

THE TEST OF FAITH

November 16, 2008 (Men's Day)

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James 1:1-2

In the text, we have an opportunity to eavesdrop on a private conversation between a preacher and his people. The text was written by the Apostle James. He writes to tribes of people who have fallen under the reign of Roman Emperor Caesar. They ran the risk of losing livelihood, faith, and freedom. He writes to a cluster of churches that are wrestling with class issues. Some of the churches believed that the Scriptures were just historical instances and references. Others believed that we should not just be readers of the word but doers as well. Faith without works is dead. He was writing to a cluster of churches in crisis. It was time for a transformation.

The testing of your faith develops perseverance; and perseverance shall finish its work. When you face troubles of any kind, perceive it as you being in process and not under attack. Other people's experience can be the best teacher. Bless people with your testimony so they can learn from your experience. There is no time limitation on the Lord's grace and mercy. You are in a process which takes time. Problems are simply a part of life. In life, you are going to deal with difficulties. You can try to duck and avoid them but they will come. Life is difficult. We fail to acknowledge that problems are a part of a believers' life. When you got saved, you probably assumed you bought an insurance policy to save you from going through trouble.

When that season of adversity comes, it comes as a series and not a single event. You have financial problems, problems on your job, problems at home, problems with your health, etc. It all seems to happen at the same time. You feel like someone is picking on you. You try to cover it up when you aren't the only one going through trials. Some suffering is indeed senseless. However, some suffering is useful to you and God. We are only friendly towards God when we can use Him. We would rather have the things He can give rather than God Himself. This society has the mentality of, "What have you done for me lately?"

We have created a generation of women who are wimps. You drop your child off at Big Momma's house so you can go out. However, your child can't read or write. It does not help the children or our community to have parents who refuse to be involved in their children's lives. You have to provide your children with structure and supply their needs. Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials because you know all things work together for the good of those who love Him. **Romans 8:28** You might have a certain perception because you are not looking at it from the right perspective. We act ignorant about what we want to be ignorant about. We know that what is going on in our communities will continue until we get involved to make changes. We must live our lives in such a

way that we can make a difference. You don't have to try to do everything but do what God has put you there to do. There is something He wants you to do.

2 Corinthians 10:4, Philippians 4:13, Ecclesiastes 9:11 The victory has already been achieved and we are walking around as if we have been defeated. God is not trying to demote you. He wants to promote you. Suffering brings about patience. Patience brings about hope. Hope brings about love. God is love. He is merciful. You want your crisis to be a developmental crisis. A developmental crisis is when you learned from what you have gone through so that you grow from it. God keeps giving you one more chance to learn and get it right. The testing of your faith brings about perseverance. God does His best work in the dark. It is in the dark that we learn to lean on Him. You cannot grow in sunshine. You must grow in the dark. We learn to look to God. **2 Corinthians 12:9** What you are going through is only a test. God wants to transform your solitariness into solitude. When you feel powerless, remind yourself that it is only a test.

Peace.

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