

# Joyful Life Bible Studies

## JAMES 1:1-4

### Lesson 3

#### FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. Share one insight or thought on James from last week's lesson or lecture that remains with you today.

Challenge: What similarities in the culture at the time of James' letter parallel the 1990's?

2. Observe and mark the paragraph divisions in this week's study (James 1:1-4) as follows. Write the key word or thought of each.
  - a. James 1:1
  - b. James 1:2-4
3. We need to study the Bible with a fervent desire to put into practice on a daily basis whatever the Lord tells us to do. (James 1:22). This week's lesson presents a powerfully challenging perspective on trials that, if followed, will transform your life. Commit yourself to allowing the Word of God to work the changes within you by writing a prayer expressing your willingness and desire. Thank Him for His enabling power and the work He will do.

*For it is God which worketh in you  
both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*

Philippians 2:13

#### SECOND DAY: Read James 1:1

1. When you receive a letter from someone, what is the first thing you want to know?
  - a. Identify the author of the letter we're studying this year by filling in the following blanks:  
\_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and  
of the \_\_\_\_\_.

(1.) How does his description of himself make you more receptive to his writing?

- b. Referring to the information about the author of the letter in Lesson 1, what fact about James do you find most interesting?
2. James was known to the early church as *James the Just*. As the half-brother of Jesus, who was James' father and how is he described in Matthew 1:19a?
    - a. What does "the Just" say to you about James' character?

Challenge: If you have time read through James' letter and record other facets of his character revealed by his writing. Do this on a separate sheet.

3. We know from our study in James thus far that the letter (epistle) is addressed to *the twelve tribes scattered abroad* (see: *Written to in the Background to James*). According to Acts 8:1b and 11:19 why were they *scattered abroad*?
  - a. Pagan worship had a strong foothold all throughout the Roman Empire in the first century. Put yourself in the place of these believers who were *scattered abroad*. Think for a moment of some of the difficulties you might encounter in settling in these unfamiliar countries. List a few here:
4. According to Young's Analytical Concordance the word *greeting* in James 1:1c means *rejoice or be of good cheer*. This would be an encouraging way to greet one another. Use this greeting this week to bless someone you know. What was his/her reaction?

**THIRD DAY:** Read James 1:2,3

1. Write James 1:2,3 KJV phrase by phrase.
  - a. Compare the following Revised Standard Version (RSV) of James 1:2,3 with the King James Version (KJV). Observe the underlined words in the RSV below. Find the corresponding words in the KJV and write them above the underlined words.

*Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials,  
for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.*

- b. Focus on the word *temptations* (KJV) (Greek: *peirasmos*). It does not mean seduction to sin. It is used of trials or testings with a beneficial effect. See and record God's purpose in this with the children of Israel. Deuteronomy 8:2 (3-6)

2. Print James' radical four word exhortation on facing trials.
  - a. Choose another word for *count*.
  - b. Closely observe the little word *it*. To what does *it* refer?
  - c. What does the word *all* say to you?
  - d. Note the word *when* in verse 2. It is not *if*. We will have trials. Growth in our life will depend on our attitude toward them. How does Hebrews 12:11 help you with this? (Note: All testings are not chastenings.)
3. What is your definition of *joy*?
  - a. What is our natural reaction to trials?
  - b. Share in a practical way how we *count it all joy* when we go through trials or testings.
    - (1.) What kind of thinking accompanies this *joy*?
4. From James 1:3 what do we *know* about these *various trials* (temptations)?
  - a. How does *knowing* God has a purpose in all our trials or testings encourage you to *count it all joy*?

*But in every situation  
 God gave blessed consolation  
 That my trials come  
 To only make me strong.*  
 Andrae Crouch

**FOURTH DAY:** Read James 1:2,3

1. According to James 1:3 what is being *tried* or *tested* when we go through these trials?
  - a. What is *faith*?
    - (1.) Using a dictionary define the word *test* as it relates to our *faith*.

(2.) Why does our *faith* need to be *tested*?

b. How does Luke 22:(31) 32 encourage you in the *trying of your faith*?

2. What does James 1:3 reveal will be *worked* into our lives by the *testing of our faith*?

a. Other words for this kind of *patience* are: *steadfastness, endurance, perseverance*. Choose one of these and relate how necessary it is to our *faith* or *trust*.

b. Check out the things wrought by *faith* in Hebrews 11:33,34. Use other versions if you like. Record the verbs that describe the victory or write each phrase.

3. Record what the following verses reveal about *patience*:

a. Romans 5:3

b. Hebrews 10:36

c. Hebrews 12:1

Optional: Choose one of the Heroes of Faith in Hebrews 11 and tell how his or her faith challenges you to *count it all joy* when your faith is tried.

4. Picture James 1:(2)3 in relationship to the persecution the believers suffered in the first century. How might a lack of *patience* (steadfastness, endurance) have affected their faith and ability to endure?

5. Meditate on I Peter 1:7(8-10) in the light of the *trying of your faith*. What does it say to you?

*These trials are only to test your faith, to see whether or not it is strong and pure.  
It is being tested as fire tests gold and purifies it  
and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. . .*

I Peter 1:7a TLB

**FIFTH DAY:** Read James 1:(2,3)4

1. Write James 1:4 phrase by phrase.

- a. Consider this paraphrase of James 1:2-4: *Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. **So, let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete.*** Write what James 1:4a is saying to you.

2. The pathway to *steadfastness* (patience) is through the *trial of our faith*. What is the relationship between *counting it all joy* and *letting patience have her perfect work*?

- a. *Let steadfastness have its full effect. James 1:4a RSV.* What will be the result of *patience* or *steadfastness* *completing her perfect work*? Answer in your own words from James 1:4b.

(1.) We will not be *perfect* in the sense of completely sinless on this earth. The word *perfect* here means *mature* - fully grown. This is often illustrated by fruit that is perfectly ripened. *Entire* means *complete*, lacking nothing; complete in every part; whole. See this from Ephesians 4:(11)12-15(16). Choose a phrase or clause from these verses that helps define the goal of *patience having her perfect work*.

(2.) Why is this *maturity* essential to our Christian walk?

3. Later in his letter James uses Job as an example of *letting patience have her perfect work*. See James 5:11. Record Job's perspective on the end product of the trial of his faith from Job 23:10.

- a. Share in a practical way how meeting trials with the perspective of James 1:2-4a matures us.

*As Christians we know that in the life of a child of God every trial and test has been permitted by God as a glorious opportunity for us to react to them in such a way that our Lord and Savior is able to produce in us, little by little, His own lovely character.*

H. Hurnard - rev.

**SIXTH DAY:** Review James 1:1-4

1. In recognition of the important position James held in the early church, why do you think he chose to identify himself as a *servant* (bondslave by choice)?
  - a. The word translated *handmaiden* used by Mary in Luke 1:38 to describe herself is the feminine form of the same Greek word James uses for *servant*. Write her commitment from Luke 1:38b as a bondslave of the Lord. Selah.

Challenge: How did a *bondslave* differ from a *slave* or *servant*? Deuteronomy 15:12-17

- a. What particular sign identified him or her?
2. An old-fashioned title for a commentary on the book of James was: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CONDUCT. Certainly, not many people in the 1990's would consider James 1:2 a *practical guide*. It runs severely contrary to the current carnal culture. Why is the Christian exhorted to *count it all joy* when he/she faces *various trials*?
  - a. What causes Christians to reject the command to *count it all joy*?
  - b. What helps or encourages you to put James 1:2 into practice?
3. James 1:2 is not promoting a superficial external joy that masks our true inner feelings. How does James 1:2-4 transform our perspective on trials and tests and produce a genuine joy?
4. In what way does James 1:2-4 challenge you?
5. What is most exciting or glorious to you about James 1:1-4?
6. What specific steps will you take to apply this lesson to your life?

*Although...  
Yet I will rejoice in the LORD,  
I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

Habakkuk 3:17,18