



The Purpose of Problems

Date: October 6, 2024

Text: James 1:2-4

BIG IDEA

God never told us that this walk would be easy. In fact, He often warns us throughout Scripture that this discipleship journey will be hard. But this warning is not without promises. If we endure through the trials we are sure to face, we shall receive all the promises of God and a reward that can never be taken in heaven. Perseverance is necessary to become a fully devoted follower of Jesus as it teaches us to trust Him, rely on Him, and rest in His strength.

Conversation Starter

- Coaches often inspire their teams with words like, “We need to have perseverance...grit.” You may have read that sentence with your *tough guy* voice. We all know what that means in an athletic context. When have you had or might you have to in the future have perseverance or grit in the faith?
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COMMENTARY #1

(James 1:2-4) In this familiar passage, James is writing to the twelve scattered tribes, and essentially all of God’s people, to consider it joy whenever you face trials of many kinds.

Hmm...how can we be joyful in the midst of difficult situations? It is possible for believers to have joy because they know that through these trials, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). James states that living through these trials produces perseverance. He says in verse 4, “Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” Continuing with the athletic analogy, James says that the one who perseveres under trial will receive the crown of life, that the Lord has promised to those who love Him (vs. 12).

Discussion Questions

1. Athletes don’t just magically have perseverance to be able to run the race or play the game—they train. How can we “train” in the faith to increase our perseverance?
2. Can you think of a time when you have persevered through trials? What did you learn to help you grow during the trials? How did knowing God’s promises help you through those times?



3. What strategies can you use now to help you be prepared to endure future trials?

COMMENTARY #2

(Romans 5:2b-4) In this section of Paul's letter to the Romans, the heading is titled, *Peace and Hope*. Paul is writing to assure believers of their certain future because of God's promises. We boast in the hope of the glory of God (vs. 2b). He goes on to emphasize that we also glory in our sufferings because they produce perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope (vs. 3). It is like a chain reaction—one leads to the next. Ultimately, we can rely on our hope in the Lord because, as it says in verse 4, God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you seen these characteristics (perseverance, character, hope) unfold in your life or with someone you know? How do they build upon each other?
2. Does this give you a sense of peace? If so, in what way?
3. How does living as a person filled with hope change your perspective, especially when facing challenges?



GOING DEEPER

1. Why do bad things happen to believers? Watch [this short video](#) on Job (6:19) from the Bible Project on Right Now Media.

Does God tell Job why he had to suffer? No, He did not. God explained to Job that His wisdom is in full understanding of the entire universe. God is both powerful and kind; we can trust God's wisdom. Discuss your thoughts about God's example through Job.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Watch [this video](#) from Right Now Media to hear NFL punter Jason Baker of the Panthers explain how God speaks through hardships.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Make a list of characters in the Bible (optional—break up into small groups and assign a character). How did God develop them through hardships? Here are some to get you started:

- Job
- Jonah
- David
- Paul



In what ways is God developing us through trials? Pastor Robin says that God directs us, inspects us, corrects us, protects us, and perfects us through trials. How can we practically live out our faith through hardships? Discuss ways we can witness to others during our trials or as we are walking with them through theirs.