

“How To Respond To Our Trials”

James 1:1-8

Sermon Series: “Trials”

Introduction: Chuck Swindoll writes, “Much of life’s music is played in the minor key. Hurts, headaches, pain, problems, disappointments, sickness, suffering, disease, and death pile upon us and *won’t go away*. This creates within us questions regarding God’s justice and life’s purpose. Philosophers have tried to interpret this heavy scene but have failed to bring any measure of relief to man’s misery. Education, travel, occupation and even overt acts of kindness provide little help when we are overwhelmed by troubles. On one occasion King David said, ‘Many are the afflictions of the righteous...’ (Ps. 34:19). Job, who suffered deeply, stated, ‘Man is short-lived and full of turmoil’ (Job 14:1). The apostle Paul spoke of being perplexed, persecuted, and struck down. So many of us could testify to lives of affliction and trials.”

Warren Wiersbe writes, “Perhaps you have seen the bumper sticker that reads: ‘When life hands you a lemon, make lemonade!’ It is easier to smile at that statement than to practice it, but the basic philosophy is sound. In fact, it is biblical. Throughout the Bible are people who turned defeat into victory and trial into triumph. Instead of being victims, they became victors. James tells us that we can have this same experience today. Not matter what the trials may be on the outside (James 1:1-12) or the temptations on the inside (James 1:13-27), through faith in Christ we can experience victory. The result of this victory is spiritual maturity.”

Ronald Blue writes, “All too often trials prompt groanings and complaints. This kind of response does not contribute to Christian maturity. It only makes matters worse. Trials are not to be seen as tribulations but testings. A test is given to see if a student can pass, not pass out. James gave sound advice on how to score high on every test. One who brings the right attitude to the trial, who understands the advantage of the trial, and who knows where to obtain assistance in the trial will certainly end up on God’s honor roll.” **We can respond to our trials in helpful ways or harmful ways. Here are some helpful responses:**

Response #1-Choose to rejoice in the Lord (v. 2). We may not have control over our trials, but we do have control over our response. The key word in this verse is “count.” It is an accounting term that means to “evaluate, esteem, regard, or hold it up in your mind.” Notice that trials are inevitable because the verse says “when you fall into (it means encounter) various trials.” Also, notice that “trials” is plural, and “various” means that we will have different types of trials. The question is, “Will we react in a way that makes us better or bitter?” God is always unchanging and worthy of worship so we can rejoice in Him and worship Him even as we grieve the trial. **On the other hand, we can choose to get bitter. Which is a more helpful response?**

Response #2-Know that God has a good purpose for the trial (v. 3). The key word here is “know.” It refers to an understanding mind. God wants us to understand that his purpose for our trials is growth, endurance, patience, and maturity. This cannot happen without difficulty. Warren Wiersbe says, “If there is nothing to endure, you cannot learn endurance.”

Response #3-Surrender our wills to God (v. 4). The key word here is “let.” It refers to a surrendered will. Instead of running from the trial, God wants us to surrender to Him so that we can learn and grow through it. Wiersbe says, “The mature person does not argue with God’s will.”

Response #4-Ask for wisdom (v. 5). The key word here is “ask.” God tells us to ask in faith for Him to give us the wisdom to handle our trials. Wisdom refers to God showing us how to live, and specifically, how to handle our trials.

Response #5-Trust God and pray in faith (v. 5-8). Ultimately, God wants us to trust Him. We are told to “ask in faith” This is how we can stand firm even during trials instead of being up and down like the waves. Faith views circumstances through God instead of viewing God through the circumstances? Are we trusting the Lord during our trials?

