

GOD GIVES VICTORY OVER TROUBLES JAMES 1:2-8

HAVE YOU EVER FELT AT TIMES:

That no one understands you?

That you always open mouth and insert foot?

That life won't get better; nothing will ever change?

That trouble is your middle name and it is hanging over your head like a gigantic rain cloud ready to drench you?

That life is one big continuous struggle and before you get on your feet, you get knocked down again

THEN YOU WILL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO RELATE WITH THIS MAN

Carlos, 24, was sentenced to ten years' probation in San Antonio for attempting to rob a liquor store. According to the records, Carlos cut his hand badly when he broke through the store roof. He tried to throw a bottle of whiskey out through the hole he had created but missed, causing the bottle to fall back into the room, shattering and setting off a burglar alarm. He fell on the broken bottle, cutting himself again. Then he left his wallet in the store. Once on the roof in making his getaway, he fell off and left a trail of blood from the store to his home down the street.

Law breakers are not the only ones who have troubles. James the brother of Jesus wrote, *My brethren, count it all JOY when you fall into various trials.* (1:2)

Dale Galloway, a pastor in Portland, had this interesting thought. *Next door in the manicured green garden area are people who don't have problems. These people are buried in the cemetery. If you have problems today, it simply means that you are alive. The good news of this passage in James was written so that you could triumph over your troubles.*

Scripture tells us that those who live the good life, the Christian life, will face all kinds of trials and temptations. We are going to see that successfully overcoming these adversities produces maturity and strong character.

YOU KNOW IT'S GOING TO BE A BAD DAY WHEN...

- You wake up in the hospital in traction and your insurance agent tells you that your accident policy covers falling off the roof, but not hitting the ground.
- You see a Sixty-Minute News team waiting in your office.
- You call suicide prevention and they put you on hold.
- Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles.
- Your twin forgets your birthday.
- You turn on the news and they are showing the emergency routes out of the city.

- Your horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you follow a group of Hell's Angels down the freeway.

To turn your troubles into personal victories you must keep a positive outlook and view your circumstances through God's perspective. A person with a positive perspective (a point of view) cannot be defeated? Where do you get the right perspective and positive outlook—the Bible! We are told in the Word of God that you are going to be tested, that you are going to have troubles, but keep the right perspective for Jesus says in John 16:33 (NLT) *I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows, But take heart, because I have overcome the world.*

We know that trouble and adversity will come, but remember that you do not have to be beaten down by the blows. You can be braced for the blows (Jesus is by your side) and overcome them. 1 John 5:4 (NLT) says, *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*

VICTIMS OF TROUBLES OR VICTORS OVER TROUBLES?

I believe that our Father in heaven allows His children to struggle in order to bring us into maturity—make us strong. Isn't this precisely what James is saying. *Consider it pure joy, my brethren, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops endurance.* ROUGH TIMES can be good times. We can profit from the troubles and trials we go through. We are encouraged in the Scripture to turn our hardships into times of learning as we walk in God's truth.

Imagine that you've just walked in the door Monday morning at the office where you work, only to be called into your boss's office before you can settle into your next project. Moments later, you walk out of that same office building after being "let go" from the company because of "down -sizing." On the way home, the car you just purchased not more than a week ago stalls in the freeway. Even though you manage to drive it over to the shoulder of the highway, it's raining; the nearest phone is at least a half-mile away, and you just realized that you left your umbrella on your desk. Well...on the desk that used to be yours!

I'm sure you would agree with me that this is not the ideal way to begin a workweek. But the reality is that any one of us could go through this type of situation at any time. The details may vary of course depending upon who you are, but we have to ask ourselves—are life's difficulties always as bad as they seem at first? Often we can come to a clearer understanding of what God is doing in and through us if we take the time to seek Him.

Our faith is tested often. Read Hebrews 11, the faith chapter and receive the truths from greats like: Able, Enoch, Noah, Sarah, Abraham, Moses, Rahab, the Israelites, and others. It's a real eye-opener. Troubles never leave you where it finds you. You are either changed into a better person or a bitter person. You have the power to choose how you will react to your problems. Choose God's way.

If we are told in the Word that we will have struggles then doesn't it make sense to be prepared for it—to have a plan that you can fall back on? Struggles can be a path an individual can follow to develop, expand,

progress and become the person that God created him/her to be. A hardship can become either a ordeal and tear us down, or it can become a magnificent experience which helps you become more like Christ. It is God's way of building and developing a Christ-like spirit and character within us.

James 1:3-4 (NLT) says, *for when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. so let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything.* I like that there is a purpose in my struggles. It is not in vain. It is a learning process and God has it under control. Faith is learning to live with some unanswered questions.

There is a story about a man who was driving his car on a narrow mountain road. To his right a cliff dropped nearly five hundred feet to the canyon floor below. As the driver rounded the corner he suddenly lost control of the vehicle. It plunged over the side and bounced down the mountain, bursting into flames at the bottom.

The terrified driver was thrown from the car as it went over the edge, and by some miracle he managed to grab a bush that grew near the top. There he was, frantically holding the small limb and hanging g precariously over the edge. After trying to pull himself up for several minutes, he called out in desperation, "Is anybody there?"

In a few seconds the thundering voice of the Lord echoed across the mountain. "Yes, I'm here. What do you want?"

The desperate man pleaded, "Please save me! I can't hold on much longer!"

After another agonizing pause the voice said, "All right, I will save you. But first you must turn loose of the limb and trust me to catch you. Just release your grip now, my hands will be under you."

The dangling man looked over his shoulder, at the burning car in the valley below, and then he call out, "**Is anybody else there?**"

How would you respond to the same command? We need to trust and let the Lord be in control.

Know that every hardship you go through prepares you for something greater. They bring us into a place of fullness in Him. Moments of prayer and commitment are keys to the victory, and freedom in the Spirit is a lifestyle, which a Christian develops through one step at a time. as we continue taking those steps, our hearts are strengthened to believe and not doubt, to let our faith release to reach for the victory. Confidence and boldness will guide us as our faith is released. To walk in the victory that the Lord has provided means that we have to put into action James 4:9—*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.* Stability in the struggles come when we come into the presence of God and release believing prayer.