

CROWN OF LIFE

JAMES 1:12

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¹² Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Introduction:

James again refers to the trials or temptations and being tried again. In this section he deals with our reaction when these various forms of testings come our way.

Do we complain bitterly or do we rejoice and thank God for them?

Do we advertise our trails to others or do we bear them quietly?

Do we live in the future, waiting for the circumstances to improve, or do we live in the present waiting to see the hand of God in all that comes through our lives?

Do we indulge in self-pity & seek sympathy or do we submerge ourselves into a life of service to other and service to the Lord?

James closes this section on times of testing with a promise for the believers who are suffering under trial by reminding them that God rewards those who remain faithful. It does not matter if the man is rich or poor, if he wants to receive the promised blessings he needs to remain faithful and his endurance will be rewarded with triumph. God rewards those who remain faithful under trial.

Notice:

1. THE RESULT THAT IS POSSIBLE FROM YOUR TRIAL

James 1:12

¹² Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

There are two words in verse 12 that don't seem to go together. They are the words "Blessed" and "temptation."

Just as it was strange to hear James say, "Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations," it is also strange to hear him declare that a man is blessed who has to endure a trying time in his life.

Even more the word blessed means happy.

The word translated “blessed” is a word that literally and simply means “happy”. It is the same word Jesus used during the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:3-10

³ Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. ⁵ Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. ⁷ Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. ⁸ Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God. ⁹ Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. ¹⁰ Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

James teaches us in this verse that it is absolutely possible that the experience that is currently trying your faith will result in your eventual happiness.

Though it may be hard to see our tests that way, notice a couple of things James teaches us about the possible result from your trial. First of all, James says that your trial could be:

A. A Blessed Experience

We think of blessings as coming to us in the form of good things and pleasant things. We say, “God blessed me with a good job.” We talk about the blessing of our health, or our family.

However, you never hear someone stand up in church and say, “I want to thank God for the blessing of going through a crisis. Thank God I lost my job.”

We don’t say things like that, nor is that what James is encouraging. What he is saying though, is that the burdens of life can very often prove to be some of the blessings of life.

Have you ever seen someone go through a trying crisis in their life, and then look back on it and say, “Even though that was a difficult experience, I am glad that it happened”?

What they found was that their difficulty was a surprisingly blessed experience. Was it hard? Yes. But it was also helpful, and something for which they could look back and thank God.

Someone said about Joseph: “If Joseph had not been Egypt’s prisoner, he would have never been Egypt’s governor. The iron chains around his feet ushered in the golden chains about his neck.”

Joseph would say “Amen” to verse 12, because he knew that our tests can actually prove to be a surprisingly blessed experience.

Illustration: Job

Job 1:13-19

¹³ And there was a day when his sons and his daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: ¹⁴ And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: ¹⁵ And the Sabeans fell *upon them*, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. ¹⁶ While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. ¹⁷ While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. ¹⁸ While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: ¹⁹ And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

But Notice:

Job 42:12

¹² So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

Notice something further about the possible results from your tests and trials. Notice not only that your trial could be a surprisingly blessed experience, but notice also further that it could be:

B. Beneficial Experience

James 1:12

¹² Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Look again at verse 12. James says, “*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried...*” Note that phrase “when he is tried”.

The word “tried” speaks of the process of testing something in order to prove it or approved.

This should be the desire of every Christian – to be approved by God.

2 Timothy 2:4

⁴ No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

We are often so worried about what others think of us, and we do so much in search of the approval and acceptance of people around us.

However, what matters most is not the admiration of your neighbors; it is the approval of the Lord Jesus.

That approval comes as God brings us through tests and trials, and demonstrates the reality and strength of our faith in Him. That is why we can be blessed by the endurance of a trial. It is a beneficial experience.

Notice not only *the result that is possible from your trial*, but notice secondly, James speaks to us about:

2. THE RESOLVE THAT IS PARAMOUNT IN YOUR TRIAL

James 1:12

¹²Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

There is an important link in the chain between a trial and a blessing. That link is found in the word “endureth”. James says, “*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation...*”

The presence of a trial in your life does not guarantee a future blessing. The blessing of a test is only found in passing it, and to pass the test means that you endure the trial.

In other words, it is of the utmost importance that we resolve to remain faithful in the face of your trials.

Notice a couple of things that are involved in this resolve. First of all, it involves:

A. Commitment In the Presence of a Trial

Mark that word “endureth” in verse 12. If you look back up at verse 3, you will notice the word “patience”.

The word translated “endureth” in verse 12 is a form of that word.

The word translated “endureth” is a compound of two words and it simply means “to stay under”.

When a trial comes into our life, and we find our faith being tested, our temptation is to try to escape from the trial – to run from that which is challenging us.

However, as we learned when studying the opening verses of this chapter, there is more value in enduring trials than there is in escaping them.

Therefore, we must make a commitment that you are going to stand strong, even in the face of trials in your life. You must resolve that come what may, you are not going to fall apart, fall back, or fall away.

Notice something further about this resolve that is paramount in your trial. Notice not only that this resolve involves a commitment in the presence of a trial, but notice also that it involves:

B. Confidence In the Passing of the Trial

James says that a man is blessed who can endure his trying circumstances, and pass the tests of his life. Within that truth is the realization that the test and the trial are not permanent things.

In other words, part of endurance is the understanding that there will be a point when the thing we are enduring will be over.

Part of the resolve we need in our trials is the wisdom and foresight to see that there is going to be an end to our adversity.

We need to say with the Psalmist:

Psalm 30:5

⁵ For his anger *endureth* but a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

Your trial can end up as a blessing in your life, but only if you have the resolve to prayerfully and patiently endure what God sees fit to allow in your life.

There is a third truth that we draw from this wonderful verse. James speaks to us, not only about *the result that is possible from your trial*, and *the resolve that is paramount in your trial*, but notice also lastly that he points us to:

3. THE REWARD THAT IS PROMISED AFTER YOUR TRIAL

James 1:12

¹² Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

One reason that our trials can eventually become a blessing is because of the reward that is available for those who pass the test.

James describes this reward as, “...*the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*”

Think about that phrase with me, and notice a couple of things about this reward. Notice first of all:

A. The Image James Gives Us

Notice that word “crown” in verse 12. James says that a crown awaits those who endure their trials and pass the test.

When we think of a crown, we think of a golden, sort of hat, worn by a king or a queen.

Crowns were a symbol of:

- Royalty
- Victory
- Freedom

This crown of life certainly represents two aspects:

- Eternal Life

- Abundant Life

B. The Inspiration James Gives Us

The Bible indicates that we will receive crowns and rewards in heaven – which we will subsequently lay down at the feet of Jesus.

James is telling us that when we patiently endure the trials and tests of this life, we will be rewarded with a trial-free, gloriously and eternally blessed life throughout all eternity.

We are reminded in 2 Corinthians 4:17:

2 Corinthians 4:17

¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

James is trying to inspire us by reminding us that the few and fleeting days in which we must endure our trials will seem like nothing as we enjoy the timeless eternity of Heaven.

Close:

There is a song that was written by a man named Johnson Oatman entitled “I’ll Trade the Old Cross for a Crown.”

Note the words:

I shall not bear the cross thro' yon city
When the burdens of life are laid down.
When I knock on the portals of Heaven
I will trade the old cross for a crown.

Yes, I'll trade the old cross for a crown,
When the burdens of life are laid down.
When the pearl gates for me shall swing open,
I will trade the old cross for a crown.

Tho' the cross oftentimes has been heavy,
And oft fortune on me seems to frown,
But how happy I'll be over yonder
When I trade the old cross for a crown.

Oft, my bark has been tossed on life's billows,
And each wave tries my vessel to drown.
But no storm cloud can harm me forever
When I trade the old cross for a crown.

Ev'ry cross that I bear for my Savior
Will at last, when He calls, be laid down,
And my sorrows will all be forgotten
When I trade the old cross for a crown.

Johnson also wrote the song: Count Your Blessings

The cross of your present trial may seem exceedingly heavy. Yet, don't let the difficulty of your trial cause

you to forget the prize that is promised for those who pass the test.

Look beyond the battle, and see the blessing that can result from your trial. Resolve therefore to stand firm in the midst of your trial, and wait patiently for the crown of the life that is to come.