

FAITH TESTS

Mike Taylor

<https://www.taylornotes.info/james>



LESSON 1: THE TEST OF PERSEVERANCE



Have you ever been angry at God for allowing a crisis to come into your life that you feel you didn't deserve? Have you ever felt that you couldn't be honest with others who asked you how you were doing? Have you ever been frustrated with God when you couldn't figure out what he was trying to teach you in a crisis?

HOW THIS SERIES WILL HELP YOU

This series is intended to help you respond to life's difficult times in such a way that makes you stronger and stronger.

THE BIG QUESTION

Why must our faith be tested? Doesn't God already know how strong our faith is?

WHAT IS "PERSEVERANCE"?

- Definition: Perseverance is the steadfast and determined pursuit of a goal, purpose, or course of action despite facing obstacles, challenges, setbacks, or difficulties.
- Duration: It involves maintaining effort and commitment over an extended period, even when faced with adversity or discouragement. Perseverance often requires resilience, patience, endurance, and a willingness to persist in the face of adversity, with the belief that continued effort will lead to eventual success or the attainment of the desired outcome.
- Determination: It is characterized by a strong resolve, resilience, and the ability to keep moving forward despite obstacles or setbacks.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PERSEVERANCE?

²"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

- (1:2) Joy (Grk. *chara*) → means happiness, gladness, which in this context is something experienced during trials because they lead to a deeper faith and maturity.
- (1:2, 12) Trials (Grk: *peirosmois*): means either an internal temptation to sin or an external situation that tests our faith.
- (1:3, 12) Testing (Grk: *dokimazo*): means to prove the worth of something. The word was used for sterling coinage which is genuine and unalloyed. The aim of testing is to purge us from all impurities.
- (1:4) Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Mature (Grk. *telios*) → means to be full grown. Sometimes translated as “perfect” (KJV, ESV, NAU, NKJ).
- (1:5) “Wisdom.” Wisdom is knowledge in action. True knowledge comes from reading God's Word.

⁶ *But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.*

- (1:6) But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. The “one who doubts” is probably referring to unbelievers who distrust God (see James 4:8).
- (1:6) The phrase “like a wave of the sea blown and tossed by the wind” is referring to the person who doubts God's ability or willingness to provide this wisdom and is like the restless sea moving back and forth with its endless tides never able to settle.
- (1:7) “That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. That person occasionally believes in God but fails to trust him when trials come and thus receives nothing. The use of this expression in 4:8 suggests that it refers to an unbeliever (“unstable”).
- (1:7-8) The phrase double-minded man is referring to having one's mind or soul is divided between God and the world.

9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. 10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation-- since they will pass away like a wild flower. 11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

*12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.”
(James 1:2-12 NIV)*

- (1:9) "Believers in humble situations ought to take pride in high position" ... this "high position" is the privilege of being identified with Christ.
- (1:10) "But the rich should take pride in their humiliation." Rich believers can be brought low by trials. Trials can help the rich realize that genuine happiness and contentment depend on the true riches of God's grace not earthly wealth.
- (1:11) "For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed." This picture from nature illustrates how death can quickly end the wealthy person's dependence on material possessions.
- (1:12) Perseverance (Grk. *hupomone*) → means to stand firm under pressure. It is like a weightlifter bearing up under the weight of the bar. Sometimes it is translated as "patience" (KJV, NKJ), "endurance" (NAU), or "steadfastness" (ESV, RSV). "Crown of life" best translated "the crown which is life." (MacArthur 1883)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Why must our faith be tested? Doesn't God already know how strong our faith is?
- 2) What is the purpose of faith tests?
- 3) How does perseverance help us to mature?
- 4) How can God help us get through faith trials?
- 5) What conditions does the Bible place on this?

APPLICATION: HOW TO PERSEVERE THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

- **Find strength through prayer:** You will find comfort, guidance, and strength through prayer. By bringing your concerns and burdens to the Lord, you can find peace and assurance in His presence.
- **Let scripture encourage you:** Reading and meditating on the Bible can provide encouragement and hope to you during challenging times. Verses about perseverance, trust, and God's faithfulness can especially encourage and strengthen you.
- **Keep your eye on the ball:** Keeping an eternal perspective can help you endure temporary hardships. Remember that trials help you to become more mature and more like Jesus Christ.
- **Ask God for wisdom:** He promises to give it to you if you ask for it (Jas. 1:5). This helps you to make good decisions when "under pressure" from trials.
- **Get support from Christian friends:** Connecting with fellow believers for support, encouragement, and prayer can be invaluable. Sharing your struggles with others who understand, and care can provide comfort and strength. Sometimes you just need help from others.