure faithfully, bringing glory to the Lord, bearing up under pressure, we shall reign with Jesus Christ in the coming Messianic Millennial Kingdom and on into eternity.

The victorious believer is one who does not deny Christ by thinking or accusing God of being unjust or unfair due to the hardships/ trials they are in (or use 1 John 1:9 if do). They do not deny Christ by thinking human viewpoint rather than the divine viewpoint while under pressure. These will reign with Christ (The Crown of Life). *The victorious believer is one who applies Bible Doctrine to the pressures of life.*

Chart above - The negative volitional response: this results in the production of human good (that which is not pleasing to the Lord even though we consider it good from the human viewpoint) and temporal death (also called carnal death). Temporal death means the separation from fellowship with the Lord in time (see the Seven Deaths in Scripture, below).

Such practice results in spiritual weakness and instability. If the believer does not correct the situation they will regress spiritually to be more and more like an unbeliever in their daily life and they become hardened to spiritual things. This later stage is operational death where the believer begins to live just like an unbeliever.

The results in eternity are the eternal loss of rewards, negative evaluation, shame, and profound regret.

2 Timothy 2:12 (KJV) If we suffer (*hupomeneo*, to await, bear up under, or endure), we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us

Deny us what? The right to reign with Him – the Crown of Life. That very special and high reward will be denied the believer in time who does not apply Bible Doctrine and endure faithfully to the end.

Between Then and Now: Experiencing stress without becoming distressed – The Pressures of Life

James 1:2 - THE TIME OF TRIAL IS THE TIME OF DECISION!

“When” not IF you fall into various temptations (trials). It literally means “whenever.” Challenges will come but you do not know when they will come. At any moment in time you can unexpectedly and suddenly drop into the pressure from trials; it can be compared to a sudden and unexpected attack.

You cannot escape the many and varied pressures (stresses) of life including those which are related to adversity and suffering. We will learn that the believer with the right perspective will be able to rejoice with exceeding great joy while getting through the going through.

As we study this section of the book of James, we will discover much about dealing with the stress of life. Every person on the face of the earth has external pressure of one kind or the other. Believers are not immune from these external pressures and, indeed, they may face a new level of such pressure as a result of the Angelic Conflict. However, we will learn that the way one is to handle stress is to be vastly different for a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ than it is for an unbeliever who follows the world’s system.

John 16:33 – You will have stress!

“ye shall have tribulation”: not “might have”; not “if you mess up”; not “if I don’t love you”; not “if you fail to have enough faith.” YE SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION! Period. (see John 15:18-33)

Never twist the Word of God! Do not be deceived by those who twist the meaning of faith and twist the Bible to mean that you can have “health and wealth” if you just exercise enough faith or say the right words (the so-called “word-faith” movement), or that God does not want you to experience poverty, and illness, or to be in difficult situations with people, circumstances, things, or health.

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You will have tribulations (pressure, stress)!!!!

Definitions:

Stress: In common usage, the word “stress” is used for any emotional and / or mental strain felt as a result of external situations experienced as pressure. The emphasis is on what is felt on the inside of the person as a response to that which is external to the person.

I like to think of it differently and will use it differently in this study. **Stress** is pure and simple anything external to the individual (including physical issues – the real you is not your body) that could be called “**pressure.**” It could be something past or present, “positive” or “negative.” James, as we will discover, refers to stress as “testing” or what we could call “trials.” It is also called temptation.

Distress is the inner unbiblical reaction or response to external stress-pressure. It is an inner pressure of the mind that we do to ourselves! Distress happens when we respond out of our sin nature; distress happens when we respond out of Human Viewpoint Thinking (HVP); distress is when we let feelings (emotions) dominate our thinking instead of thinking dominating our feelings (emotions); distress is a result of looking for “happiness” and solutions to life’s issues in the people, circumstances, things, or events found in the details of life; distress is choosing to give in to emotional and thinking sins thus allowing the sin nature to gain control.

Distress is often felt as a negative. However, distress may not always be felt as negative: we may experience it as a positive (such as inheriting a few million dollars!). What makes it distress is our unbiblical response to the stress (pressure).

Distress affects us emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Distress is always sin.

Distress is arrogance because it applies human viewpoint thinking and emotional responses rather than the Word of God. When one lifts up their own thoughts, with the corresponding negative emotions, above the Scriptures then they are living in arrogance (pride). See **1 Corinthians 3:18-20**.

Proverbs 16:25

If the pressure pushes you away from God’s plan for your spiritual life then it is distress – it is carnal death, the end of any spiritual effectiveness, the separation from fellowship and spiritual growth

When the believer sins he is walking in the realm of death – **Romans 8:12-13**

The realm of death is the realm of spiritual darkness – **1 John 1:6**

1 Peter 1:3-9 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried

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with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls [this salvation refers to the rewarding of the believer in eternity which is the result of steadfast endurance].

Seven Deaths in Scripture

Webster's dictionary defines death as "a permanent cessation of all vital functions: the end of life." Though it is often associated with extinction, death in the Bible never means the end of existence. Instead, it means separation from or the inability to function in a particular realm. Seven deaths are described in the Word (from *The Basics* by Gene Cunningham at www.basicbibletraining.org):

1. **Spiritual death** is separation from God. As a result of the Fall, all human beings are born spiritually dead, captives of "the domain of darkness" (GEN 2:17; COL 1:13; ROM 6:23).
2. **Positional death** is separation from sin and the sin nature. Every believer is made spiritually alive and placed in Christ at salvation. We now have the ability to choose every moment whether we will serve our old sin nature, which will not be taken away until we die physically, or our new nature (ROM 6:1-4; ROM 6:10-11; GAL 2:20; COL 2:12; COL 2:20; COL 3:3).
3. **Temporal death** is carnality—separation from fellowship with God. Every time we as Christians give in to temptation to sin, we enter temporal death (JAM 1:15; ROM 8:2; ROM 8:6; ROM 8:13; 1TI 5:6).
4. **Operational death** is separation of our profession of faith from the practice of that faith (JAM 2:26; EPH 5:14; 1JO 1:5-6).
5. **Sexual death** is the inability to function sexually (ROM 4:19-20; HEB 11:11-12).
6. **Physical death** is the separation of soul and body, the inability to function in the physical realm (HEB 9:27; GEN 5:5).
7. **The second death** is the judgment of unbelievers, eternal separation from God (REV 19:1-21, REV 20:1-15).^{iv}

Stress is inevitable – distress is a choice! Why is this so? Because of the Word of God and the Spirit of God!

We have learned five basic points so far:

1. The trials and temptations of life are related to being a winner at the Judgment Seat of Christ
2. There will be pressures in life: trials and temptations
3. It is God's will for the believer to be under such pressures
4. One can experience mental and emotional peace, have courage under pressure, and joy

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5. That Jesus wants us to be victorious under pressure (testing) and this is part of His purpose for every believer.

It is a matter of fact that without the pressure there will be no success at the Judgment Seat of Christ

James is telling us:

“Do not base your satisfaction, peace, and joy on the details of life with all its various circumstances and people.” “Do not base your mental and emotional stability on the details of life!”

Beloved, if we base our satisfaction in life on circumstances, people, places, and things we are guaranteeing we will be miserable in time, a failure in the spiritual life in time, and a loser at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Proverbs 24:10

The Lord Jesus Christ wants us to be spiritually strong in order to be spiritual champions.

The words used: John 16:33

Tribulation: #2347 *thlipsis* – it comes from a word meaning “to crush, to press, compress, and squeeze.”

It refers to pressures on the soul of the believer which are coming from circumstances and people. In any trial the particular circumstances or people are not the issue – the issue is the believer’s response.

James 1:2-3

V2: Temptations (trials): *Peirasmos* #3985: an experiment, attempt, trial, proving, a putting to the test

Such trials should further develop our faith (trust) in God and His Word. Trials give opportunity for the greater purification of the believer’s character. When God is the one doing the testing, *peirasmos* is for the purpose of proving the maturing quality of someone’s faith, it is never for the purpose of causing him to fall into sin. If it is the devil who tempts, then it is for the purpose of causing one to fall. (Mostly from The Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament).

V3: trying (testing): *dokimion* #1383: the proving; that by which something is tried or proved, a test

Testing done to determine the quality of something or to prove that it is real; a test of spiritual staying power (endurance); in this case, a test done by God to give the believer an opportunity to move from one level of character development to a higher one (see v.3).

James 1:2 – Distress verses Joy

The inner response of the real you to stress (the pressure external to the real you) can be either distress or, as the Holy Spirit will show us, total joy! The opposite of joy is distress. Joy and distress cannot exist together: one cancels the other!

The world's systems, like psychotherapy and mind-altering psychotropic drugs, try to manage distress: this is man's attempt to cope with distress independent of God. God does not teach us to "cope" or "manage" stress: He teaches us to solve the problem of distress. The believer can eliminate distress and instead experience joy, inner peace, mental and emotional stability, and deep inner satisfaction. It is a matter of the application of what the Bible teaches – Bible Doctrine.

1 Peter 1:8 – the Sober Spirit

A "sober spirit" simply means "to be stable in your thinking," or "to think clearly about reality." It is the opposite of drunken thinking that is emotionally unstable and mentally fuzzy. Such thinking often results in behavioral bad decisions.

"Sober" means to have one's life and thinking controlled by the Holy Spirit through His application of the Word of God to their life. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to stabilize us in time and to bring us to spiritual maturity - we can see reality. Since the Bible defines reality, a person of "sober spirit" learns to see all the details of life from the Divine Viewpoint or true reality. In other words, we respond to the pressures of life by the means of Bible Doctrine (the Divine Viewpoint Thinking) rather than the typical way of responding to pressure that is dominated by emotional responses and Human Viewpoint Thinking.

- *All "distress responses" to pressure are from Human Viewpoint and the sin nature. They indicate the believer has not yet developed a "sober spirit." The believer is, in the terms of 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, a man "of flesh" who is operating just as an unbeliever would operate in life. The Bible refers to this believer as "carnal."*

1 Peter 5:7-8 According to these verses, such responses clearly indicate that a believer is being devoured by "the devil" who is "your adversary." To use a common American expression, he is "eating you alive" though the internal distress responses to pressure. The enemy has lured you into his feeding grounds because you have not applied the biblically mandated principles for handling life's many pressures.



At the core of Satan's plan of attack against both believer and unbeliever alike is a redefinition of reality. The Bible tells us what reality is and the Bible is Truth (**John 17:17**). If we think that distress responses to stress are natural, inevitable, unavoidable, and really have nothing to do with spiritual issues, then we are not living in reality – we have redefined biblical reality

James 1:2 – the Choice for Joy

"count" or "consider": this is a thinking word not an emoting word. The first thing we have to recognize is that stress is processed correctly when we learn to think correctly.

"My brethren": obviously writing to believers, those who have received eternal life. Believers are not exempt from serious afflictions and challenges in life.

Thus it makes this a personal responsibility for the believer:

(1) this is something you must do to be in the will of God; (2) this is something you must do for yourself and no one else can do it for you; (3) the faster this is done the faster will be the positive results!

This word “consider” or “count” is addressed (in the grammar) to the person and means it is an action that the person has to perform; it is something you, the believer, must do yourself and no one else can do it for you. This clearly shows us the personal responsibility we are to take for our responses and actions while experiencing stress! We are not victims! Since the Word of God and the Spirit of God gives us all the power we need to perform every biblical command, then we must not buy into the lie that says, “I can’t.”

Reminder: “Count,” “Consider”: (Greek: *hēgeomai*): add up all the facts which is the reality of the doctrine that you know, and come to the correct spiritual understanding about the matter; draw the correct divine viewpoint conclusion, interpret it accurately (Gene Cunningham calls this process “spiritual mathematics”).

It means to make this that he is about to teach a standard part of your thinking; to let this be the measure of accuracy and truth in your dealing with stress (trials, temptations) of all kinds. This teaching is to lead us in our thinking and lead our emotional responses.

It makes the standard of the Word of God the measure of the accuracy of our responses and, because of this thinking, our emotions are controlled. This is thinking objectively not subjectively:

- **Subjective:** thinking based on feelings (emotions) and personal opinions (HVP – human viewpoint thinking) rather than facts or evidence.
- **Objective:** based on facts and evidence (DVP – divine viewpoint of Scripture) rather than feelings and personal opinions. The objective looks outward to the facts, to reality, to the Bible because the Bible defines reality!

A command is always to a person’s mind and volition. Since the Bible issues commands in relation to trials (pressure, stress), the Bible is asking the person, “How are you thinking about this?” for the believer it is to look outward at Bible Doctrine, to think about it, apply the Divine Viewpoint to the situation, and then respond accordingly.

Subjective responses for the believer are those which look inward at the point of stress and responds with emotion and Human Viewpoint Thinking. “How do I *feel* about this?” is a subjective response to stress (pressure). How one feels is *never the issue!*

James 1:2 – the golden key to victory in trials!

THE TIME OF TRIAL IS THE TIME OF DECISION! DVP or HVP?

“all joy”: wholly joy, total joy, nothing but joy, great joy, supreme joy, pure joy, joy to the highest, “all conceivable joy – a matter on all hands joyful” (Alford)’. As Hodges notes, there is nothing “partial or

insufficient” about this joy^{vi}. “‘Whole joy,’ ‘unmixed joy,’ as in Phil.2:29. Not just ‘some joy’ along with much grief.”^{vii}

Matthew 5:10-12

Jesus: “rejoice, and be exceedingly glad” When under maximum pressure!

1 Peter 1:6-7: Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.

James 1:2: What is James saying to us? “Put the facts of Bible Doctrine in your soul together with the facts of the situation and you can conclude it is total joy.” If we have not yet learned the inner joy of living by doctrine then we will struggle to operate in it during times of increased pressure. This is absolutely not “positive thinking,” or any other such mind games that a person can play. It is doctrinal thinking, or otherwise called, divine viewpoint thinking!

“fall”: “encounter,” “to fall around,” “to fall among,” “to fall into,” “enveloped in,” “to surround.” The idea is not just like running into a wall, but, rather, dropping into a hole of water that surrounds or envelopes you. “It is a picture of being surrounded (*peri*) by trials” (A. T. Robertson). It is suddenly and unexpectedly surrounded by trials, suddenly enveloped by trials.

“divers” “diverse” “various”: “Manifold,” “many colored,” “of many kinds,” “variegated,” “all sorts of,” a great diversity, many different kinds of pressure; pressures that last many different lengths of time.

Pressures felt at different levels of intensity. This sums up anything that puts pressure on us and does not refer to specific to any specific type of pressure.

God is adding color to your life through trials and it is good!

“Temptations,” “trials”: testing done to determine the quality of something or to prove that it is real; a test of spiritual staying power (endurance); in this case, a test done by God to give the believer an opportunity to move from one level of character development to a higher one (see v.3).

Dr. Tom Constable, of Dallas Theological Seminary, gives this excellent commentary on this passage:

What kinds of trials was James talking about? Did he mean troubles such as running out of money, or failing a test in school, or having to stay up all night with a sick child: everyday troubles? Yes. The Greek word translated "trials" (*peirasmois*) means a "proving," specifically "the trial of a man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy . . . also an enticement to sin, temptation." Various temptations to depart from the will of God are in view. The context supports this conclusion. Verse 3 restates these trials as "the testing of your faith." James was speaking of the different kinds of trials in which we experience temptation to accompany sinners rather than remaining faithful to the Savior. He was not distinguishing between internal and external temptations. Trials come from both sources (cf. v. 14). Any trial can constitute a test of our faith, namely, a temptation to cease trusting and obeying God.^{viii}

James 1:13-15

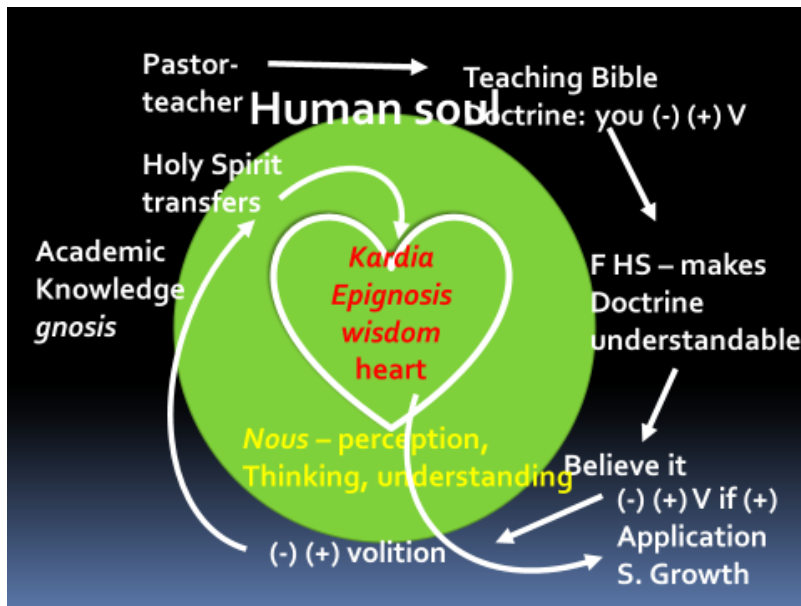
When under pressure the believer will always be baited (tempted, enticed) by Satan to turn from the Lord and the Word and to respond improperly. Every test God gives to improve us is also an enticement to sin by not applying doctrine and instead to respond from our sin nature.

Often we think in terms of temptation being only about the “big ones” – the “big” sins by our human opinion; but the temptation to sin is far more subtle than that. There is a constant a continuous enticing going on that never stops; the moment-by-moment “little” things, the seemingly small decisions of disobedience or neglect – these are the most dangerous because temptation is progressive with the “little” things leading up to the “big” things. Beloved, anytime we are not advancing in the faith and applying Bible Doctrine we are giving in sin even if “all it is” is the mental attitude sin of failure in the application of Bible Doctrine.

James 1:3 “knowing this”: Here is the critical explanation of the word “consider” (count) in the previous verse. How can you consider trials as “all joy”? Because you know something! What do you know?

Bible Doctrine, especially that Bible teaching related to Christian character development and God’s purposes in testing. When Bible Doctrine is tested and you apply it then you will know by experience that your biblically founded faith works!

“Knowing,” Greek *ginosko*: to know, to perceive, to come to understand - experimental knowledge, the



only way of getting this view of "trials" as "all joy." It is the perfect form of *oida* – mature, complete knowledge. Specifically, you have to know things about the doctrine of the believer’s trials – including suffering, the character and purposes of God, and the doctrine of rewards. You have to this knowledge in your heart, the very center of who you are. This operational knowledge will provide you with the ability to make wise and correct decisions. This knowledge will keep your emotions under control.

To the left is the basic chart of how the believer is to learn Bible Doctrine through his pastor-teacher and how the Spirit of God bring the truths of the Word of God into the very center of who we are when we choose to believe them.

Out of who we are comes the decisions that direct our daily living if, once again, we choose to apply it to our circumstances.

James 1:3

“The trying of your faith”: Zane Hodges writes it as, “The genuine thing of your faith”; “your quality-proven faith,” “your unalloyed [pure] faith.” The word “trying” is *dokimon*: “James is referring to the way trial and testing apply ‘fire’ to our faith, so that it comes through the ‘furnace’ of trouble cleansed of any impurity from the flesh. Like gold that has been refined, faith can be purified from selfish motives and misguided perceptions that often distort and weaken it”^{ix}

Such trials should further develop our faith (trust) in God and His Word. Trials give opportunity for the greater purification of the believer’s character and demonstration of trust in the Lord and His Word.

1 Peter 1:7 with James 1:3

A. T. Robertson “trying”:

His use of *dokimon* (neuter article with neuter single adjective) here and in 1 Peter 1:7, clearly means "the genuine element in your faith," not "crucible" nor "proving." Your faith like gold stands the test of fire and is approved as standard.^x

What the believer has to know to fulfill the v.2 command of joy is to know some specific doctrines because any test (trial, temptation) is an opportunity to demonstrate what has been learned. It is not just information: it is true knowledge that makes a difference in the way the believer thinks and acts – including how he responds to the pressures of life (stress). It is doctrine in the soul.

James 1:3 “worketh patience”

This is the doctrine you have to have clear in your mind: the outworking of your faith under pressure will produce the highly valued spiritual character quality of patience.

Patience #5281 *hupomonê* a patient enduring; endurance.

Wuest: such trying “produces a patience which bears up and does not lose heart or courage under trials.”

When Bible Doctrine is applied over and over again, while under pressure, it will produce the ability to get through the going through without blowing up or breaking down! Patient endurance does not give up our thinking to human viewpoint. HVP always thinks DVP doesn’t work!

Romans 5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing (*oida* mature knowledge) that tribulation worketh patience (*hupomonê* endurance)

This is a living faith that works in the believer making a difference in the way we think and act.

This is what testing “produces”: increasing confidence in the Word of God and the God of the Word! Or, if you will, “endurance” or “perseverance.” It is sometimes translated “patience.”

Endurance is the ability to hold up in spiritual strength and remaining faithful while going through pressure. Endurance is persevering throughout life doing the will of God and not rejecting faithfulness to God and His Word. Endurance is “active staying power”^{.xi} even when – or especially when – the pressure to give up and give in tempt us to stop the race.

James 1:4

“and let”: addressed to the believer’s volition – it is a choice you have to make and by the power of the Spirit of God a choice you can make! The believer must keep on allowing this process of spiritual development to go on and not get impatient. In other words: submit to the will of God in this matter of trials and allow God to work! Stress is inevitable – distress is a choice!

“perfect” “complete” *telios* a goal: having reached its end, i.e. complete. “That ye may be” points to the goal, the purpose of the trial or stress that God intends. The idea is of perfect or complete work leading to spiritual strength and maturity in time with the resulting rewards in eternity - this is God’s goal for the life of the believer.

This is God’s goal for the believer’s life! “perfect”: a spiritually mature believer or a Christ-like believer. It does not mean “sinless perfection.” The word would refer to one who is learning and applying Bible Doctrine so that he or she is well down the road to spiritual transformation into maturity. This person has doctrinal stability as well as mental and emotional stability.

The Greek word *telios* refers to a goal being accomplished or completed. To “carry on the work to the end or completion.”^{.xii} But it is up to us to choose to cooperate with God so that He can accomplish His goal in our lives!

“God is seeking the fully developed Christian person who (in the popular phrase) ‘really has it together.’ Such a man or woman is prepared to cope with life’s adversities in deep reliance upon the sufficiency and grace of God.”^{.xiii}



Perfect or complete = the goal of God for your life! This is what your Lord Jesus Christ, your Savior, desires for you more than anything else in your life as a believer and testing (stress, temptation, trials) are the method He uses to accomplish His goal.

“entire” “complete”: “complete in all the parts” (A.T. Robertson) “whole, having all its parts, sound, perfect” (Zodhiates) - one who is fully developed in all aspects of Christian character; one who has all the spiritual equipment needed to be useful to the Lord in the work of His service in this life.

“Wanting nothing” “lacking in nothing”: not missing anything that one needs to:

(1) Be both useful and used by the Lord in His service, and

(2) Ready to be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ including the right to rule and reign with Him.

Patience – endurance: the long-term results

- **James 1:12** – reward – the crown of life
- **2 Timothy 2:12**
- **Revelation 2:10, 3:21**

God intends for the believer who goes into any trial (pressure – stress) to come out spiritually stronger and more mature in the faith. He intends that their understanding of doctrine, as something that works effectively in their life, will be increased. The result? Personal transformation into spiritual maturity or Christlikeness is what happens when doctrine is learned and applied!

- The method God uses to accomplish His goal: temptation, trials, testing, pressure = stress
- The goal of God in our lives: transformation into Christlikeness
- The result of such transformation in time: total joy
- The result of such transformation in eternity: rewards, increased joy, reigning with Christ in His Kingdom, and special privileges throughout eternity.

James 1:5-8 - Trials Bring Discovery and Opportunity

“If any of you lack wisdom”: the trial reveals the lack! In the context, the wisdom to handle the stress correctly so that it does not become distress; remember: distress is always out of God’s will for you! Distress is the human viewpoint response to a trial. Distress interrupts the development of endurance.

Wisdom is how to respond correctly to the pressure. It is how to apply Bible Doctrine that has been learned to a specific detail in life, that is, a specific point of stress (pressure – positive or negative); wisdom is how to make the right decisions in time in order to endure and to thus maximize spiritual advancement; wisdom is needed to endure and pass the test!

Wisdom is to know how to think and act given the circumstances or people involved.

“let him ask of God”: Imperative – a command!

It is not a matter of option, although we can express our free will and refuse to obey. If we are not asking for God’s wisdom in all the pressure points of life, then two things become apparent:

1. We are disobeying God’s direct command to us His children
2. We are acting in arrogance and self-sufficiency

Under stress most people simply pray and ask God to relieve the pressure. While such asking is alright, we must ask for much, much more if we are to see everything from the divine viewpoint.

We must ask:

- What doctrine applies to this situation?
- What is the Divine Viewpoint on this pressure?
- What promises from Scripture can I remember and rely on?
- What does God desire me to learn about Him through this?
- What does God want me to learn about myself from this (both strengths and weaknesses; the trends of my sin nature)?
- How would trust in the Lord be best demonstrated to myself and others?
- Beginning with my thinking, what needs to be changed in me?

Consider Paul in **2 Corinthians 12:7-10!**

James 1:5

REMEMBER:

- the promises of God
- the power of God
- the purposes of God
- the person of God

Hebrews 4:14-16

Come and ask for wisdom to deal with my weaknesses in the application of these four things to a specific pressure; to apply DVP rather than HVP! Not just “Get me out of this situation!”

James 1:5

“God, that giveth to all men liberally”: Our God is a giving God. His freely giving to us is also called “grace.” The question we need to answer is how does God give us His wisdom? Is it some “lightning bolt from the sky? Is it some vision? Do we hear some voice where we can say, “God spoke to me”? Is it some feeling of inner “peace” about a decision? No, He gives it through His Word and only through His Word!

Proverbs 3:5-6

To know that it is true that God is absolutely trustworthy; we can be confident in Him. The comparison is with the word “lean.” Which one will we be confident in – God (His character) and His thoughts (His Word, the Bible) or ourselves and our thoughts (HVP)?

“Heart” refers ones thinking, the mind. What are we focused on – the Scriptures and the God of the Scriptures or our thoughts and feelings?

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” “Acknowledge Him” means “to know Him.” Such knowing is based on the revealed Word of God – He is Who He says He is and we can fully rely on Him. It requires a submission to His being our Lord and not to doubt Him or His Word (as we will see James says). In other words, it is a knowledge that makes a difference in the way we think and act.

In the case of trials to “acknowledge Him” is to put into practice what He has revealed through His Word about the nature and purpose of trials and our response of “joy.” To acknowledge Him is to know and apply Bible Doctrine (DVP). The result is the direction of our paths: this is spiritual wisdom.

So how is wisdom given to us by God?

- A. We have do the lifetime work of constantly learning Bible Doctrine through diligent study
2 Timothy 2:15
- B. We have to maintain fellowship through 1 John 1:9
- C. We have to think Bible Doctrine Colossians 3:16
- D. We have to maintain our confidence in God and His Word, learning endurance Hebrews 12:1-2
- E. We have to seek God’s wisdom through prayer in the application of Bible Doctrine James 1:5

James 1:5

“Ask” to ask, to request, beg, call for, crave, desire, require: Greek grammar: present (do it now in continuous action) active (you have to do it, no one else can do it for you) imperative (a command to your volition). You are to keep on asking and make this a regular part of your life!

Matthew 7:7-8 7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

I know this: I simply do not have the brains nor the wisdom to figure out how to handle all the details of life with its multiple challenges and all its stress – nor do I want to! But I have a Heavenly Father who is ready and willing to give me all the knowledge and wisdom I need through His Word and the power to live it out through His Spirit.

James 1:6

Faith is to be convinced that something is true (believe). This is simply taking God at His Word in reference to the trial that God will give wisdom if we seek it. Will we believe the promise about wisdom that God has just made which is “Who gives to all men generously and without reproach”?

Zane Hodges: “When one doubts he is not believing. When one believes he is not doubting.”^{xiv} Doubt questions the Truth of God as well as the God of Truth. Doubt does not trust.

Nothing wavering: we say, “Oh, I believe God and His Word,” and then when the pressure comes we jump right in with HVP and our emotions run wild as we try to handle it without ever looking for and asking for His promised wisdom from His Word. That is foolishness! Or when God’s time is not our time we just figure we’ll have to solve the issue ourselves! We fail to act in faith.



Panic and faith (trust) cannot coexist in the same brain at the same time!

James 2:17

Even though saved and on our way to heaven, our faith has become a non-working faith that is making no difference in the way we handle the details of life. In other words, we are to put our faith – the content of Bible Doctrine – to work in our life. This is to have a working faith, a living faith. In pressure, we make our faith active by believing and applying Bible Doctrine under the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit – we practice the faith-rest drill, we ask for wisdom, we apply DVP.

Doubting creates instability in both thinking and in emotions. This spills over into all aspects of life. Such instability will make a mess of everything in life but especially the spiritual aspects.

Ephesians 4:11-15

God has promised every believer that you can learn His Word and be transformed by the complete renovation of your mind from Human Viewpoint to Divine Viewpoint. Bible Doctrine – learned and believed under the ministry of the Holy Spirit – will stabilize your life in every aspect. God’s Word can bring anyone to the stability found in spiritual maturity no matter what your past or what you may think your limitations are (such as education, I.Q., or learning ability). Paul emphasizes the mental and emotional stability that comes when correct doctrine is learned (“the unity of the faith”) and lived out.

“knowledge of the Son of God” means a knowing by experience that doctrine works and through it learning of the rich personal relationship we have with our Lord Jesus Christ.

James 1:6

Experience-based, non-doctrinal teaching Christianity thrives on individuals who are doctrinal children and are, like children, seeking a various emotional (they call it “spiritual”) experiences rather than to do the hard work of learning and applying Bible Doctrine.

“a wave of the sea”: “The Greek word refers to a succession of waves, one after the other, being driven by the wind.”^{xv}

“driven and tossed”: driven is the wind pushing sideways; tossed is the waves surging up and down.

The present tense speaks of a constant unrest, both mentally and emotionally; there is a deep lack of any peace because there is no inner Bible Doctrine learned and believed to bring stability in the storms of life.

James 1:7

If we will not believe Him in all that He has given us His Word and through His Spirit, then He has nothing else to give us and He won't!

James 1:8

"Doubled minded," *Dipsuchos*: Literally, "two-souled"- I have called these "bi-polar Christians." They say, "I believe God, I don't believe God. I believe God, I don't believe God." "I believe His Word, I don't believe His Word." This is the most common of all: "His Word is true but doesn't apply to this circumstance." "I know what God has said, BUT....."

H. A. Ironside

A double-minded man is never sure of anything. He goes from one calling to another and from one line of service to another, like a bee or butterfly flitting from flower to flower, but is ever unsettled and fancies some other course might be better than the one he has taken. "The meek will He guide in judgment; the meek will he teach His ways" (Ps.25:9). Changeableness is an evidence of an unsubdued will and generally, too, of an inflated ego, which leads one to be occupied unduly with the importance of his own affairs.^{xvi}

Testing in Two Forms

James is now going to give a brief example of what he has taught so far. In reality, everything else in the book of James is an exposition of James 1:2 – it tells us how to keep this command in the details of daily life.

The two types of pressure

- 1. Adversity testing – v.9
- 2. Advantage testing – v.10



Whether we perceive such testing as negative or positive, it is none the less a stress, a pressure, on us. Whether or not we respond from the DVP or HVP is up to us. Stress is not the problem!

Now he is going to point out that both adversity testing and advantage (prosperity) testing can be used by God in our lives to develop us spiritually. Both can and do put “pressure” (stress) on our thinking and acting; how we respond is the issue.

So James is going to give a warning: do not get distracted from the real issues in life! He is going to show us what can create double-mindedness (v.8).

James 1:9

“low degree” is the Greek word *tapeinos* (5011): humility, lowly position “in outward condition” (A.T. Robertson), “poor and afflicted, as contrasted with rich” (Vincent). “A social lowliness” (Dean). “Face in the dust” (Cunningham). “By lowly brother James probably means a 'poor brother,' since he is contrasted with 'the rich' [brother] in v.10” (Hodges).

What is this economically poor person of low social standing to do about this long and perhaps lifetime trial? He is to apply James 1:2! He is to “rejoice” in his situation!

Exalted is the Greek word *hupsos* (5311): It means, “high, aloft, height, elevation.” (Zodhiates). As a figure of speech it can mean to be exalted or lifted up to a high place spiritually.

Zane Hodges:

“There is no higher honor than that to be the object of God's gracious and loving concern. Equally, God is preparing to bestow on this brother the crown of life which comes to those who endure testing (v.12...). That too is an exaltation. Thus the lowly brother's exaltation is both present (in the trial itself) and prospective (in the trial's outcome). This, then, should be the poor person's perspective on trouble.”^{xvii}

James 1:10

The “rich” person referred to here is also a brother in Christ. This is simply a believer who has much in the material aspects of life. The Bible does not exalt poverty as being a more spiritual thing than riches; it neither praises poverty nor degrades wealth.

However, it does warn of the great challenge a rich person faces spiritually because they tend to trust in themselves: their abilities which accumulated the riches and the riches themselves as things upon which they rely to handle times of trial. This sort of thinking fails to glorify God in life and it creates failure at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Self-reliance and material-reliance are dangerous to the spiritual life because they both come from human viewpoint. By now we should recognize that human viewpoint is nothing in the eyes of the Lord and it will ruin our lives as believers.

Zane Hodges

The wealthy Christian brother should glory (also implied from v.9) in his personal trials as a form of humiliation. Like all people with abundant material wealth, the wealthy Christian can easily forget that as a flower of the field he will pass away..^{xviii}

The money issue is simply one of the things in the manifold details of life that can distract us from the real spiritual issues in life of learning and living Bible Doctrine.

James 1:11

Adversity testing can have a positive effect on everybody, but it can be especially valuable to the rich man. Why? Because it reminds him of his humanity and that life is transitory; it helps him get his mental focus right; it helps not to trust in his wealth and talent. The “burning heat” is adversity testing. Adversity can “wither” the everyday goodness of life, it can cause the beauty of life – the flower – to fall off and be destroyed.

The main thing: James 1:9-11

The key thing to remember from verses 9-11 is this: if you are in the category of “poor,” do not focus on what you do not have, all your troubles, and feelings of “victimization”: focus on who you are in Christ. If you are in the category of “rich,” do not focus on your abilities, personal confidence, busy activities, or abundance: focus on who you are in Christ.

James 1:12

Now we are back to where we started. The believer who passes the tests of life will develop into a spiritually mature individual whose character as a Christ-like believer will be commended by his Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

“Blessed”: Greek *Markarios*: “Possessing the favor of God, the state of being marked by fullness from God...The believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit because of Christ and as a result should be fully satisfied no matter the circumstances. *Markarios* differs from the word “happy” in that a person is happy who has good luck (from the root hap meaning luck as favorable circumstance) (Zodhiates).

“Blessedness” happens when we live our lives according to biblical Truth and it may or may not include a “happy” feeling. Blessing is not a reward, but it describes a life lived within the plan of God. This is spiritual success and prosperity.

“endureth”: *hupomeno* meaning to endure, literally: “to remain under” - To remain under, or bear up under even if it is a load of misery, difficulty, and suffering. To persevere means one is applying doctrine on a moment-by-moment basis while experiencing the trial. Endurance keeps stress from turning into distress, worry, panic or other mental and emotional responses – all of which are mental attitude sins. Mental attitude sins will rob the believer of stability, joy, and satisfaction that God intends for us to have.

The word translated here “crown” is the Greek word *stephanos*. In the Greek culture this was not the crown of a king (that word is diadem, a royal crown); rather, it is the crown or wreath of the victor in the various athletic games. It was also used as recognition of civic worth, to honor military valor on the battlefield, and a few other uses.

The reference here is for the believer being victorious in the “race” of the Christian life (while in the angelic conflict) – it is the victor’s crown which Paul says in imperishable (1 Corinthians 9:25). Such crowns were given at the end of the race and after the battle, not during. The reference is pointing the believer to the end result that is experienced in eternity.

2 Corinthians 5:10 – we will be evaluated

Crown of Life: The reward for faithfulness under trial

Revelation 2:10 - The crown of life is not free! It belongs only to the victorious overcomers.

This crown ties in with **Revelation 3:10** - Ruling with Christ in the coming Kingdom is a reward only for the victorious believers

The reference here is for the believer being victorious in the “race” of the Christian life (while in the angelic conflict) – it is the victor’s crown which Paul says in imperishable. Such crowns were given at the end of the race and after the battle, not during. The reference is pointing the believer to the end result that is experienced in eternity.



Do you agree, beloved?

Will you be crowned for faithfulness under pressure because you have learned to live out Bible Doctrine and trust the Lord in the day-to-day pressures of your life?

My prayer for you is that you will earn the **Crown of Life!**

To view four of the five video sessions on You Tube go to www.nrbbc.com

Student Study Guide

This short course can earn a one-half hour credit in the Free Grace Bible Institute. After completing the study and reading *all* the Scriptures listed, the student must answer the following questions and then turn it in to the designated person for evaluation.

1. Yes or no: I have read all the Scriptures listed in this study _____
2. True or false: there are dozens of ways to look at stress _____
3. Define *Divine Viewpoint*
4. Define *Human Viewpoint*
5. Define *worldliness* in your own words based on the Dean and Ice definition pp.2-3
6. Romans 8:28 states that God will work all things together for good for whom (be exact)?
7. What is the value of the believer “considering the end” in reference to the Judgment Seat of Christ?

8. Complete this sentence p.3: It is not about _____ it is about _____

9. Write 2 Corinthians 5:10 below:

10. Think about it: this is the evaluation for the born-again believer and for them only. The word “recompensed” means “to be paid.” It says the believer will be paid back for the deeds done in the body (our life in time) whether good or bad. What do you think it might mean when it says the believer will be paid back, by the Lord Jesus Christ, for both the good and the bad deeds?

11. According to James 1:12 what will the Lord pay as a reward for those who are successful under pressure in time?

12. What is the key difference between winners and losers at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

13. After reading 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 what would you say are the most important facts to know from this critical passage?
14. In James 1:12 it says “for when he is tried.” Define what this means:
15. True or false: evidence testing is given to see if the person really has eternal life or not _____
16. What is the purpose of evidence testing?
17. Yes or no: is the believer held responsible by God to learn what is being taught from the Bible in church? _____ How does this apply to the doctrine of testing?
18. According to 2 Corinthians 5:9, what is the main goal of the believer in time?
19. What does the term *volition* mean?
20. The word *consider* is a _____
21. What does 1 Corinthians 10:13 tell us about tests (temptations)?

22. What are the two means God has given believers to pass every test in time?

23. What does the word “consider” mean and why is it important to understanding this verse?

24. True or false: good works provide evidence that a person is truly saved _____

25. If a friend were to ask you the meaning of 2 Timothy 2:12, how would you explain it to them?

26. Fill in the blank: The time of trial is the time of _____

27. In James 1:2 what does his use of the word “when” mean?

28. What does John 16:33 teach us?

29. What meaning does Pastor David give to the word “stress” for this study?

30. What meaning is given to the word “distress”?

31. Have you ever thought that inheriting a million dollars could be distressful? _____ Think about it in the context of this study, how might wealth cause spiritual distress?

32. Why is distress arrogance?

33. Read 1 Corinthians 3:18-20. Summarize the key lesson from this passage.

34. What does Romans 8:12-13 teach you?

35. Stress is inevitable, distress is a choice. What does this mean? How does it impact you?

36. 1 Peter 1:3-9. Peter was writing this to encourage believers in the middle of serious persecution pressure. Use this passage as a means to encourage someone undergoing a serious trial in their life. Write out the main points you would say to them.

37. Write out below the seven deaths in Scripture and their basic meaning.

38. In John 16:33 what is the Greek word translated “tribulation” and what does it mean?

39. In James 1:2 what is the Greek word translated “temptations” and what does it mean?

40. True or false: God’s purpose in testing is to get you to fall into sin _____

41. In the same verse, what does the word trying or testing mean?

42. What is the opposite of distress? _____

43. True or false: the believer can eliminate the distress in their life and have total joy even under maximum stress _____
44. 1 Peter 1:8. What does the term “sober spirit” mean?
45. What defines reality? _____
46. What does a person of a “sober spirit” learn about life’s pressures?
47. If a believer under pressure (stress) responds with negative human emotions and thoughts, what does this indicate about that person? What do they need to do quickly?
48. At this point does responding to pressures (stress, trials) with total joy seem impossible for you to ever experience? _____ Why or why not?
49. 1 Peter 5:7-8. Carefully read these verses. What is the Lord telling you through these?

50. James 1:2. Who is to take responsibility for the person's response to pressure?

51. What is the difference between subjective and objective responses to pressure?

52. What does "all joy" mean?

53. Explain the meaning of Matthew 5:10-12

54. James 1:2. What is significant about the word "fall"?

55. James 1:2. What is the meaning of "divers trials"?

56. James 1:2. According to Tom Constable, what is the choice in every trial?

57. James 1:13-15. What does it mean to say temptation is like “bait”?
58. James 1:3. What do you have to know to successfully achieve God’s purpose for testing in your life? Two words! _____
59. Explain the word “knowing”:
60. What is operational knowledge and why is it important?
61. James 1:3. What is being testing when the believer is under pressure (stress, temptation)?
62. Page 16. Fill in the blanks: “What the _____ has to know to fulfill the v.2 command of _____ is to know some specific _____ because any test (trial, temptation) is an _____ to demonstrate what has been _____
63. James 1:3. Explain the meaning of “worketh patience.”
64. What does testing produce in the believer who applies Bible Doctrine?

65. What is endurance?

66. James 1:4. What is significant about the words “and let”?

67. KEY: What is God’s purpose in the believer’s trials?

68. What does the word *telios* mean? Why is this important for us to know in relation to stress?

69. Consider James 1:12, 2 timothy 2:12, and Revelation 2:10 and 3:21. In your own words summarize what they are teaching believers.

70. James 1:5-8. What is biblical wisdom in relation to stress?

71. True or false: the believer is commanded to pray and ask for wisdom while under pressure

72. Pick out one of the items in the list “We must ask” that would be the one part of your prayer you think you need most when you are under pressure. Why did you choose this one?

73. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. What can you learn about how to handle even physical pain (or any other serious challenge) from what Paul did and said? What was his attitude?

74. What can we learn in practical wisdom from Proverbs 3:5-6?

75. What does the word “heart” refer to in Scripture?

76. Look up all the verses under the heading "So how is wisdom given to us by God?" What do you think is the most difficult to do on a consistent basis? Explain your answer.

77. James 1:5. What does the word "ask" mean?

78. James 1:6. What is the definition of faith?

79. Complete this sentence: "When one doubts he is not believing. _____"

80. Why is the statement "nothing wavering" important?

81. Explain James 2:17.

82. Based on Ephesians 4:11-15, what has God promised every believer?

83. James 1:6. What do the words “a wave of the sea” and “driven and tossed” tell us about this person? Why do you think this is contrasted with “faith”?

84. James 1:7. This is a warning of what?

85. James 1:8. What the “double-minded” man?

86. James 1: 9 – 10. What are the two forms of testing?

87. Describe the person of James 1:9.

88. Why is this person to “count it all joy” when even greater pressure comes on him?

89. James 1:10. Why is it potentially spiritually *distressful* to be rich?

90. Explain James 1:11.

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91. James 1:12. What does the word “blessed” mean? Why does it not mean “happy”?

92. What does it mean for a person to have endurance / perseverance? Why is this important in the life of the believer?

93. What is the “crown” mentioned in verse 12, when is it given, and who will give it if the believer is qualified?

94. What have you learned about God from this study?

95. What have you learned about yourself from this study?

96. What are the two most important things you have learned about stress (pressure) from this study as it applies to yourself?

ⁱ Robert Dean and Tommy Ice, Spiritual Warfare Grand Rapids: Kregal Publications, 2000, p.59

ⁱⁱ Marty Cauley the Outer Darkness Sylva: Mithological Press, 2012, p.361

ⁱⁱⁱ Robert Dean, www.deanbibleministries.org

^{iv} Gene Cunningham, The Basics, Hot Springs: Basic Training Bible Ministries, 1990, p.3

^v Dean Alford, The New Testament for English Readers, Chicago: Moody Press, ND, p.1591

^{vi} Zane Hodges, The Epistle of James, Irving: Grace Evangelical Society, 1994, p.18

^{vii} A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament: Vol. vi, Nashville: Broadman, 1930, p.11

^{viii} Dr. Tom Constable, "Constable's Expository (Bible Study) Notes" www.soniclight.com, 2015 edition

^{ix} Zane Hodges, *ibid.*

^x A. T. Robertson, *ibid.*

^{xi} Arnold Fruchtenbaum, The Messianic Jewish Epistles, San Antonio: Ariel Ministries, 2005, p.217

^{xii} A. T. Robertson, *ibid.*

^{xiii} Zane Hodges, *ibid.*, p.20

^{xiv} *Ibid.* p.21

^{xv} Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *ibid.*

^{xvi} H. A. Ironside, Hebrews, James, Peter, Neptune: Loizeaux, 1982

^{xvii} Zane Hodges, *ibid.*, p.23

^{xviii} *Ibid.*