

**Topics in Practical Theology – Lesson 5 – Trials**  
**Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School**  
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All people will experience trouble in their lives: perhaps a financial crises, unemployment, personal illness, serious illness or death of a family member, or the victim of crime.

<sup>7</sup>For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward. Job 5:7

<sup>1</sup>Man, who is born of woman, Is short-lived and full of turmoil. Job 14:1

Believers will have particular trouble in the world.

<sup>33</sup>"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

<sup>18</sup>"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup>"If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. John 15:18-19

<sup>12</sup>Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 2 Tim 3:13

### Definitions

Trial (e.g. James 1:2): Trial is from *peirasmos*, which has the basic meaning of trying, testing, assaying, or proving. The word itself is neutral and can have negative or positive connotations, depending on the context, and is sometimes translated "temptation" (e.g., Matt. 6:13; 26:41; 2 Pet. 2:9). The verb form of the word, in fact, is rendered "tempted" or "tempt" in James 1:13, where the idea is clearly that of solicitation to evil. In the present text, however, James obviously has in mind the idea of testing through trouble that is caused by any sort of hardship, problem, or difficulty. MacArthur NT Commentary-James

Temptation (e.g. James 1:13): Solicitation or enticement to evil (sin).

### Key Passage

<sup>3</sup>And not only this, but we also exult in our **tribulations**, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; <sup>4</sup>and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; Rom 5:3-4

Tribulations (thlipsis): originally expressed sheer, physical pressure on a man. Thlipsis is a strong term which does not refer to minor inconveniences, but to real hardships.

Thlipsis (tribulations) has the underlying meaning of being under pressure and was used of squeezing olives in a press in order to extract the oil and of squeezing grapes to extract the juice...In Scripture the word thlipsis is perhaps most often used of outward difficulties, but it is also used of emotional stress." MacArthur NT Commentary: Romans 1-8.

<sup>6</sup>In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; <sup>8</sup>and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 1 Pet 1:6-8

<sup>2</sup>**Consider** it all **joy**, my brethren, **when** you **encounter various trials**, <sup>3</sup>knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup>And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-5

Consider (hegeomai): aorist imperative – a command calling for action. Denotes deliberate and careful judgment stemming from external proof, not subjective judgment based on feelings. It calls for a mental evaluation adopted as the result of due deliberation, the conscious acceptance of a definite inner attitude.

Joy (chara): Joy is the deep-down sense of well-being that abides in the heart of the person who knows all is well between himself and the Lord. It is not an experience that comes from favorable circumstances but even occurs when those circumstances are the most painful.

When (hotan): in the subjunctive mood and carries the idea not just of possibility but inevitability.  
Encounter (periptō): falling into, usually unexpectedly.

Various (poikilos): various kinds or modes, diversified, manifold, variegated, many colored. It stresses the diversity not the quantity of trials.

Trials (peirasmos): trial, try, tempt, prove in either a good or bad sense. Depending on the context, it may either mean that which entices to sin or difficult times.

When the inevitability varieties of trials fall upon us out of the blue, we should evaluate the truths from God's Word concerning trials and joyfully accept them looking expectantly for how God we may glorify God in the trial and how He will change us.

Things to "Consider": Purposes of trials include:

1. To test the strength of our faith.

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. Ex 16:4

<sup>6</sup>In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; <sup>8</sup>and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 1 Pet 1:6-8

God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart. 2 Chron 32:31b

To test the genuineness of a diamond, jewelers often place it in clear water, which causes a real diamond to sparkle with special brilliance. An imitation stone, on the other hand, will have almost no sparkle at all. When the two are placed side by side, even an untrained eye can easily tell the difference. In a similar way, even the world can often notice the marked differences between genuine Christians and those who merely profess faith in Christ. As with jewels, there is a noticeable difference in radiance, especially when people are undergoing difficult times. Many people have great confidence in their faith until it is severely tested by hardships and disappointments. How a person handles trouble will reveal whether his faith is living or dead, genuine or imitation, saving or non-saving. MacArthur Study Guide on Trials

2. To humble us

<sup>7</sup>Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself! 2 Cor 12:7

<sup>8</sup>For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; <sup>9</sup>indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; 2 Cor 1:8-9

3. To remind us of our future glory

<sup>18</sup>For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Rom 8:18

4. To develop godly character and strength

<sup>3</sup>And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; <sup>4</sup>and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Rom 5:3-5

<sup>10</sup>Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Cor 12:10

The road to maturity, to being complete in Christ during our alien pilgrimage here, is filled with the bumps of difficult circumstances. The life of ease is not the way God has typically chosen as the forum for growth. This perspective, also reflected in Acts 14.22, and 1 Peter 1.6-9, shows us a purpose in hard days. We have the great opportunity to both please and honor our God by our faith and to simultaneously grow in the likeness of Christ. Wayne Johnston

5. To enable us to better help others in their trials

<sup>31</sup>"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; <sup>32</sup>but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Luke 22:31-32

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup>who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup>For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. <sup>6</sup>But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; 2 Cor 1:3-6

6. To allow us to receive help in time of need

<sup>16</sup>Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Heb 14:6

7. To cause us to learn more of God's Word

<sup>71</sup>It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes. Psa 119:71

8. To give us opportunities for service.

<sup>12</sup>Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, <sup>13</sup>so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, <sup>14</sup>and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. Phil 1:12-19

### Hope in Trials

1. The trial may never end this side of heaven, but glory awaits the true believer.

<sup>18</sup>For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Rom 8:18

2. God is sovereign and is working all things for His glory and my benefit.

<sup>28</sup>And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Rom 8:28

3. God has given us everything we need to glorify Him through the trial.

<sup>2</sup>Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; <sup>3</sup>seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. <sup>4</sup>For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 2 Pet 1:2-4

4. God will not allow more trials (temptations) in our life than we can bear.

<sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. 1 Cor 10:13

5. The Word can equip us to glorify God in the trial.

<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17

6. Saturation with the Word provides peace.

<sup>165</sup>Those who love Your law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble. Psalm 119:165

7. Prayer brings peace.

<sup>1</sup>Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning. <sup>2</sup>Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray. <sup>3</sup>In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch. Psa 5:1-3

<sup>6</sup>Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

8. Trust in God in the midst of the trial.

<sup>15</sup>"Though He slay me, I will hope in Him Job 13:15a

9. Cast the burden on God and He will care for you.

<sup>22</sup>Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. Psa 55:22

<sup>6</sup>Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 1 Pet 5:6-7

10. Perseverance results in blessing, maturity and eventually the crown of life.

<sup>12</sup>Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. James 1:12

11. Fear God in the trial not man.

<sup>6</sup>so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?" Heb 13:6

12. Our hope is an anchor for our soul.

<sup>17</sup>In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, <sup>18</sup>so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. <sup>19</sup>This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, Heb 6:17-19