

“Consider It All Joy, My Brethren,
When You Encounter Various Trials”

A Biblical Theology of God’s Many Forms of Testing

Randy Leedy, August 2, 2026

We are constantly under trial!

Psalm 11:4

The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.

Words for Negative Experiences

Suffering

Affliction

Trouble

Pain

Trial

Categories of Troublesome Experience

Physical maladies

Oppression by enemies

Material deprivation

Dysfunctional relationships

Difficult workplace demands

Our own besetting sins

God's silence

Anyone want to add another?

How are We to Feel About These Things?

James 1:2-5 — ***Consider it all joy***, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

How are We to Feel About These Things?

This page captures some material supplied orally, without PowerPoint support, regarding the command to “consider it all joy when you encounter various trials.”

This does not mean that all negative emotions about trials and hardships are sinful. Jesus Himself was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

What we are commanded to do is take ourselves in hand, set ourselves down, and give ourselves a little talk (much like in Psalm 42) to persuade ourselves that, **along with** the negative emotions that trials naturally generate, trials also give us great cause to rejoice. They are evidence that God is at work in us, intent on doing us good. They are opportunities for us to demonstrate spiritual character that glorifies God. And, failing that, they become opportunities for us to recognize our need for growth and to pursue that growth, with God’s help, so that we can demonstrate better character in the future.

What should emerge from such self-persuasion based on Biblical teaching is a joy that surpasses the negative emotions that can also remain entirely appropriate in their lesser degree.

Words for Special Focus

“Affliction”

I found the 185 occurrences of “afflict*” (any word beginning with those letters) to be especially encouraging.

“Afflict*”

Psalms 119:71: It is good for me that I was afflicted,
That I may learn Your statutes.

Psalms 119:75: I know, O LORD, that Your judgments
are righteous, And that in faithfulness You have
afflicted me.

Psalms 119:50: This is my comfort in my affliction, That
Your word has revived me.

Psalms 34:19: Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

“Afflict*”

Many passages indicate that when the Lord sees someone being afflicted, He is deeply moved with compassion and acts for their deliverance.

And when He Himself afflicts His people, He also promises them relief and joy in the end.

I commend this word family for your personal study.

Words for Special Focus

“Trial”

Especially helpful for producing a joyful perspective, because it has a focus on a process of testing that will ultimately come out positive.

Words for Special Focus

“Trial”

Definition (Louw & Nida’s Greek Lexicon):

To try to learn the nature or character of someone or something by submitting such to thorough and extensive testing.

This is not punishment!

It is diagnostic.

Major Portions of Scripture

Job

- Trials might well reflect God's confidence in us, not His displeasure with us!
- God takes ultimate responsibility for our hardships (Job 2:3)
- God might never in this life explain Himself
- Our responsibility is to praise Him and trust Him
- Deliverance will ultimately come

Major Portions of Scripture

Israel's Wilderness Wanderings

- Our sufferings are a test of our faithfulness to God's covenant with us
- Disobedience only intensifies our sufferings
- Lessons:
 - Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God
 - God has the right to test us, but we had better not test Him!

Major Portions of Scripture

Psalms — A great abundance of:

- Variety of trials
- Examples of prayer while under trial
- Examples of praise while under trial
- Expressions of trust under trial
- Promises of deliverance from troubles
- Testimonies of actual deliverance from troubles

Major Portions of Scripture

Life and Ministry of Jesus

- Sinlessness only increases trouble in a sinful world
- Our Savior fully shares our experience
- His deliverance guarantees ours: we are in Him
- Suffering in the will of God produces good fruit

Major Portions of Scripture

Life and Ministry of Paul

- Boldness with the gospel brings rejection
- Praise while in pain can unlock God's power
- Our sufferings are an extension of Christ's sufferings
- Our sufferings will be rewarded with a share in Christ's glory
- Our sufferings continue to produce good fruit

Major Portions of Scripture

1 Peter

Let's leave this one for Pastor Newton!

A Few Other Noteworthy Verses

Lam. 3:32-33

For if He causes grief,
Then He will have compassion
According to His abundant lovingkindness.
For He does not afflict willingly
Or grieve the sons of men.

A Few Other Noteworthy Verses

1Cor. 12:26

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. . . .

A Few Other Noteworthy Verses

2Cor. 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

A Few Other Noteworthy Verses

2Cor. 4:17

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison

A Few Other Noteworthy Verses

Acts 5:41

So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.

Isaiah 43:1-4

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, **I will be with you**; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; . . . **you are precious in My sight, . . . and I love you**

So, my brothers, by God's grace, can we truly do this?

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials (James 1:2).

Not just moderate our negativism a little bit,

But truly *rejoice!*

Not that we ***seek*** to suffer!

That would be unnatural and would go beyond Scripture.

But can we ***accept*** the suffering that God providentially appoints for us with genuine joy that He sees us, knows us, loves us in spite of everything He knows about us, cares for us as His own treasured possession, and intends for us only His very best?

How could we *not* be joyful
in yielding ourselves to the
wise hand of a God who is
so great and so good?