

James 1:1-7

Count It All Joy

Welcome back and here we go!

Today we start a new series in the book of James. I suspect we will be here for several months during which we will tackle all types of practical technics for standard Christian living. Remember, if you are not advancing --- you are retreating.

Compromise or refusal to compromise.

--- History ---

- James – Jesus’ brother as seen in *Matthew 13:55*
- James rejected Jesus – *Matthew 12:44-50, John 7:5.*
- James became the leader of the Church and Jerusalem – *Acts 12:17.*
- Many important events are linked to James. Peter sends news, Paul reaches out, Paul brings collections to him.

--- Other Fun Facts ---

- James died a martyr in 62 or 66 AD, stoned and clubbed by Jews.
- James closely mirrors the sermon on the mount.
- James was not included in many early New Testaments!

James 1

We will have about six lessons in Chapter 1. Today we are covering **James 1:1-7.**

- 1) What does it mean to “*count it all joy*”?

You know, for the human mind, it is counterintuitive to be grateful for trials. The term count is an accounting term, so here we are commanded to see trials as something in the positive column. This isn’t a request. So how does it fall in the positive column? Through joy --- not just any joy --- ALL JOY.

We just finished Philippians in our Discipleship class --- all about JOY. Joy is not happiness. Happiness depends on positive outcomes or circumstances or events.

“*When we fall*”...

- 2) Why does it say “when”?

Trials will come. I wonder what your trial is today. Let’s begin to think about that. If you have a trial today, what could God possibly be trying to do? Often, we don’t have a clue. Other times, we understand why. Either way, the idea of “*falling into*” presents the idea that it is God who is allowing the trials.

3) How does it help if I know God is allowing it?

For me, it absolutely helps because I know God loves me. I know He cares. I know He can just as easily save me. I always pray in trials --- "Give it all to me God".

4) How do trials test our faith?

James mentions the word "faith" 16 times. God will prove our faith by trials. Think of Job. Satan was defeated by the proving of Job's faith.

The end result of our trials is patience. The idea of patience is perseverance. We learn to persevere through trials.

Romans 5:3-4 'And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. '

God is trying to build character, to help us overcome issues, to become better people.

1 Peter 1:6-9

The idea here is of your faith being found pleasing in God's sight!

James 1:5 '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.'

Remember 'count' --- putting the trial in the positive column!

'Lack' --- putting the trial in the negative column.

5) What don't you understand about your trial today?

The idea here is that in prayer and careful consideration, God / Christ's mind / His wisdom is available to us.

James 1:6 'But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. '

Doubt is the opposite of faith.

6) Why do we doubt?

It is not a matter of a lack of faith. Often it is a matter of lack of understanding.

Let's pray for understanding.

Next week *James 1:9-18*.