

Coping with Real Life

James 1:2-8

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We must have the right perspective on life's problems and persevere with God's help through them.

I. God calls Christians to perceive life's difficulties completely the opposite of our expectations. (v. 2)

Trials/Temptations (Gr. Peirasmos)

- 1) the trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue
- 2) of the condition of things, or a mental state, by which we are enticed to sin, or to a lapse from the faith and holiness
- 3) adversity, affliction, trouble: sent by God and serving to test or prove one's character, faith, holiness

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. (1 Peter 4:12)

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

No trial has overtaken you that is not faced by others. And God is faithful: He will not let you be tried beyond what you are able to bear, but with the trial will also provide a way out so that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13 NET)

II. God has a good purpose for allowing our difficulties. (v. 3)

Perseverance (Gr. Hupomone)

- 1) steadfastness, constancy, endurance, patience
- 2) in the NT the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings

As a result we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions you are enduring. (2 Thessalonians 1:4)

I am also aware that you have persisted steadfastly, endured much for the sake of my name, and have not grown weary. (Revelation 2:3)

This requires the steadfast endurance of the saints – those who obey God's commandments and hold to their faith in Jesus. (Revelation 14:12)

III. God uses our steadfast faith to help perfect our character. (v. 4)

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Romans 5:3-4)

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12:1-2a) (the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. NLT)

...until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God – a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature. (Ephesians 4:13)

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. (Colossians 4:12)

IV. If we are unsure how to handle a situation we are to seek God and His will. (v. 5)

...so that your faith would not be based on human wisdom but on the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:5)

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, accommodating, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and not hypocritical. (James 3:7)

For everything that was written in former times was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through encouragement of the scriptures we may have hope. (Romans 15:4)

But as for the seed that landed on good soil, these are the ones who, after hearing the word, cling to it with an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with steadfast endurance. (Luke 8:5)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. (2 Corinthians 1:3-7)

For one person is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, and another the message of knowledge according to the same Spirit... (1 Corinthians 12:8)

And we speak about these things, not with words taught us by human wisdom, but with those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. (1 Corinthians 2:13)

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him... (Ephesians 1:17)

V. We must trust God both for an answer and with that answer. (v. 6)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.
Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD and shun evil.
This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones. (Proverbs 3:5-8)

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (James 1:22)

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. (Ephesians 4:14-15)

VI. God doesn't help those who don't ask or listen to Him. (v. 7)

Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." (1 Kings 18:21)

Even while these people were worshiping the LORD, they were serving their idols. To this day their children and grandchildren continue to do as their ancestors did. (2 Kings 17:41)

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." (Luke 16:13)

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he? (1 Corinthians 10:21-22)

VII. Consistency and constancy is the only pathway to strength and security. (v. 8)

So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. (1 Peter 4:19)

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. (1 Corinthians 10:6-11)

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete." (Luke 6:46-49)

Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:6)