

What About Trials?

2017 Mark Beard*

Text: James 1:2-8 NIV

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

Introduction

There are many erroneous ideas about trials, but trials do come, there is no doubt about that fact. Sometimes trials come because of spiritual warfare, because we live in a fallen world with people who oppose God, because we make poor choices, and other reasons. *It is important to remember that trials try us—not God.*

Additionally, there are several clear *truths* about trials.

- I. Trials can produce joy (but not necessarily happiness).
 - A. Our attitude toward what happens in our lives is key to what is produced.
 - B. We must make a conscious decision about how we will respond to trials.

II. Trials test our faith.

- A. Temptations and trials test our faith—not God.

James 1:13 tells us, When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone... This is why we say, “*trials try us—not God.*”

- B. Our “tests of faith” will show the depth of our faith.

III. Trials produce endurance.

- A. Our “tests of faith” show the level of our commitment.

B. Our “tests of faith” produce spiritual maturity.

1 Peter 1:6-8 (NIV)

⁶In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy...

IV. Trials lead to growing in God's wisdom.

A. God’s wisdom will lead us to a better understanding of Him, and His plan for us.

B. God’s wisdom will stabilize us in the life we live for Him.

Conclusion

As we can see, there are many *truths* about trials, but still it is natural to struggle with not always knowing the rhyme or reason. This is when we must trust God without wavering.

Illustration

Gold is one of the most valuable materials on earth. It has been used for centuries as money, but it also has many uses in industry, manufacturing, and even space flight. One of the traits that makes gold so useful is that it can be shaped and formed so easily. In fact, a single ounce of gold can be flattened out to cover three hundred square feet.

But gold ore dug out of the ground contains many other elements that must be removed prior to the gold being useful. The refining process for gold involves intense heat. Gold melts at a temperature of almost two thousand degrees Fahrenheit. That incredibly high temperature is required for gold to be ready to be used. The Christian life involves much the same process. Sometimes we are surprised when “bad things happen to good people.” But the Scripture tells us that fiery trials are part of God’s refining process for our lives. Rather than griping or complaining when trials come, we should rejoice as we think of the end result they will produce.

Trials will try us, but God is faithful to sustain us in our hour of need.

*Four main points came from James MacDonald - sub-points, scriptures and illustration added - <http://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/outlines/2011/march/whytrials.html>