



Life in the Valley

PASTOR MIKE YODER • JAMES 1:1-8

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

James 1:1

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

James 1:2

because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

James 1:3

Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:4

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

James 1:5

But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

James 1:6

That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

James 1:7

Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

James 1:8



Letter Introduction — *Faith/Works* (1:1)

Perspective on Trials (1:2-4)



1. Choosing Joy

No matter what precautions we take, no matter how well we have put together a good life, no matter how hard we have worked to be healthy, wealthy, comfortable with friends and family, and successful with our career — something will inevitably ruin it.

Tim Keller

No amount of money, power, and planning can prevent bereavement, dire illness, relationship betrayal, financial disaster, or a host of other troubles from entering your life. Human life is fatally fragile and subject to forces beyond our power to manage. Life is tragic.

Tim Keller

To have joy...means we will have a deep-seated confidence that God knows what He is doing and that the results will be for His glory and our good.

D. Edmund Hiebert

The Apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

Acts 5:41

The great theme of the Bible itself is how God brings fullness of joy not just *despite* but *through* suffering.

Tim Keller



2. Seeing Purpose

Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind;

Psalm 26:2

for I have always been mindful of Your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on Your faithfulness.

Psalm 26:3

Suffering is not a test you can cram for.

Zac Hess

Suffering can refine us rather than destroy us because God himself walks with us in the fire. In Jesus Christ we see that God actually experiences the pain of the fire as we do. He truly is God with us, in love and understanding, in our anguish.

Tim Keller

The difficulties of life are intended by God to refine our faith: heating it in the crucible of suffering so that impurities might be refined away and so that it might become pure and valuable before the Lord.

Douglas Moo

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

1 Peter 1:6

These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

1 Peter 1:8

for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

When pain and suffering come upon us, we finally see not only that we are not in control of our lives but that we never were. [Many people would say]: “I always knew in principle that ‘Jesus is all you need’ to get through. But you don’t really know Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.”

Tim Keller

If your ultimate goal is not just to fix your circumstances but to know God and to grow in God, God has designed trials for your growth in godliness. Trials are joy when God is our goal.

David Platt



Essential Wisdom (1:5–8)



1. Finding the Source

Wisdom is the possession of the believer given by the Spirit that enables him to see history from the Divine perspective.

Peter Davids

It is characteristic of the unbeliever to see God with a clenched fist; it is characteristic of the believer to see Him with an open hand.

D. Edmund Hiebert



2. Trusting the Result

Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God...

Romans 4:20

The one who doubts is a walking civil war in which trust and distrust of God wage a continual battle against each other.

D. Edmund Hiebert

Are you putting all your eggs in one basket —
God's providence and wisdom — or are you seeking
to diversify your trust in multiple foundations?



Personal Preparation

If you're not in a storm, one is coming. The "in-between times" — those seasons of calm — are crucial periods of preparation for the next storm.

**Tough times remind us of a
generous God and grand purposes.**