

James 1:2-4

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

It would appear that James is using an oxymoron in verse 2, when he speaks of joy pertaining to trials. Yet, that is true only for the casual observer or listener. Look with me at what the ultimate promise is, perfect, complete, lacking in nothing. If I was to ask who wants these three traits in their life, most people would raise both hands. So seeing the prize or promise, let's look again at the conditions. Each of us must learn to yield ourselves to our Heavenly Father through joy as we encounter the various trials of life. Nothing sounds more impossible in the natural, and in the natural I believe that's true. Yet we are not to live our lives through our own strength, but His. To do this, you must die to yourself. I have heard it said that a soldier is only effective in battle, when he comes to the place where he is ultimately willing to die. As believers in Christ, the same is true for you and me. The only way we can live our lives with all of the various trials, and be joyful, is to come to the place where Jesus takes a greater measure than we do, in our own lives. Is that not the example that He made for us? He poured Himself out in every way.

You may ask, why a God of love would ever allow pain, struggles, trials and adversities into the lives of His people. The answer is because we need them! Can you imagine how boring this world would be if everyday was sunny, clear and seventy degrees? But because of the extremes that we endure, we greatly appreciate the beautiful days so much more. If my life and yours were without any difficulties, what would we need God for? If we were able to recognize our need for Him, how could we ever mature without these outside obstacles making us stronger? The bottom line is that all of life's issues simply refine us into the image of our Savior Jesus Christ. Ultimately it is endurance that is produced through our faith being tested. Just like an athlete, without endurance we would fail before our finish line. Our Heavenly Father, knowing all of this and more allows you and I to face, endure and persevere through the trials of life. Thank God that He does!! Because if we do persevere, then ultimately we will be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. The problem is that most people want to be delivered before the fruit of the trial has been developed in their lives.

Beloved I want you to know what we are ultimately being prepared for. Please follow along with me in **James 1**, down to verse ¹² **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.** Each of us can ultimately receive the crown of life by learning to yield our will over to the Lord and persevering under the trials and temptations of life. Every man and woman faces them; and I exhort you to be the one that endures. Keep your eyes on Jesus, listen to what He has to say and don't quit! You may not believe that you can make it through another day, but with Christ nothing is impossible!!