

STUDY # ONE
GROW TALLER THROUGH TESTING 1:1-12

KEY VERSES: 1:2-3 Deem it pure joy my brethren whenever you fall into various kinds of trials knowing that the testing of your faith is producing endurance [patience].

MEMORY VERSE: 1:5

TEXT: 1:1-12

James, a bond slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes those in the dispersion be rejoicing. Deem it pure joy my brethren whenever you fall into various kinds of trials knowing that the testing of your faith is producing endurance [patience]. But let patience be having its complete work in order that you may be fully developed and complete, lacking in nothing. And if any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him keep on asking from God, Who is giving to all generously, [without reserve] and Who does not reproach and it shall be given him. But let him be asking in faith, without any doubting, for the one who is doubting is like the surf of the sea moved and tossed by the wind. For let not that man be supposing that he shall receive anything from the Lord, a double-minded man unstable in all his ways. But let the lowly brother be glorying in his high position. But the one who is wealthy in his humiliation because as the flower of the grass, he shall come to an end. For the sun arises with its scorching heat and the grass dries up and the flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed. So also the wealthy person will fade away, together with his pursuits [projects, undertakings, investments, holdings]. Happy is the man who, being tested, is holding his ground because having been approved he shall receive the crown of life which He promised to those who love Him.

EXPOSITION: Paul in writing to the Philippians points up this fact "yet my brothers I do not consider myself to have arrived spiritually nor do I consider myself already perfect but I keep going on grasping ever more firmly that purpose for which Christ grasped me. My brothers I do not consider myself to have fully grasped it even now but I do concentrate on this, I leave the past behind and with hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead, I go straight for the goal. My reward, the honor of being called by God in Christ." All of us who are spiritually adult should set ourselves this sort of ambition. And if at present, you cannot see this, yet you will find that this is the attitude which God is leading you to adopt. It is important that we go forward in the light of such truth as we have ourselves attained to.

1. The problem of growing up in Christ is a universal one. We all have the deep desire to be going on to maturity in Christ.
2. James realizes the fact that there are a number of things which he can speak about that will be helpful in hastening the growth and development of these Jewish Christians that are scattered abroad. The problems that plague them are not a great deal different than the ones we face today.

Pride - Bless us in spite of ourselves...

Jacob + the Lord --

Most of the Trouble in our lives is the result of a conflict of wills...

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- ✓ 3. It is well for us to remember at the very outset that Pointers only become practical as we apply them to our lives. It is the desire of James to help us on our road to spiritual adulthood in Christ.

Verse One: James, a bond slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes those in the dispersion be rejoicing.

- ✓ 1. The first thing we'd better do is get acquainted with James. James was the half-brother of the Lord Jesus. Jesus, of course, was born of the virgin Mary, and then Mary and Joseph had other children after the birth of Christ. It is believed that James was the oldest of these brothers.

- ✓ 2. From the very beginning, James had every opportunity to witness the life of the Lord Jesus and to put his faith and trust in Him.

- ✓ 3. James, however, did not put his trust in Christ for we read in John 7:5 that even His brothers did not believe in Him.

- ✓ 4. Ethel Barrett expresses some of the problems James encountered when she says "How many times James must have been scandalized at the things his brother was doing; turning water into wine at Cana, hobnobbing with that no-good Zacchaeus, denouncing the Pharisees-[James was one of them], eating with publicans and sinners, befriending a woman like Mary Magdalene, stopping to chat with the Samaritan woman by the side of a well, preaching to the hoipolloi on a hillside--outrageous, James must have spent a good deal of his life apologizing for his brother, Jesus right up until his ignominious and shameful death."

- ✓ 5. Then three days later, something happened. Jesus rose from the dead. Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:7 "Then James saw Him and later all the apostles." We will never know what took place at this meeting between the resurrected Christ and James, but one thing for sure, James was never the same as a result of this meeting. Just as the apostle Paul met the resurrected Christ on the Damascus road, so James had his Damascus Road experience with the resurrected Saviour.

- ✓ 6. James is next seen in the Upper Room with his other followers waiting for the coming of the promised Spirit after the ascension of the Lord Jesus back to heaven.

- ✓ 7. James becomes one of the prominent figures in the early church. He is seen taking the lead in Acts 15 at the Jerusalem council and Paul makes mention of him in Galatians 1:19 "and the only other apostle I met at that time was James, our Lord's brother." He also makes reference in chapter 2, verse 7, calling Peter, James, and John pillars of the church.

- ✓ 8. James ultimately lost his life through martyrdom. He was cast off the pinnacle of the temple and then stoned. It was recorded that his dying words were "Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing" Someone seeing that he was still alive hit him then with a club which was the death blow.

- ✓ 9. James a bond slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

- ✓ 10. Barrett points out "and so when James came to write the letter, he did not begin by saying 'from James the eminent, most right, right reverend, the brother of Jesus' he began by saying 'from James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.'"

James Zebedee
James Alphaeus

- ✓11. He did not choose to call himself the brother of Jesus or a pillar in the church, but simply assumes the title of bond slave.
12. Barclay points out that there is contained in this word several things. First of all, absolute obedience; secondly, absolute humility; thirdly, absolute loyalty. The bond slave did not think of his privileges, but of his duties; not of his rights, but of his obligation. He is one who lost himself in his service. He did not have to serve, but because of love, he willingly gave himself to service.
13. James joins Paul, Peter, and others who once were slaves of sin and Satan but now have been set free to be willing slaves of Christ Jesus. Zodiates points out "James seeing the risen Lord was transformed from a slave of sin to a slave of the Lord." A servant was one who was deprived of his personal freedom and so becomes fully an instrument in the hands of his master. He is one who can never say "no" and he is one who works. It is impossible to be a slave and not work.
14. "Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free. Force me to render up my sword and I shall conquerer be. I sink in life's alarms when by myself I stand. Imprison me within Thine arms and strong shall be my hand."
- ✓15. James, a bond slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ! How thrilling it is to see James, the Lord's brother, respond to the deity of Jesus Christ. He is no longer a brother, but God Himself in human flesh. What are your conclusions about Jesus Christ?
16. Wilbur Smith, in his book Have You Considered Him?, raises this question "What do you think of this person Christ? What is your personal conclusion regarding His claims for Himself? If you do not accept them, have you sound reasons for rejecting them? Not simply the blind following of someone else who has rejected Christ, but have you, yourself, come to a conclusion regarding this evidence which is laid out before us so clearly in the Gospels of the New Testament. Surely you would not say that you do not understand these things, therefore, you will not believe. That is not the attitude of modern man towards the physical facts of this universe nor towards the historical data of great events. Have you ever sat down before these Gospels and really thought through what they say; really considered the character who is here portrayed."
- ✓17. James was convinced that Jesus was the Son of God and with the centurion at the cross his testimony is true. "Truly this was the Son of God."
18. If you have never responded to Jesus Christ, or examined carefully His claims, it is my prayer that at the beginning of this study you will do this and as a result, you will be a candidate to respond to the Pointers for Progress that James is going to be giving us in our further studies of this epistle.
- ✓19. "To the twelve tribes, those in the dispersion, be rejoicing." James now tells us to whom he is writing. Joe Temple, in his notes on the book of James, says "This letter is addressed to those Jewish believers who had attended the feast of Pentecost described in the second chapter of Acts. They had been baptised

into the body of Christ on the day of Pentecost along with the Jews and the Gentiles who were in Jerusalem. These were the Jews who went back home to various provinces throughout the Roman Empire to carry the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. James recognized that they were members of the Body of Christ, though they themselves individually might be alone in the various cities or provinces where they were. They knew they were members of the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, universal world-wide in its influence."

Verse Two Deem it pure joy, my brethren, whenever you fall into various kinds of trials.

1. This is a strange command from the pen of James. It is the same thought that Paul conveys to the Philippian church as he is writing to them from prison in Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice."
2. In Luke 10:30, we read "And Jesus answering said 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.'" The Greek word that James uses for "fall into" is the same word Jesus uses in this parable of the good Samaritan for "falling among thieves." They stripped the good man of all that he had and left him half dead. What James is saying is no matter what happens, do not let the external circumstances affect the internal joy which is the earmark of the Christian.
3. Robert Johnstone points out that we must apprehend that nothing but love sends the troubles that come, however numerous and diversified and severe and long continued troubles may be, our Almighty Father can give strength to count them all joy.
4. Hebrews 12:10, and following, says "our earthly fathers trained us for a few brief years, doing the best for us that they knew how, but God's correction is always right and for our best good that we may share His Holiness. Being punished isn't enjoyable, while it is happening. It hurts, but afterwards we can see the result...a quiet growth in grace and character. So take a new grip with your tired hands, stand firm on your shaky legs, and mark out a straight, smooth path for your feet so that those who follow you, though weak and lame, will not fall and hurt themselves, but become strong."
- ✓ 5. I Peter 4:12-13 "Dear friends, do not be bewildered or surprised when you go through the fiery trials ahead for this is no strange unusual thing that is going to happen to you. Be full of joy because these trials will make you partners with Christ in His suffering, and afterwards you will have the wonderful joy of sharing His Glory in that coming day when it will be displayed."
6. These trials then do not come into our lives because the Lord is unhappy with us but because He wants, through them, to help us grow on to maturity. This verse and verse 3 are the key verses in our study. Grow taller through testing. It is through these times of testing that we grow and mature in our faith. Therefore, we can accept the admonishment of James to count it joy when we go through these difficulties.

① G. loves You!
② G. has a plan
③ G. is Sov.

Growth
Grace
Glory

7. It is awfully easy to be critical of the Lord and to exercise disbelief in Romans 8:28 that says "all things work together for good to them that love God and to those who are the called according to His purposes." Dr. Donald Barnhouse illustrates this by pointing out that a picture on a small screen shows a mother, father, and child walking along. The mother and father slap and shake the child until the child's teeth rattle and the child begins to wimper. Watchers say "How cruel" but look at it from a wide angle; it's 40° below 0 in Dakota, in the middle of the winter. The three have had to abandon their car to walk to safety. The child wants to lie down in the snow and go to sleep. The parents are striking the child to keep it from dying. They keep urging the child on. When you look at God and the world, and see the evil that is in the world, all you are seeing is a little 18" screen, but when you see it in the light of the whole of the Word of God, you see that the purpose is to know that in His universe, God's methods are blessing through humility and yieldedness to Him.
 8. Andrew Murray gives us this advise when experiencing these difficulties. First, He brought me here, it is by His Will I am in this difficult place. In that fact I will rest. Next, He will keep me here, in His love, and give me grace to behave as His child. Then He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends me to learn and working in me the grace He means to bestow. Last, in His good time He can bring me out again. How and when, He knows. Let me say, I am here, first by God's appointment; second, in His keeping; third, under His training; and fourth, for His time.
 9. One thing we can count on, in the midst of trials, is the promise of His presence. Isaiah 43:2 says "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned and the flames shall not consume you." When through firey trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply. The flames shall not hurt thee, I only design thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine. The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose, I will not, I will not, desert to its foes. That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake.
- Verse Three: Knowing that the testing of your faith is producing endurance [patience].
1. James now gives us the reason we can have joy in the midst of our various kinds of trials. It is having the knowledge that our faith is being tested and that the ultimate fruitage of this is going to be a greater endurance.
 2. II Corinthians 4:17-18 "These troubles and sufferings of ours are, after all, quite small and won't last very long. If this short time of distress will result in God's richest blessing upon us for ever and ever, so we do not look at what we can see down here, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon go away, but the joys to come will last forever."

① Isa. 41:20 "that they may see, + know, + consider + understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this"...

② Isa. 2:5 "Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

③ "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." Ecc. 11:1

④ Prov. 11:25 "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."
11:24 "There is he that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is he that withholdeth more than is fitting, but it tendeth to poverty."

#10 Ps. 145:16 "Thou openest thine hand; and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."
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#7 Ps. 126:3 "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."
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#8 Psalm 118:23 "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."
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Letter 12: 2, 3 + 5

3. Charles Jones, in his book Life is Tremendous, says "neither do I believe God solves all of our problems. In fact, I believe he gives us bigger and better ones. When people come to know God, life will not get easier, but it will get better. If good baseball players want to play against good opponents, and tough football players want to play tough competitors, don't living people want to live instead of vegetate? Conflicts, striving, sacrificing, not ease and rest, make real men and women."

4. Amy Carmichael points out that the working out of the law of pain for the pioneer [Christian] was ever one who was not tested to the uttermost be set behind and before, crushed and filled until nothing was left for the eye of man to find beauty in or any power. And so it is that when the work is accomplished, the excellency of the power is shown and known to be of God and not of us.

- * 5. So, all things are working for the Lord's beloved. Some things might be harmful, if alone they stood. Some might seem to hinder, some might draw us backward, but they work together and they work for good. All the thwarted longings, all the stern denials, all the contradictions hard to understand and the force that holds them speeds them and retards them, stops and starts and guides them, is our Father's Hand.

6. So we learn that it is through trial and testing that our faith is strengthened, and we are able to grow toward spiritual maturity.

7. The athlete is put through rigorous training and conditioning in order to be able to stand the rigors of the game and to play tough, competitors. So the Lord is hardening us, through the trials, that we might be able to progress towards the goal of spiritual maturity.

8. Henry Jacobsen points out that it is often our wish for God to change our circumstances. However, God's usual practice is to change us to suit our circumstances.

9. Since trials come then as opportunities from the hand of God to hasten our growth and development, our attitude should be one of joy rather than discouragement.

10. Richard Seume points out that life on earth would not be worth much if every source of irritation were removed. Yet, most of us rebel against the things that irritate us and count as heavy loss what ought to be rich gain. We are told the oyster is wiser; that when an irritating object, like a bit of sand, gets under the mantle of his shell, he simply covers it with the most precious part of his being and makes of it a pearl. The irritation that it was causing is stopped by incrusting it with the pearly formation. A true pearl is therefore simply a victory over irritation. Every irritation that gets into our lives today is an opportunity for pearl culture. The more irritations, the Devil flings at us, the more pearls we may have. We need only to welcome them and cover them completely with love, that most precious part of us and the irritation will be smothered out as the pearl comes into being. What a store of pearls we may have if we will!

Push us
out of the
Nest
Shock us with
A cattle prod
to Get us
Moving. —

Training For
A Marathon !!

Stepping up
Times

Dealing with Irritations Constructively: The Oyster

There once was an oyster whose story I tell,

Who found that sand had got under his shell; Just one little grain, but
it gave him much pain,

For oysters have feelings although they're so plain. Now, did he berate
the working of Fate

Which had led him to such a deplorable state? Did he curse out the
Government, call for an election?

No; as he lay on the shelf, he said to himself, "If I cannot remove it, I'll
try to improve it."

So the years rolled by as the years always do,

And he came to his ultimate destiny—stew. And this small grain of
sand which had bothered him so,

Was a beautiful pearl, all richly aglow. Now this tale has a moral—for
isn't it grand

What an oyster can do with a morsel of sand; What couldn't we do if
we'd only begin

With all the things that get under our skin.

(From Parson's Technology)

(I Hope God's Promises come to Pass Before My Body Parts Go South!

by Cathy Lechner)

My motto this year has become, "If we must suffer before the answer comes,
then we are going to celebrate a lot while we are waiting."

Now, which way to the cake and ice cream? Oh yes, I forgot—I am
doing the low-fat thing . . . so which way to the cake and sorbet?

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(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

The presence of Christ puts pain in perspective.

—David L. Thompson

It is by those who have suffered that the world has been advanced.

—Leo Tolstoy

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11. We come now to this first Pointer of Progress that James has outlined for us and that is Growing Taller Through Testing. Is it your heart's desire to grow up in Jesus Christ? Do you long with the apostle Paul to know Christ and to be conformed to His image? The only way God has of accomplishing His purpose is through trial and testing. Whereas we face difficulty, we learn to trust more and to try harder.

Verse Four: But let patience be having its complete work in order that you may be fully developed and complete, lacking in nothing.

1. James, first of all, asks us "to count it pure joy when we fall into these various kinds of trials because these trials and testings are producing indurance and now in verse 4 he is asking us "to let this process go on to its completion and then he gives us the reason for this by saying "in order that you may be fully developed and complete, lacking in nothing."
2. This is the key verse to the whole book Pointers for Progress. It is James' desire that he might, through giving some simple pieces of advice, hasten the maturity of those to whom he is writing. May God grant, that as we study these Pointers for Progress, we too might be moving toward maturity, toward being fully developed and complete, lacking in nothing.
3. Bob Richards, in his book The Heart of a Champion, says "I don't believe anyone ever got to the top without going through the valleys. Like the mountain climbers reaching out for the peak, they have to go down before they can go up. The spirit of man sometimes falls into moods of depression and doubt, but if you can fight your way out of it, and keep on going with your mind fixed on the top and making one less mistake per day and swinging away and do the best you can, then you have the secret of going to the top."
4. If James could summarize his thoughts at this point, he would use a modern phrase "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."
5. Charles Jones, in his book Life is Tremendous, calls "rolling with the punches" flexible planning. He says "flexible planning says plan on your plan going wrong so that you are ready with an alternate plan, because that's my plan. Do you know that a lot of people are miserable because they expect everything to go right. They are asking for misery. I expect things to go wrong, and so I am jubilant all the time. Smart guy asked me 'What if something goes right' 'Easy, I can work it in. I haven't had much trouble with that yet.' Try this tomorrow morning when you start out. Say 'Lord, send me some miserable problems today.' I've done it and no sooner did I get started than I say 'You sure answered that prayer in a hurry.' You may say that you don't have to pray such a prayer. The miserable problems come anyway, but you aren't prepared for them, are you? Flexible planning says to have a plan that enables you to roll with the punches, to adapt and adjust. Be willing to capitalize on things that go wrong, making them stepping stones of progress. That makes the wrong things right, an exchange that anyone should appreciate."

- Trial
Testing
+ Word
Self Exam.

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6. Ironside points out that this is the time we should look up into the Father's face with confidence, knowing that He is working out some purpose in us which could not be wrought out in any other way. But he who learns to be submissive to whatever God permits, glorifies Him who orders all things according to the council of His own Will.
7. What James is asking us to do here is not to get discouraged by the testing and trials because this would be submitting to the plan of Satan. But that we would be patiently enduring the testing, seeking God's purpose in it. The reason James is concerned that we stick with it through to the end that we might be fully developed and complete, lacking in nothing. He is so desirous that these persecuted Jewish Christians might go on to maturity in Christ and might not be discouraged by the problems to the point where they would forsake their profession of faith in Christ. To help them along the way, he gives these Pointers for Progress.
8. If our lives are going to grow and develop, it is going to be through the painful process of change.
9. When a eagle wants to teach its little ones to fly from the nest high up in the cliff, hundreds of feet up in the air, it prods one of the little eaglets and with its beak noses it out of the nest. The eaglet starts to fall and the great eagle flies underneath, puts its wing out, catches the little one on its back, and flies a mile into the air. When you can hardly see the eagle as a point in the sky, it turns sideways and down falls the little eaglet, fluttering maybe a thousand feet. Meanwhile, the eagle circles around the eaglet and underneath it, the eagle catches the eaglet on its wings and carries the eaglet up into the air again. After dishing the eaglet out again, and letting it go, the eaglet comes down farther and farther, sometimes within a hundred feet of the ground. Again, the great eagle catches the little one on its back and up they go another mile. The little eaglet is at perfect rest and learning to fly way up there in the sky. The great eagle will bow over again and little by little the eaglet will learn to fly. The eagle knows when the eaglet is tired. It spoons the eaglet into the nest, noses out the next one, and starts off again. God says "That's the way I take care of you." But you may say "I don't like to have my nest stirred up. I like everything cozy and tidy and I just like to stay in my baby ways where I am." But God loves you and that is why He won't let you stay as a baby. He wants you to learn to fly. Sometimes you have to be carried aloft and you may have a horror of having to go by yourself, but it must come if you are going to grow.
10. Charles Jones in Life is Tremendous speaks on growing when he says "You know what growing means. Growing means growing pains. It means changing. When two people come together and don't let each other change each other, they may wind up exchanging each other. If you are learning to say something positive to everybody about everything all the time; if you are disciplining your mind to see something positive in every thing that happens and if you are learning to see it big and keep it simple, you have a foundation on which to build a steady, expanding life."

omit

(A Man to Match the Mountain: Overcoming the Obstacles of Life
by David Roper)

*"Disappointment—His appointment,"
Change one letter; then I see
That the thwarting of my purpose
Is God's better choice for me.
His appointment must be blessing,
Though it may come in disguise,
For the end from the beginning
Open to His wisdom lies.*

*"Disappointment—His appointment,"
Whose? The Lord's, Who loves me best
Understands and knows me fully,
Who my faith and love would test;
For; like loving earthly parent,
He rejoices when He knows
That His child accepts, unquestioned,
All that from His wisdom flows.*

*"Disappointment—His appointment,"
"No good thing will He withhold,"
From denials oft we gather
Treasures of His love untold.
Well He knows each broke purpose
Leads to fuller, deeper trust,
And the end of all his dealings
Proves our God is wise and just.*

—Annie Johnson Flint

11. I stood the children straight and tall by last year's marks upon the wall. Another year, how soon they go, see how fast the children grow. And then I thought of how God's Word says grow in grace and in the Lord. And as I knelt with God alone He asked me gently, "Have you grown? Can you look back and understand how sun and rain came from My hand, the trials which My love decreed? Did they not prove Me real indeed? Or would you change a single hour and miss the knowledge of My power? Do I seem nearer when you pray than just a year ago today? And does your zeal for lost men die or greater grow as years go by?" What deep and searching questions, these, they kept me long upon my knees. Before His gaze my soul must own, how very little it had grown. Dear Lord, this year may all men see that I grow daily more like Thee.

* 12. With Job, we are able to say with confidence in Job 23:10, "He knows the way that I take. When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

13. Zodiates says of this verse "We lost our shape in the fall. Like iron, God puts us into the fire to shape us into the image of His Son." Patience is that Christian virtue, says James, which will enable us to bear all the trials of life and make profitable use of them til that great day of reaching our heavenly goal. Maturity comes through the school of hard knocks and a Christian who has had no hardships in his life is lacking in spiritual maturity. He wants us to be mature in our bodies and our minds and in our hearts.

14. James' burden for these persecuted Christians was the same burden Paul had for the persecuted Thessalonians in I Thess. 3:10 "night and day we pray on and on for you, asking God to let us see you again to fill up any little cracks there may yet be in your faith."

Verse Five: And if any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him keep on asking from God who is giving to all generously [without reserve] and who does not reproach and it shall be given him.

✓ 1. James is here saying that a good degree of wisdom is needed in order to understand the good of trials in our lives. And God is going to be giving wisdom to those who ask from Him for it.

✓ 2. Solomon experienced this in I Kings 3:9-12. "So give Thy servant an observant mind to judge Thy people rightly and to distinguish between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Thine." The request which Solomon made was pleasing in the sight of the Lord. God said to him "Because you have made this request and have not requested for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies but have requested for yourself understanding to recognize justice I have done according to your word. I have given you a wise and perceptive mind so that there has been no one before like you nor shall one like you arise after you."

William Kelly points out that when a soul has fairly entered on the path of trials, which faith never fails to experience in a world departed from God, he soon finds his lack of wisdom.

Heb. 5:14
"Senses Trained
to discern
between good
& evil." 3:

4. Robertson in his study in the epistle of James says "Wisdom is the right use of one's opportunities in holy living. It is living like Christ in accordance with the Will of God."
- ✓5. Colossians 2:3 "Christ Himself, for it is in Him and Him alone that men will find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."
- ✓6. Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding and in all thy ways, acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."
7. Amy Carmichael points out that when decisions have to be made, don't look back and wonder what I would have done, look up and light will come to do what our Lord and Master would have you do. It may be that decisions which seem to change the character of the work which will have to be made but if the root principles which have governed us from the beginning are held fast, there will be no real change. The river may flow in a new channel but it will be the same river. If you hold fast to the resolve that in all things Christ as Lord shall have the pre-eminence; If you keep His Will, His glory and His pleasure high above everything, and if you continue in His love, loving one another as He has loved you, then all will be well, eternally well.
- ✓8. Zodhiates has a pointed remark along this line saying "Wisdom is necessary if we are to become masters of circumstances and not servants thereof. Unless there is within us that which is above us, we shall soon yield to that which is about us."
9. Mein Gutzke also points out that one of the finest things that can happen to me as I turn to God is that I give up on myself. James tells how to nurture spiritual life as a Christian that the believer may prosper and be blessed.
- ✓10. The Psalmist talks about the kind of wisdom that we are looking at here, the wisdom that is needed in the time of trial, and we read in Psalm 73:13-24 "Have I been wasting my time, why take the trouble to be pure. All I get out of it is trouble and woe every day and all day long. If I had really said that, I would have been a traitor to your people. Yet it is so hard to explain it, this prosperity of those who hate the Lord. Then one day I went into God's sanctuary to meditate and thought about the future of these evil men. What a slippery path they are on. Suddenly God will send them sliding over the edge of the cliff and down to their destruction. An instant end to all their happiness and eternity of terror. Their present life is only a dream. They will awaken to the truth as one awakens from a dream of things that never really were. When I saw this, what turmoil filled my heart. I saw myself so stupid and so ignorant I must seem like an animal to You, God, but even so You love me. You are holding my right hand, You will keep on guiding me all my life with Your wisdom and counsel and afterwards receive me into the glories of heaven."
- ✓11. Acts 5:41 The followers of Christ also caught this truth. "Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name."
- ✓12. This wonderful gift of wisdom and understanding, as to God's dealings with us in our daily lives, is available and God is not like men in that He does not scold us for coming often but rejoices in making available to us the wisdom to meet all of life's circumstances.

I Cor. 13: Know in part... God is not obligated...
 I understand that I don't understand.
 Rightly Relating when why's becomes what's. II Cor. 12:9

27

13. Paul says in Romans 8:32 "Since He did not even spare His Own Son for us, but gave Him up for us all. Won't He also surely give us everything else?"

Verse Six: But let him be asking in faith, without any doubting, for the one who is doubting is like the surf of the sea, moved and tossed by the wind.

- ✓1. James thus far has asked us to rejoice in trial because God is testing our faith to produce endurance and if we are lacking wisdom to understand His design, we are to ask of Him and He will give it to us. In this verse, we now have the contrasting word but let him be asking in faith, without any doubting, and here James is giving us the prescribed approach to God. It is to be asking in faith, without any doubting.
- ✓2. Hebrews 11:6 says "Without faith, it is impossible to please Him for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him."
- ✓3. James illustrates what he means by waivering in the faith when he uses the illustration for one who is doubting is like the surf of the sea, moved and tossed by the wind.
- ✓4. Johnstone points out that this waivering faith springs from a dominant unwillingness to lean absolutely on the divine strength and must, therefore, be distinguished from weak but real faith and from those doubts and fears to which the man of strongest faith is subjected at times.
5. In Matthew 14 we read about Peter's experience with the Lord on the water and beginning with verse 27 we read "But Jesus immediately spoke to them and reassured them, telling them not to be afraid and Peter said 'Sir, if it is really You, tell me to come over to you, walking on the water.' 'Yes,' the Lord said, 'Come.' so Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water towards Jesus. But when Peter looked around at the high waves, he was terrified and began to sink. 'Save me Lord,' he shouted. Instantly Jesus reached out His hand and rescued him. 'O man of little faith,' Jesus said, 'why did you doubt?' When they had climbed into the boat, the winds stopped."

Faith =
 ① Strength = II Cor. 12:9
 Ph. 1. 4:13
 ② Stability = Isa. 40:31
 30:21
 ③ Steadfast = Heb. 6:19
 We have not Andrew
 I Cor. 15:58

Doubting =

① Goodness
 ② Grace
 ③ Glory
 Heb. 3:12

When the winds of adversity blow, it is awful easy for us to have our faith waiver and to be revealed as weak which is to be the result of the trial anyway. mark 4:

Hannah Whitehall Smith in her book The God Who is Enough says it would be difficult to find any one thing that produces more discomfort in the religious life than does a waivering faith. The figure given us by the apostle James exactly describes it. A wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. Just as it is impossible for a traveler to reach his destination by advancing one day and retracing his steps the next, so is it equally impossible for the waivering soul, while it waivers, to reach any place of settled peace. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. To be immovable, in one's religious life, is the exact opposite of waivering. In the 46th Psalm we can see what it is.

The earth may be removed and the mountains may be carried into the midst of the sea; our whole universe may seem to be in ruins, but while we trust in the Lord, we shall not be moved. The man who waivers in his faith is upset by the smallest trifle. The man who is steadfast in his faith can look on calmly at the ruin of all his universe. To be thus immovable in one's religious life is a boon most ardently to be desired and it may be ours if we will only hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.

Verse Seven: For let not that man be supposing that he shall receive anything from the Lord.

- ✓1. Here James gives the reason why we need to be asking with a faith that is not wavering. The reason being that this man can not be supposing that he shall receive anything from the Lord.
- ✓2. Matthew 21:22 "In whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive if you have faith."
- ✓3. James was certainly a man of great prayer and he knew what it was to trust the Lord to meet his needs in many of the situations he faced in life.
- ✓4. Tradition says that James was nicknamed "Camel Knees" because of the hours he spent on his knees in prayer before the Lord.
- ✓5. An illustration of his believing prayer is seen in Acts 12 as he and others prayed for Peter who was in prison awaiting execution. We read in Acts 12:5 "But earnest prayer was going up to God for his safety all the time he was in prison. The night before he was to be executed, he was asleep, double chained between two soldiers with others standing guard before the prison gate, when suddenly there was a light in the cell and an angel of the Lord stood beside Peter. The angel slapped him on the side, to awaken him, and said 'Quick, get up' and the chains fell off his wrists and the angel told him 'get dressed and put on your shoes' and he did. 'Now put on your coat and follow me' the angel ordered. So Peter left the cell following the angel, all the time he thought it was a dream or a vision and didn't believe it was really happening." As soon as Peter makes known this miracle, we read in the 17th verse "Tell James and the other brothers about it," he said and left for safer quarters. James, of course, was one of those who, in believing prayer, was trusting God for Peter's deliverance.

Verse Eight: A double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- ✓1. Here James, in essence, is saying "for let not that man think that a double-minded man, unstable in all of his ways, shall receive anything of the Lord."
- ✓2. Robert Johnstone says of the double-minded, "one mind is disposed to lean on himself and to seek wisdom and strength and satisfaction in the world; the other is disposed to look to God and seek help and happiness from Him. Hesitation, inconsistency, varying purpose, and effort exhibit themselves, therefore, everywhere in his life."
- ✓3. The double-minded man in this verse is the same man of verses 5-7.
4. James Mauro points out that the love of and the desire for earthly things must be purged out and there must be a single-eyed devotion to the Lord in order that our prayers may be effective.

① No Man Can Serve Two Masters

② Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God ...

Children of
Israel at
Jordan.

- ✓5. Jesus said that no man can serve two masters. He also said that a house divided against itself cannot stand. Being double-minded means that we are trusting the Lord one minute and doubting the next. It is a half-hearted commitment serving the Lord in such a way as not to offend the Devil. Jesus is either Lord of all or not at all.
- ✓6. William T. Barker, in his book Kings in Shirtsleeves, says of Amaziah, that Amaziah had a fatal, personal flaw which caused his personality to disintegrate. In spite of his outstanding initial performance, this flaw eventually brought him down. The writer of II Chronicles summed it up this way. "He did what was right in the eyes of God, but not with an undivided mind." But not with an undivided mind, this means Amaziah's fatal flaw was a part-time loyalty to God; a half-hearted allegiance. Amaziah, the man with the divided mind, was a spiritual schizophrenic. He tried to temporize with God, afraid to throw himself completely into trusting and serving God. Amaziah was a man who hemmed and hawed.

Verse Nine: But let the lowly brother be glorving in his high position.

- ✓1. James, in these next verses, spells out for us the proper attitude of the poor and the rich amidst the trials that they are facing.
- ✓2. The lowly brother can be glorying in his high position in that he has the promise of the Divine Presence while he is going through his trials.
- ✓3. His high position, of course, is centered in the fact that he is in Jesus Christ. James will make reference to this in chapter 2 and verse 5. "Listen my brethren, beloved ones, did not God choose out for Himself those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him."
- ✓4. I am not what I ought to be; I am not what I wish to be; I am not what I hope to be, but by the grace of God, I'm not what I was. This is what the lowly person can glory in as his position in Christ.

Verse Ten: But the one who is wealthy, in his humiliation because as the flower of the grass he shall come to an end.

- ✓1. It is very difficult for a wealthy person to humble himself and to be dependent.
- ✓2. Paul tells Timothy in I Timothy 6:17: "Tell those who are rich not to be proud and not to trust in their money which will soon be gone, but their pride and trust should be in the living God who always richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment."
- ✓3. At the cross of Christ, we learn that the ground is level. There is no respecter of persons with God. The rich and poor; the slave and the free become one in the family of God. We can also say here that trials are no respecter of persons, but that the rich and the poor, alike, face difficulties and problems.
- ✓4. The reason given for the wealthy to be recognizing his humiliation is because, as the flower of the grass he shall come to an end.

Awfully easy to substitute material Goals For
spiritual ones when things get rough. -

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we think God ought to make it All down hill with the wind to our
backs...

5. Wealth is only temporary and not something you can take with you into eternity.
6. Matthew Henry wisely says of riches "There is a burden of care in getting riches; fear in keeping them; temptation in using them; guilt in abusing them; sorrow in losing them; and a burden of account at last to be given up concerning them."
- Verse Eleven: For the sun arises with its scorching heat and the grass dries up and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed so also the wealthy person will fade away together with his pursuits [projects, undertakings, investments, holdings].
1. Here James continues with his illustration about the wealthy by giving us the reason for his previous statement. For the sun arises with its scorching heat and the grass dries up and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed. What James is describing here is that which can happen so quickly and also the fact that riches are temporary at best. He then applies this truth to the wealthy person that he has been speaking about in verse 10. So also the wealthy person will fade away together with his pursuits [projects, undertakings, investments, holdings].
2. Isaiah 40:6-8 "The Voice says shout. 'What shall I shout,' I asked. 'Shout that man is like the grass that dies away and all his beauty fades like dying flowers. The grass withers, the flower fades beneath the breath of God and so it is with fragile man. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God shall stand forever.'"
3. Luke 12:16-21 "Then He gave an illustration. A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. In fact, his barns were full to overflowing. He couldn't get everything in. He thought about his problem and finally exclaimed 'I know, I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, then I'll have room enough and I'll sit back and say to myself, friend you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy; wine, women, and song for you.' But God said 'Thou fool, tonight you die and who will get it all.' Yes, every man is a fool who is rich on earth but not in heaven.
4. James will have a good deal more to say about this matter of wealth when we get over to chapter 5 in our study.
- Verse Twelve: Happy is the man, who being tested, is holding his ground because, having been approved, he shall receive the crown of life which He promised to those who love Him.
1. James sounds a great deal like the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in the beatitudes. In Matthew 5:1-12, it also sounds a great deal like Psalms 1 "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law doth he meditate day and night."
2. Here James brings to a culmination his teaching on the testing of faith by presenting to us the reward for being steadfast in the midst of our testing.
3. William Kelly points out "Happy is a man who endures trial. Job, Abraham, David, and the prophets, so it is now for every believer, and made plain by Him who endured more than all and as He alone could, but also how sweet, while pilgrims and

Heb. 10:36

I Pet. 2:20,21

and strangers, to have so cheering a promise in the trial we endure."

- ✓4. Colson says that God's great concern with His children is not to make them comfortable but to develop in them a character like that of Christ.
- ✓5. The refiner of silver waits as the molten silver reflects the image of the refiner before it is taken from the fire and so our blessed Lord permits trial and testings to come into our lives so that people might see the image of Jesus Christ in us.
- ✓6. James, in making this declaration, says happy is the man who being tested is "holding his ground; that is, not giving in or becoming discouraged" or "doubting the goodness of the Lord." Paul says much the same thing in Ephesians 6:13. "Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand."
- ✓7. It is possible to get thrown for a loss by the Devil if he penetrates our line of defense. James will have more to say about this in chapter 4.
- ✓8. Our attitude in the midst of this testing that is going on is to be one of joy because the ultimate outcome of the testing will be victory and approval by the Lord and not only this, but also a reward that he speaks of here in the last part of this 12th verse when he says "because having been approved, ye shall receive the crown of life which He promised to those who love Him."
- ✓9. Ethel Barrett points out that you are uniquely you; there is nobody else who has ever been born who is quite like you. The testings God sends into your life are to meet your needs, show you your weaknesses, to develop your character.
- ✓10. In view of this, let us hold our ground and be steadfast in the midst of our trial because we have the promise that once we have been approved, we shall receive the crown of life which He promised to those who love Him. James sounds a great deal like the apostle Paul here in I Corinthians 9:26-27. "So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. I fight to win. I'm not just shadow-boxing or playing around. Like an athlete, I punish my body, treating it roughly, training it to do what it should, not what it wants to. Otherwise, I fear that after enlisting others for the race, I myself might be declared unfit and ordered to stand aside."
- ✓11. Once having been approved, we get the promise from James that he shall receive the crown of life. James once again sounds a great deal like the apostle in II Timothy 4:7-8, as he tells young Timothy that he has fought a good fight, he has finished the course, he has kept the faith; henceforth, there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness.
- ✓12. This crown of life is mentioned in Revelation 2:10 where we read "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold the Devil is about to throw some of you into prison that you may be tested and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life."

Job: "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him."

'hanging in
There No Matter
What... 7.

Light Affliction
is but For A
Moment...

Church At
Smyna

- ✓13. It is well for us to note the last phrase in this study which He promised to those who love Him."
- ✓14. Paul says in II Corinthians 1:20 "He carries out and fulfills all of God's promises no matter how many of them there are and we have told everyone how faithful He is, giving glory to His name."
- ✓15. In Numbers 23:19 we read "For God is not man that He should lie, neither human that He should change His mind. When He gives His Word, does He not perform it or does He promise and not fulfill it?"
- ✓16. The Lord has made a promise here of the crown of life and He will fulfill it. He will fulfill it to those who love Him.
- ✓17. Joe Temple, in speaking on this last phrase, translates it this way. "Which the Lord has promised to them that continue to love Him." Have you ever met any bitter people? I have. I have spent hours consoling with embittered people. People who have put their trust and their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and then God sent one of these beneficial trials into their lives and they endured it. They weathered the storm, but didn't love God any more. They were bitter about it. They felt as if God gave them a rough deal, that He should have not treated them the way He had in view of all that they had done for Him. You see the secret? It is not only enduring the trials, it is continuing to love the Lord, even in the midst of the trial. Now I don't know how much you have been tried and I don't know how much you will be tried, and I suppose it would be difficult to evaluate the meaning of trials from an individual standpoint, because what might seem like a storm to me, might seem like a breeze to you. I would say this to you, continue to love Him no matter how deep the trial comes, no matter how long it lasts, continue to love Him. Have enough faith in Him to believe that it is good for your good. Have enough faith in Him to believe that He is doing it with a beneficial purpose. Prove that you can continue to love Him by rejoicing in the midst of the trial.
- ✓18. James sounds a great deal like Habakkuk the prophet in Habakkuk 3:17-19. "Even though the fig trees are all destroyed and there is neither blossom left nor fruit and though the olive crops all fail and the fields lie barren, even if the flocks die in the fields and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be happy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength and He will give me the speed of the deer and bring me safely over the mountains."
- ✓19. We will not grow bitter towards the Lord if we realize that He knows our limitations and will not allow testing to go beyond our endurance as we depend upon His strength. "The Lord God is my strength and He will give me the speed of a deer and bring me safely over the mountains." He will bring me safely over the difficult places.
- ✓20. Paul speaks of this same matter to the Romans in Romans 8:35-39. "Who then can ever keep away Christ's love from us? When we have trouble or calamity, when we are hunted down or destroyed, is it because He doesn't love us anymore? And if we are hungry or penniless or in danger or threatened with death, has God deserted us? No, for the scriptures tell us that for

"All the Way My Saviour Leads Me"

1. All the way my Saviour leads me; What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy, Who through life has been my Guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know, whate'er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well.
2. All the way my Saviour leads me, Cheers each winding path I tread,
Gives me grace for every trial, Feeds me with the living bread.
Though my weary steps may falter, And my soul athirst may be,
Gushing from the Rock before me, Lo! a spring of joy I see.
3. All the way my Saviour leads me; Oh, the fullness of His love!
Perfect rest to me is promised In my Father's house above.
When my spirit, clothed immortal, Wings its flight to realms of day,
This my song thro' endless ages: Jesus led me all the way.

His sake we must be ready to face death at every moment of the day. We are like sheep awaiting slaughter, but despite all this, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loves us. I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love. Death can't, and life can't, the angels won't, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God's love away. Our fears for today are worries about tomorrow or where we are, high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

CONCLUSION: In this first study, Grow Taller Through Testing, we have learned together that God submits us to testing to produce in us a quality of endurance or steadfastness and we are asked to let this testing have its complete work so that we might be fully developed and lacking in nothing. And if in the midst of our testing, we need wisdom, the Lord has promised to give to all and will not reproach us for coming. The only stipulation is that we ask in faith and not to be having a mind which is divided. If we are a poor brother, we are to be glorying in the fact that we have the high privilege of suffering for the sake of the Saviour and if we are wealthy, to remember that our wealth is only temporary. Then James reminds us that all of this testing is for our good and that there is a crown of life awaiting those who have been approved which He promised to those who love Him.

Dick Hillis, in his book Born to Climb, tells of Lilian Hamar who overcame many difficulties and trials in going to the mission field. One Saturday in April, Lilian decided to go down to the valley on an all-day hike. It would be good for her to have a quiet, peaceful Sunday. Besides, she was almost out of medical supplies. She started the long trek through the jungles. We will never know what her thoughts were that morning, but we do know that she often sang hymns as she walked. Perhaps she was doing just that when, suddenly, a man stepped from between two large trees and shot Lilian with a sawed off shotgun. She died instantly. The murderer was never captured. Who was he? What did he want? We will never know. But Lilian Hamar's life is more important to us than how she died. Was it worth it all? The years of training and disappointments followed by only a handful of converts and a violent death? If we would talk to Lilian, she would have but one answer. She would remind us of the one picture in her tiny hut, a picture of Christ walking into the future, looking back over His shoulder to see who was following Him. Lilian Hamar was, and He is worth it all.

- Lesson #1 When trials come our Attitude should be Joyful expectancy.
- Lesson #2 The Lord's promises wisdom to relate in A right manner.
- Lesson #3 Hang on to your Confidence in God No matter what.
- Lesson #4 His love is unconditional And unchanging...

"Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me."—Job x. 2.

PERHAPS, O tried soul, the Lord is doing this to develop thy graces. There are some of thy graces which would never be *discovered* if it were not for thy trials. Dost thou not know that thy faith never looks so grand in summer weather as it does in winter? Love is too often like a glow-worm, showing but little light except it be in the midst of surrounding darkness. Hope itself is like a star—not to be seen in the sunshine of prosperity, and only to be discovered in the night of adversity. Afflictions are often the black foils in which God doth set the jewels of His children's graces, to make them shine the better. It was but a little while ago that on thy knees thou wast saying, "Lord, I fear I have no faith : let me know that I have faith." Was not this really, though perhaps unconsciously, praying for trials?—for how canst thou know that thou hast faith until thy faith is exercised? Depend upon it, God often sends us trials that our graces may be discovered, and that we may be certified of their existence. Besides, it is not merely discovery, *real growth* in grace is the result of sanctified trials. God often takes away our comforts and our privileges in order to make us better Christians. He trains His soldiers, not in tents of ease and luxury, but by turning them out and using them to forced marches and hard service. He makes them ford through streams, and swim through rivers, and climb mountains, and walk many a long mile with heavy knapsacks of sorrow on their backs. Well, Christian, may not this account for the troubles through which thou art passing? Is not the Lord bringing out your graces, and making them grow? Is not this the reason why He is contending with you?

"Trials make the promise sweet;
Trials give new life to prayer;
Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there."

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① Grow Taller
Thru. Testing

2006
February 18
Saturday

INSIDE OUT

READ:
Ephesians 4:25-32

[Jesus] said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man."
—Mark 7:20

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:
Leviticus 22
Mark 1:1-22

While giving a sermon, missionary Hudson Taylor filled a glass with water and placed it on a table in front of him. As he was speaking, he pounded his fist hard enough to make the water splash onto the table. He then explained, "You will come up against much trouble. But when you do, remember, only what's in you will spill out."

That's worth thinking about, isn't it? When we are mistreated or misunderstood, how do we respond? With loving words, patience, and kindness? Or are we inclined to retaliate in anger?

In Ephesians 4:25-32, we see the contrast between what a person is before he is saved and what he is afterward. When we live under the control of the Holy Spirit, we will show it by the way we react to the jolting trials and temptations of life. How we respond to trying, embarrassing situations that are suddenly thrust upon us is a good test of how much we have grown in grace.

It is possible to suppress frustration and anger, and to appear undisturbed to people around us. But if our heart is full of the Savior's love, we will respond to the jostling of an unexpected trial with genuine patience and kindness. Like a full glass of water, what's inside of us will spill over on the outside. —Richard De Haan

*Lord, help me flee all sin and shame,
Lest I disgrace Your holy name;
And may I live so others see
The Savior's love revealed in me. —D. De Haan*

When trouble grows, your character shows.