

# Pure Religion

Joyful Trials – James 1:1-4  
January 14, 2018

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. - **James 1:2-4**

## I. THE LETTER OF JAMES

- Written, most likely, by James the brother of Jesus.
- Likely an early letter (AD 40-50).
- Written from Palestine to a Jewish audience (vs. 1).
- Known as a “general” or “catholic” letter, since it is directed to the church at large, not a direct congregation.

## II. COUNT IT ALL JOY?

- James commands his readers to be counterintuitive—to learn to rejoice in trials (vs. 2; 1 Peter 1:6-7).
- James is not speaking from an ivory tower; he knows suffering and trials. There is a “pastoral” spirit about his exhortation (James 1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14, etc.).
- There are “various” trials in life, some more difficult than others.

## III. TESTING OUR FAITH

- James here speaks of trials, not the natural results of sin. Trials come after we have come to faith, not before (Heb. 10:32-39).
- Remember that Jesus endured trials which led to his “learned obedience.” Paul also endured various trials, as have all believers (Matt. 4; Luke 4; Acts 20:18-20; Heb. 5:7-9).

## IV. BECOMING PERFECT

- We are working on steadfastness, working on endurance. This is the great theme in the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:9; 2:2; 2:19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12).
- When our steadfastness has been tested and strengthened, we move on toward “perfection” and completeness (vs. 4; 1 John 2:5; 3:4-10).
- God is working on our perfection. We should be working with him (Phil. 2:12-13).

**KNOW:** Trials in our walk of faith are not random nor meaningless. They are purposeful and filled with positive outcomes.

**DO:** Accept the trials that come your way. Learn to rejoice in the maturity they bring.

### Recommended Reading:

*A Chance To Die*, by Elisabeth Elliot (LifePoint Library #266.132 ELL)  
*Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan (LifePoint Library #828 BUN)  
*Faith in the Furnace*, by Ian Rees

### Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please read James 1:1-4

1. Who was James, and who was he writing to?
2. What does James want his readers to do?
3. Why does God test our faith?
4. When James says “perfect” in verse 4, does he mean “without sin”?
5. How can we minister to a brother or sister who is in the midst of a difficult trial?
6. What did you learn from this passage? What steps can you take to apply it to your life?