

“Fall Into” Trials?

by Wayne Goff

*“My brethren, count it all joy when you **fall into** various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” James 1:2-3.*

Notice that James uses the phrase **“fall into”** various trials. The Greek word suggests one is “being surrounded by” trials, and emphasizes the *external* nature of the problem, and the *suddenness* with which it may occur. This makes it impossible to escape the experience, so God advises us through James to **“count it all joy.”**

This is different from “walking into” trials! Sometimes we ask for trouble by the places we go, and the people with whom we associate. You cannot moan, whine and complain about your awful circumstance when you are the one who caused it. So be sure to differentiate between the two scenarios.

So why should we **“count it all joy”** when we suffer? Not because we suffer, but because we learn from the experience. It is the **end result** that causes the joy, not the present suffering. The end result is (1) your faith is tested and proven to be strong; and (2) your faith produces patience, or endurance. There is nothing more joyful than to know your faith is strong, tested, and proven! It helps eliminate fear, worry, and doubt in your life as a Christian. We all wonder whether or not we can be faithful unto death. The trying of our faith helps to allay those concerns. But it is important for us to **view** our trials in this way. If we do not see the value of the end result, then we may just become discouraged and weary in well doing.

“Patience”

The word translated **“patience”** in James 1:3 is exercised toward *things*. In this case, the things are **“various trials.”** It has the two-fold meaning of both **perseverance** and **patience**. Ellicott in his work says it is “the brave patience with which the Christian contends against the various hindrances, persecutions, and temptations that befall him in his conflict with the inward and outward world.” So we need both the disposition that our battle in this world as a Christian is long-term, **AND** that nothing can overcome us in our love and service to the Lord. Many times when I feel tired and discouraged in a world hostile to true Christianity, I stop to think about what alternative I have. There are two choices: (1) quit the Christian race and be lost eternally; (2) move onward and upward, looking to the prize that awaits us. Realizing these are the only two choices, I have always had the courage to choose the onward, upward call of God in Christ Jesus. But some of my fellow brethren have chosen to give up and return to the sinful world and its comfortable way of life. They have lost their faith. So dear reader, which will you choose? It may seem like the easy choice to live in and of the world, but it’s the choice of an **eternal loser!**

“Patience”

James goes on to say, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him ”(1:5).* **Please don’t divorce this advice from its context!** One **needs** wisdom from God, who gives generously to those who ask, in order to overcome the adversities of life! Wisdom puts life in perspective. Wisdom looks a long way down the road. Wisdom gives one the understanding necessary to make the right choice, not just the easy choice. So ask God for wisdom. He has plenty to share!

Not Just Theory

James is writing to all Christians, but especially to Jewish Christians who have experienced the trials and tribulations of which he speaks. Hebrews 10:32-34 mentions the verbal attacks they endured: reproaches and being made a spectacle. Peer pressure has great power over one if he lets it. They also endured physical persecution, as did the apostles. But they made it through faithfully to this point. Let the same be said of us.

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