



**Without Struggle or Pain, there is no Growth**

NorthRidge Church

Dr. M. David Myers

February 17, 2019

**Truth for Life**

For the week of February 17, 2019

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4*

### The Journey of Spiritual Growth – James 1:2-4

- 1) His Instruction ... *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,*  
Cp. 2 Samuel 12; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
  - a) Considering it joy is a conscious choice we make every time we encounter hard times. When we make such a choice, these 2 truths arise ...
    - i) This difficulty is from \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii) This difficulty is necessary for my \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) When hard times come our way, How do we Move Forward, rather than Retreating or Hunkering Down?
    - i) When hard times come, be a \_\_\_\_\_, not a \_\_\_\_\_.
    - ii) \_\_\_\_\_ for what you can give thanks for.
    - iii) Remind yourself of the \_\_\_\_\_.
    - iv) Choose to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in God.
    - v) Resolve to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ with life
- 2) The Purpose ... *because you know that the testing of your faith produces ...*
  - a) God wants to purge us from \_\_\_\_\_ and to purify us of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b) God uses suffering to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c) God uses times of difficulty to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d) God uses hard times to prepare us to \_\_\_\_\_ to others.
  - e) God uses hard times to \_\_\_\_\_ for a new understanding of his character.
- 3) The Promise ... *Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be ...*  
Cp. Philippians 1:6; 1 Corinthians 10:31  
2 Words ... \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you ever encountered a difficult or painful situation? In the moment, did life seem hopeless or empty? How did you come out of that painful situation? Have you seen any part of that experience where it was beneficial for your personal growth? If so, explain.
2. Read James 1:2 in a few translations. Is there any difference between James' admonition to "considering it pure joy" and working up or having a "positive attitude"? If so, explain.
3. Choosing to not "squirm out" and short circuit the growth process can be no small challenge, especially when it seems like God is absent or simply not doing anything now to help the situation. How can the following verses help you stick with it and affirm God is more involved than you realize?
 

Jeremiah 32:40-41	John 10:27-30	John 14:15-17
Philippians 1:6	John 16:33	Isaiah 41:10

How do God's promises help us when God seems absent or when we feel alone in a difficult situation?
4. Reread the points under Point 1, letter b, "when hard times come our way ..." Which of those 5 points is most difficult for you to do? Why is it difficult? Is there something that you could do to help you to put this in practice? How can this group assist you in that?
5. Here are some more challenging questions that will be great to ponder among your small group.
  - a. Why is it important to affirm God's loving sovereignty over all our trials? What is lost if we deny this?
  - b. Has a time of suffering ever caused you to doubt God's love? How can you fight this in your next trial?
  - c. Since it is not always God's will to deliver us from trials, is it wrong to pray for deliverance? What else should we pray for?
  - d. Why doesn't the Lord protect those who are seeking to serve Him from difficult trials?



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## The Journey of Spiritual Growth – James 1:2-4

- 1) His Instruction ... *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,*  
Cp. 2 Samuel 12; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
  - a) Considering it joy is a conscious choice we make every time we encounter hard times. When we make such a choice, these 2 truths arise ...
    - i) This difficulty is from **the Lord**
    - ii) This difficulty is necessary for my **Spiritual Growth**
  - b) When hard times come our way, How do we Move Forward, rather than Retreating or Hunkering Down?
    - i) When hard times come, be a **student**, not a **victim**.
    - ii) **Give thanks** for what you can give thanks for.
    - iii) Remind yourself of the **promises of God**.
    - iv) Choose to **believe** and **trust** in God.
    - v) Resolve to **get up** and **go on** with life
- 2) The Purpose ... *because you know that the testing of your faith produces ...*
  - a) God wants to purge us from **sin** and to purify us of **iniquity**.
  - b) God uses suffering to **test our faith**.
  - c) God uses times of difficulty to **humble us**.
  - d) God uses hard times to prepare us to **minister** to others.
  - e) God uses hard times to **prepare us** for a new understanding of his character.
- 3) The Promise ... *Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be ...*  
Cp. Philippians 1:6; 1 Corinthians 10:31  
2 Words ... **Pray** and **Stay**

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