



This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. James 1:1

In the same way, faith by itself, if it does not show itself with actions, is dead. James 2:17

2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. James 1:2-4

Let it (troubles) do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. James 1:2-4 (MSG)

- Our problems have a purpose.
 - Troubles don't produce faith; they expose the faith we have.
- So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17

Supernaturally, faith is built in us as we hear, understand, trust and act on God's word.

When you're going through difficulties:

- Cooperate with God's growth process.
- 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:4 (NIV)
- You don't have to understand the problem to trust God's process.
 - Ask for God's help.

We Ask for strength and grace to endure the difficulty.

4 So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. 5 If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help, and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. James 1:4-5 (MSG)

When we pray:

Prayer is not about getting our way but surrendering our will.

Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." Luke 22:42

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:9-10

Prayer also reminds us that we're not in control and keeps us close to the one who is.

8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you... James 4:8 (NLT)

Prayer isn't just asking, but trusting.

3 You are my refuge and defense; guide me and lead me as you have promised. 4 Keep me safe from the trap that has been set for me; shelter me from danger. 5 I place myself in your care. You will save me, Lord; you are a faithful God. Psalm 31:3-5 (GNT)

When you're going through difficulties:

- Set your hope in God's activity.
- 6 But when you pray, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. James 1:6 (NLT)

3 ...God has allotted to each a measure of faith. Romans 12:3 (NASB)

29 He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. 30 Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. 31 But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:29-31 (NLT)

Ways to Experience God's Strength:

- Fill your mind with God's word.
- 28 My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me with your word. Psalm 119:28 (NIV)
- 28 My sad life's dilapidated, a falling-down barn; build me up again by your Word. Psalm 119:28 (MSG)
- Find support from God's people.
 - Hold on to God's promises.

VISION:

**TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE
IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.**

Questions that can be used in Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain.
- What is usually your first response when you face trouble?
- Why do you think James tells us to consider trials an opportunity for joy?
- How have difficult seasons exposed the condition of your faith?
- How would you define faith?
- What's the difference between simply surviving a trial and allowing God to mature you through it?
- Why is it sometimes easier to ask, "Why is this happening?" instead of, "What is God teaching me?"
- How does prayer help you trust God's process instead of trying to control the outcome?
- What does it look like to pray, "Your will be done," in a difficult situation?
- Which of God's promises has strengthened you during a hard season?
- How have God's Word and God's people helped you remain faithful through trials?
- What is one practical step you can take this week to cooperate with God's work in your life instead of resisting it?

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