

***Count It
All
“Joy”***

“When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.” —Helen Keller

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Introduction

Everyone wants to be happy. I have never met a person that told me their ambition in life was to be sad. However, many of us, being Christian Folk, are sad, depressed, and just disappointed with life. Much of this attitude is because of how life has treated us. Things have not particularly gone the way we imagined them. People have let us down. We didn't get the breaks that others seem to get. We seem to have fallen under the stress of daily trials.

Listen to what Helen Keller said so many years ago. You'll remember that she was both deaf and unable to speak until Anne Sullivan taught her sign language. Here's what she said...

“When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.” —Helen Keller

I use her quote because it typifies the core problem with those that are not happy. They spend too much time looking at closed doors instead of searching for the open door that God has waiting for them.



Joy - - Pleasure - - Happiness

Psalm 16:11 ...You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

The Bible tells us where to find Joy. It is in the presence of the Lord. His right hand is full of endless pleasure. However, it all comes together when He makes known to us the path of life. It is in His will where we find our destiny, not in the things of this world.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:2-4

James tells us that we are to count or consider it pure joy when we experience diverse or various temptations. James explains further by saying it is actually the trying or testing of our faith for the purpose of producing patience. The experience is meant to perfect the believer so they are wanting for nothing, complete.

There is something about patience that sustains us and keeps us from anger, envy, jealousy and all the other works of the flesh that are listed in Galatians chapter five.

Let's Explore

I'd like to explore the concept of various trials, otherwise known as temptations. Let's reason together and see if we can make sense of what James is really saying.

James is talking to believers, not pagans. He is teaching them a, "How To" truth about dealing with life in a corrupt and sinful world. He knows that his brethren are or will soon be persecuted for their faith. He doesn't tell them to get into an argument and fight with everybody that redicules them for being moral, conservitive, truthfull and a lover of God. He leaves all that stuff up to the individual believer and their walk with God.

What James does say is astounding. He tells them how to deal with the attack from a supernatural, “Walk In The Spirit” perspective.

Point #1.....”I’am Falling”



Notice in the scripture that James does not say, “When you are led into various trials”. He says ,”When you FALL into various trials”.

We all try real hard to do the right thing, think the right thoughts and be a good person. However, all of us fall because we are still battling the, “Flesh”, the, “Old Man”, a “Sinful Nature”.

Point #2...Not of God

That means the thing we are experiencing that is a temptation or trial is not of God. He is not responsible for our failures, we are...and that’s ok because we are of a fallen race and have not as yet obtained complete salvation.

Yes, we are seated with Christ in heavenly places. Yes, we are more than conquerors in Christ. We are indeed forgiven through the Blood of Christ and saved by His Life. What we are not is perfected in the flesh.

Point #3...A New Perspective

So, when we fall, James tells us to laugh it off and focus our attention on a new perspective by considering the trial as a happy occasion...thus, ‘count it all Joy’. How do you feel about that?

Here you are in the midst of a thing. It could be financial, marital, emotional or otherwise. You are depressed and struggling with it, not sure what to do or how to get away from it. Your focus is on, “It” all the time.

When, “It” dominates your thinking, you have no room for what God wants. In fact, you will find it hard to see into spiritual things or hear the voice of the Lord. That is why James says, “Count it all Joy”, because that is the pivot phrase that will open the door to an orderly escape from the temptation.

Point #4...Logical Asscent

Once we shift our thoughts to what God desires for us, we escape the torment for which the trial was intended. We move in a logical asscent from depression, fear, worry and all that other stuff towards a walk of faith.

The trial no longer stands as the primary subject of our thought life. We begin to seek the Lord and find His will. Yes, we will still be faced with the temptation but instead of a looming giant over us, it is just another attack by evil forces. The mountain thus becomes a moldhill.

Point #5...Temptation's Sources

The fact that we fall into temptation is indicitive to the trial. It is a setup or snare, designed by Satan to enslave and torment us. By it's very design, it is meant to keep us from enjoying our Lord and the joy of His fellowship.

There are two main sources of temptation. They are:

1. **The powers of darkness** which include Satan, the devil, evil spirits and the like. They use their fiery darts and snares against us.
2. **The fallen nature** that is in all of us. Its deeds are seen in Galatians chapter five and its ambition is to rule over us. The Bible calls it, "**The Flesh**". We are admonished to walk in the spirit so as not to fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Point #6...Understanding Life

Some younger or new Christians, when faced with a trial or temptation will cry out to God, Saying, "**Why Me Lord**". They are unaware of why things happen and how God uses those things for good in their lives. When we surrender to the Lordship of Christ, we sign a spiritual pledge that Jesus is Lord, not we ourselves. It is His will that we seek and not our own.

So, if a thing enters our day that is not from God but is capable of tempting us to sin, we know not to follow its path. We understand that God's will is supreme and takes priority over our desires. This is understanding Life.

Point #7...The End Result

Romans 8:28 tells us how God responds to what is happening to us. Here's what it says.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"

God calls us all according to His divine will or purpose. We love God because He first loved us and saved us from our own sin. The scripture says if...we love God and are called by Him, He will work everything together for good, even the temptation or trial we have fallen into. The end result is good, not evil. That means the attack is nullified and the damage is repaired so we become more complete in Him.

It Came To Pass

I have noticed a phrase in the Bible that really stands out. It says, "**And It Came To Pass**". Notice that says a lot about a thing...It comes our way but cannot stay. If we reject it, it passes by us and on to someone else.

So it is when we fall into a thing. It knocks at our door on its way, looking to leave a wake of destruction in our souls. Knowing that it will pass and that it is not here forever is a great comfort. It makes it all bearable as we call upon the Lord for our salvation.

Don't Panic...
God Is On Your Side

It Came To Pass

Things often come to pass,
but seldom do they ever last.
They come into our busy day
for a while, and then pass away.

We hear their voices, loud and clear,
when they arrive and while they are here.
They speak both joy and misery,
some to you and some to me.

We say, "It came to pass,"
Or say, "It happened so fast."
Down life's beaten path
comes both love and wrath.

So say goodbye to sad and blue,
to all that is now troubling you.
For things will come, only to pass,
but God's love will always last.

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The Trying of Your Faith Worketh Patience

The temptation is used by God to try or test your faith. He did not send the trial your way but does use it never-the-less.

Is your faith a sustaining faith that will keep you? Are you just pretending when it comes to believing? Can you use your faith to move mountains? God takes advantage of what was meant for evil to show us what is really in our hearts. He wants us to know exactly where we stand...in faith or not.

He also wants to work into us a lasting foundation, made from patience that will endure hardship. If we are patient in dealing with trials, we are stronger in mind and spirit. It means we do not jump to conclusions, cry in desperation and fall apart in the face of temptation. We rather deal in faith according to the will of God. Here's an example of what I mean.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. I Peter 5:8-9

A Perfect Work

“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing”. This is a process over time. It grows with every trial taking us from glory to glory.

With each trial comes more patience that brings more peace and a clearer perspective. As we learn to deal with temptations of varying sorts, we grow in grace and faith. This expands our understanding of God, of evil, of life on earth and even eternity. We become more complete in Him having want for nothing.

Wanting For Nothing?

That is correct. There is a point in every Christian's walk with their Lord that the desires of the flesh and the lust of the world begins to fade away.

That point is when we draw closer to Jesus in love and fellowship that all we really desire is more of Him. The lust for “Stuff” seems silly and the craving for power has no more appeal. We find ourselves at peace with God and comfortable in our own skin. All is well with our souls, even in the midst of ciaos. We become content living in the will of God.

This is why James can say to us, “Count it all Joy’ because he knows that the end result, if we allow patience to do its work, is that we will have overcome all the tricks and fiery darts of the devil and the fleshly appetites of sin. We will overcome all of that and walk in the Spirit with a perspective far above those around us.

Conclusion

All that has been said so far can be summed up in five words of encouragement.

1. Stop looking at the door that has been shut and channel your energies on finding the open door that God has for you. With every trial/temptation there is a way of escape. (*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*)
I Corinthians 10:13 Find it and use it. It was made specifically for you.
2. You are not alone. Others suffer the same trials. (*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.* **I Corinthians 10:13**)
3. Resist the devil, knowing he will flee from you...**I Peter 5:8**
4. Walk in the Spirit and you will not be acting out the deeds of the flesh. (*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*) **Galatians 5:16**
5. Know that no matter what is going down, God will intervene and work it all together for good...If we love Him and are called according to His purposes.

God bless you as you grow in grace and experience His love.