

Crossing Over To Maturity
Turning Trials Into Triumphs
James 1:2:12

With the thought in mind of turning trials into triumphs, have you ever seen the bumper sticker that says **“when life hands you lemons, make lemonade?”** It is easier to smile at that statement than to practice it, but the basic philosophy behind it is sound. As a matter of fact it's biblical. The Bible is full of people who turned **defeat into victory** and **trials into triumphs**. Instead of becoming **victims**, they become **victors**.

James is telling us that we can have the same victory today. No matter what the trials may be on the outside or the temptations on the inside, through faith in Christ we can experience victory and the result of that victory is **spiritual maturity**.

If you are going to turn your trials into triumphs there are a few things you must do differently.

1. **Have a Joyful Heart.**

1:2 “Consider it pure joy my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,...”

Have you ever heard the phrase, **“outlook determines outcome”**, and **“attitude determines action?”** God is telling us to expect trials. It is not **“if you face trials of many kinds”** but **“when you face trials of many kinds.”** In ***John 16:33 Jesus said to his disciples, “In this life you will have trouble.”***

We cannot always expect everything to go our way. Some trials come simply because we are human such as sickness, accidents,

disappointments, even tragedy. Other trials come because we are Christians. ***1 Peter 1:12 says, "Dear Friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you."***

With Satan fighting us, the world opposing us, this can make for a life of battle sometimes.

So where does the joyful attitude come into play?

Remember what I said earlier, **"outlook determines outcome."** There was a husband and wife that decided to take a vacation in India. On their trip they came across a world famous weavers shop. They decided to go in and watch this craftsman at work. As they watched this Man work on the looms the husband and wife noticed the underside of the rugs were not very beautiful. The patterns were obscure and the loose ends of yarn was dangling. The weaver knew what they were thinking and stopped his work and said, **"don't judge my work by looking at the wrong side."** In the same way, we can look at our current situation and see it from the wrong side. Only the Lord sees the finished pattern. Let's not judge him on his work from what we see today. His work in your life is not finished yet.

Another translation of James chapter 1 verse two says, ***"Count it all joy my brothers whenever you face trials of many kinds."*** The keyword is **"count."** It's a financial term, and it means **"to evaluate."**

When Paul became a Christian, He evaluated his life and set new goals and priorities. Things that were once important to him became garbage in the light of his experience with Christ. This is the reason why the faithful Christian can have joy in the middle of trials.

Our values determine our evaluations. If we value comfort more than character, then trials will upset us. If we value the material and physical

more than the spiritual, we will not be able to count it all joy. If we live only for the present and forget the future, then our trials will make us bitter, not better.

If anyone had justification for bitterness it was Job. I want you to look closely at his attitude through this terrible trial when he said, ***“But he knows the way that I take, when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.”***

So, when trials come, immediately give it to the Lord and decide to have a joyful attitude. Choose to look at your current trials through the eyes of faith. **Remember outlook determines outcome.** Don't end with a joyful attitude, start with one.

The second thing we must do differently if we want to turn our trials into triumphs is:

2. Have An Understanding Mind. Verse 3
“because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.”

Here's a fun fact for you, faith is always tested. God always tests us to bring out the best, Satan temps us to bring out the worst. The fact that our faith is being tested it all is proof that we are born again.

Here's another fun fact, **testing works for us, not against us.** This fact alone forces us to look at our trials differently. Well how do you know that our trials work for us? Look with me in the book of **Romans 8:28** ***“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*** And then let's not forget what **2 Corinthians 4:17** say, ***“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us and eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”***

Fun fact number three, **trials help us to mature.**

What does God want to produce in our lives? Patience, endurance, and the ability to keep going when things get tough. ***Romans 5:3-4 says, "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character, and character, hope."***

Let's talk about patience for a minute. **The biblical perspective on patience is not a passive acceptance of circumstances.** If that were so, there would be no need to persevere or to hold fast. If that were true we would passively expect what's coming our way and expect our lot in life but that is not a biblical definition of patients.

Hebrews 6:12 says, "We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."

Here's the reason why God wants us to be patient, God wants to make us patient because that is the key to every other blessing. A little child who does not learn patients will not learn much of anything else. When the believer learns to wait on the Lord, then God can do great things for him.

Abraham ran ahead of the Lord, married Hagar and brought great sorrow into his home. See here's the thing, Abraham wasn't always Abraham. He had to go through trials and failures before he ever god's promise fulfilled in his life. Let me give you an example. The Lord spoke to Abram And said leave your country, your people and your fathers house and go to a land I will show you. There are certain details about the story that we miss, for one, when he heard God say leave his country and family, Abram was 75 years old and without children. He's no spring chicken and why is he still living at his father's house?

So, God said I'm going to bless you and out of you will rise a nation and your descendants will be as Numerous as the stars. So, Abram and his wife Sarah set out on this journey. Nine years go by and nothing happens. Sarah is still unable to have kids so Sarah comes up with a brilliant idea. She went to her husband and said, "the Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maid servant and perhaps I can build a Family through her."

Does anybody see a problem with that? Can you see this ending well? So, Abram, being a dude, married Sarah's maid servant and slept with her. A few months later she became pregnant and the plans seem to be working until it didn't.

Abrams wife Sarah, instantly became jealous and the maid servant started treating Sarah poorly because she knew she couldn't have children.

If God has spoken something into your life do not run ahead of him. Learn to be patient even when you feel as though God has forgotten his word to you because if we run ahead of God and make your own plans they will be illegitimate with no blessing attached to it. **Patience is always tied to blessing.**

We can never have an understanding mind if we're always accusing God. Satan can defeat the ignorant believer, but he cannot overcome the Christian who knows the Word and understands the purposes of God in his life.

Church no believer grows to maturity without facing trials in their life. Embrace the trials, embrace failure because we know that it is working for our benefit if we do not give up. Be teachable And allow God to teach us how to have an understanding mind.