

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith  
Audio Script – July 17, 2009

“I just lost my job, the wife is in the hospital, the lawn mower quit and the transmission went out in the truck – I’m so excited I can hardly stand it!” That may not be exactly what James teaches should be our reaction to trials, but it’s not far from it. Join me for today’s Templates of Truth.

The half-brother of Jesus wrote in his New Testament epistle these familiar words: *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials* (James 1:2). The word, *consider* means to hold in high regard or place a high value on. *Joy* refers to pure, complete, total and sheer joy. *Trials* are defined as the trying circumstances of life that test and threaten our character, stability and security. They can be all sorts of trials, tribulations and temptations as referenced through James’ use of the word *various*, meaning multi-colored. Put all of that together and the teaching of James is abundantly clear: whatever kind of trial or tribulation comes your way, consider it most valuable and count it as one of the greatest joys in life to experience! That’s almost crazy, but that’s Bible!

Some modern theology teaches that true followers of Christ do not suffer trials, if they are indeed obedient and walking in faith. That is not, however, what Jesus taught and experienced, or what the New Testaments represents. Christians do encounter various trials, often severe circumstances, in fact, that cause deep hurt, grievous loss and life-altering ruin. Why would God allow His people to suffer those kinds of situations? Dr. John MacArthur gives some helpful insight in his commentary of James:

- To test the strength of our faith.
- To humble us and to remind us not to let our trust in the Lord turn into presumption and spiritual satisfaction.
- To wean us from our dependence on worldly things (wealth, education, career success, honors, awards, friends, etc.).
- To call us to eternal and heavenly hope (we don’t get too comfortable here – this world is not our home).
- To reveal what we really love. Nothing and no one should be more dear to us than the Lord.
- To teach us the value of God’s blessings (His Word, care, provision, strength, promises and His salvation).
- To develop in His saints enduring strength for greater usefulness.
- To enable us to better help others in their trials.

Life’s trying circumstances drive us to our knees and compel us to trust and reliance upon God. If we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that we often get too busy to do that as much as we should. How many days have passed since you were on your knees before God, engaged in a meaningful time of intimate prayer with Him? That should be the experience of our life every day, not just when we need God’s help. But God uses the needs and challenges of our life to draw us to Him for help and deliverance. It is His desire that once we are on our knees before Him and we experience the sweet blessing of His divine care in the midst of our trial, that we

will seek His companionship at all times of life, and not just when we are in trouble. It is for our ultimate good that God allows us these times of trials and tests. He knows what they will ultimately produce in us: *the testing of your faith produces endurance...that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing* (James 1:3-4). We won't be totally perfect and complete until we have our glorified bodies in heaven, but God uses trials & tribulation to develop the kind of supernatural endurance within us that enables us to survive life until we get there. Isn't that something to shout with joy and thanksgiving about? I'm so excited, I can hardly stand it!

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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