

**Lacking in nothing** -- This is the same as *complete* stated negatively.

Conclusion: God is in the process of making us everything we should be as His children. He intends for us to be mature, functioning in every part of our being exactly as He intends.

For this to be accomplished, trials are *necessary*. They build in us an endurance, a steadfastness under pressure which will develop us as mature men and women in Christ.

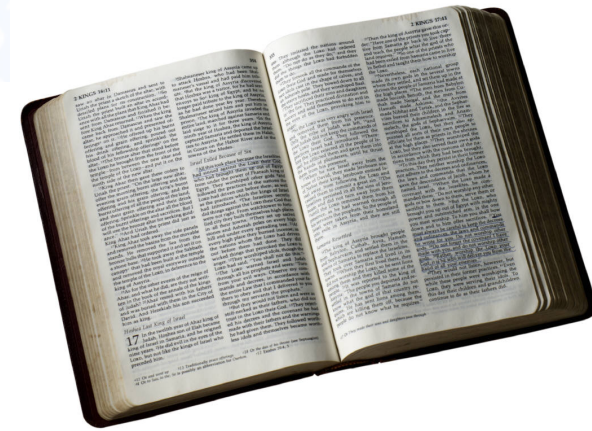
What a tragedy that trials often become the occasion for complaining and discouragement, We become obsessed with getting out from under the pressure rather than from learning to stand firm and thus become everything that God intends us to be

**Rom. 5:2-5:** *By whom also through faith we have had this access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice under the hope of the glory of God. Neither that only, but also we rejoice in tribulations, knowing that tribulation bringeth forth patience. And patience experience, and experience hope. And hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy ghost which is given to us.:*

**1 Pet. 1:6,7:** Wherein ye rejoice, though now for a season (if need require) you are in heaviness, through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes (though it be tried with fire) might be found unto your praise, and honor and glory at the appearing of Christ.

# AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP PULPIT SERIES

May 22, 2011



## Let's Get Practical

Practical Applications of Biblical Truth

**TODAY: DEALING WITH DIFFICULT TIMES**

Rev. Michael Gantt, Senior Pastor

Agape Christian Fellowship  
30 Canal Street

Brattleboro, Vermont 05601  
Ph. (802) 257-4069

Fax (802) 254-4239

agape@sover.net

[www.acfellowship.net](http://www.acfellowship.net)

Michael K. Gantt, Senior Pastor

M. Bryan Gantt, Associate Pastor  
**Going Around the World for Jesus**

**Introduction** --The first verse gives the basic introductory material to the letter. The author is James, the half-brother of Christ. He is also the brother of Jude who wrote the letter bearing his name. The recipients are Christian Jews who have been scattered abroad from Jerusalem in the great time of persecution called the diaspora.

In this entire book - James is concerned with the behavior of believers. His conviction is that saving faith transforms the life and is evident in conduct. Saving faith is alive and evident in the life a person lives. So the Book of James is really about faith, *but it is concerned about faith as it is lived out in the life.* James speaks firmly about the need for believers to manifest their faith in their actions. In the 108 verses of the book, He gives 54 imperatives (commands) concerning putting our inner faith into outward action.

One of the most difficult areas for us to deal with as believers is the matter of testing and trials, and it is at this very point that James begins his letter. A popular sermon title is “Why do bad things happen to good people?” We could go on with that debate for a long time – but the fact remains is that difficult times come into all of our lives. The more important question ought to be: *What should be the believer's response to trials and pressures?* Pressure does two things:

1. It *reveals* character.
2. It *produces* character.

James is concerned that we **manifest our godly character in the face of trials and appreciate the importance of trials in producing godly character in our lives.**

Three areas of importance to the believer, in regard to his trials, are covered in verses 2-4: We are going to a pretty focused look at these 4 verses, paying careful attention to the words James chooses as we look at:

### **I. Response to Trials--1:2**

### **II. Reason for Trials--1:3**

### **III. Result of Trials--1:4**

#### **I. Response to Trials--1:2**

**My brethren**--James' firmness is coupled with warmth as he identifies himself with his readers. He addresses them 15 times in this way, making the letter very personal (1:2,16,19; 2:1,5,14; 3:1,10,12; 4:11; 5:7,9,10,12,19).

**Consider** (aorist mid imperative)(count)--Meaning "to consider," "deem," "regard as." This is a decision that is arrived at as a result of careful deliberation.

**Trials**--This is the subject under consideration. It can refer to trials that press upon a person from the outside or the temptations that come from within. **Here he is talking about the testings from the outside.** Later he will talk about inner temptations (1:13-15).

**Various**--This does not refer to the number of trials but to the variety or diversity of the trials. It carries the idea of *multi-faceted* or *multi-colored*. You could use this word to refer to Joseph's coat of many colors (**Gen. 37:3**) or to God's multi-faceted grace (**I Pet. 4:10**).

**Encounter**--This is a compound word meaning "to fall in with" and "be surrounded by." Trials are not something we seek or look for, **but when we fall into them we are to function biblically.**

**When**-- James did not use the word “IF” - but “When” - This indicates that these trials will come and there is nothing we can do to avoid them. The picture is one of a believer falling into and being surrounded by trials which threaten to overwhelm him. These are not his fault and there is nothing that could have been done to avoid them. They are either imitated by God or allowed by God for the accomplishing of His purposes.

This command may have its background in the instruction of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. **Matt. 5:10-12** read it). Jesus didn't tell his audience that men “might” revile or persecute, or speak falsely against you – he said they WILL. James is now attempting to teach us how a Godly man will respond to the inevitability of difficult times.

### **II. Reason for Trials--1:2**

Foundational to responding properly to trials is understanding what God is accomplishing in our lives through trials.

**Knowing**--This connects to *consider* in verse I and tells us why we can **count it all joy** when we fall into trials. “*Knowing that the testing of your faith.....*”

**Testing of your faith**--Faith is like gold that is revealed by the test of fire. James recognizes that his readers are true Christians who have their faith in Christ (cf. a1). Trials prove our faith, revealing its true character. The testing (or trying) of our faith reveals the faith that is there, and as we will see also produces something in us....

**Produces endurance**--*Endurance* is a compound word, *hu-po* (under) and *meno* (to stay, abide, remain). It pictures someone being under a great load and resolutely staying there.

*Our faith, being purified by trials, produces a staying power which enables us to live under pressure. There is an active character about this word. It is not a passive resignation to a situation but a confident stand when surrounded with overwhelming pressures.*

One commentary calls it "The characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to the faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings." It is that tenacity of spirit which holds up under the pressure while awaiting God's time for reward or dismissal.

**Produces**--An intensive form of the word "to work," used here in the present tense. This indicates that a process is in view, not an instant accomplishment. The trying or testing of our faith is an ongoing process. Its not an instantaneous thing – its not a one shot deal – it doesn't happen overnight – it is a part of a process that is ongoing in your life. It PRODUCES ENDURANCE. (patience).

### **III. Result of Trials--1:3**

We need to realize that we cannot speed up the process that God uses to produce endurance in each one of us. **The danger is that we begin looking for a way out of the trial rather than appreciating what God is doing with the trial.**

James therefore gives a command to allow endurance have its perfect work. The producing of endurance in the life is not the end but part of what God uses to accomplish His purpose in the life of the believer. The producing of endurance (patience) must first be accomplished before the finished work that God wants to do in us can be accomplished.

**Perfect result** (lit. "perfect work") -- The reference is to the **perfect character** that God intends to develop in each of His children. This is described in three ways in the last part of the verse.

**Perfect**-- This does not mean absolute perfection, as though the believer would then never sin (cf. 3:2). The idea is that of maturity, being all that we should be as spiritual adults in Christ. God is in the process of bringing us to maturity in Christ (cf. **1 Cor. 14:20; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15; Col. 4:12**).

**Complete**--This word refers to that which is whole, having all its parts. Every necessary part is present and functioning.