

## WHEN THE PRESSURE RISES

James 1:1-4

**How do we respond when the pressure rises?**

...times are hard; not sure what to expect tomorrow?

**Persecuted church:** N. Korea, India, Sudan, Nigeria

More than 200M; 70 countries face threat of persecution.

Biblical examples of people suffering seem “Long ago & far away!” *Not so long ago! Not so far away!*

*How do we respond in hard times—**When pressure rises***

**Jim & Marie:** Devoted selves to building what they had: good income, nice home in the country, 2 fine young sons. 1 night, their older son killed in tragic accident

Yr later Jim lost his job. He commented: “I’ve lost my son & lost my job, & *I’ve never been happier!*”

Is there difference in way we face hard times?

**How do we deal with a <sup>P</sup>andemic?** – Many dying

People isolated; businesses closed; income cut off;

Bottom dropping out of retirement funds;

What’s next? What will happen 2-3 weeks from now?

Uncertainty; FEAR!; Will **WE** get it?!! kids/grandkids?

**How do we respond to uncertainty of hard times?**

**James writes to help us face such times.**

We should become familiar with biblical books written to prepare us for hard times: Jas, Pt, Hb, Phl, Job, Dn, Rv.

**God wants us to know how to live under pressure!**

James, written to believers, 10-20 yrs after Jesus’ death

**Scattered by Jewish persecution**

–suffering for faith > –expelled from synagogue.

–cut off from family –lost jobs; business boycotted

Normal response: **Pressures of life produce self-centered interest in self-preservation!**

We watch out for selves; not into helping one another.

James, pastor at Jerusalem, feels responsibility toward those who’re cut off from his church.

Like **Itinerant pastor** from Chimal. visited me in ‘82-83

**James shows how God's people should live in times of pressure & affliction**

American church (our church) needs theology of **how to live in a “pressure cooker”!**

**James issues a call to faith under pressure.**

**NOT call to theoretical (doctrinal) faith!**

**Call to LIVING faith– faith that works.**

**LIVING FAITH PRODUCES FRUIT,  
EVEN UNDER PRESSURE.**

**Greeting 1:1** Introduces self; describes readers.

“James, a servant of God & of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:

**LIVING FAITH ENDURES AFFLICTION 2-12**

Addressed to people who, like Job, find selves over-helmed by all kinds of trials.

Sometimes we’re “*bombarded*” by problems of *all colors*,  
*shapes and sizes—coming from all directions!*

**Job** tries to figure it out; deals with “**why**” of suffering.

**James** deals with **how to live** in affliction.

### **3 principles help us endure under pressure:**

**Principle of joyful attitude 1:2** “*Consider it pure joy, my brothers whenever you face trials of many kinds*”

When facing “multi-faceted” afflictions—1 after another...

1<sup>st</sup> aid to victory in affliction: “**Count it all joy!**”

What is this? ... wacko counsel from a lunatic pastor?

Doesn't say “accept it!” “Might as well be resigned to it!”

NOT— “Hay que tener una santa resignacion!”

=> “**Count it all joy!**”

**NOT** because we're **looking for trouble**.

**NOT** because we **enjoy pain**—

**NOT** because we **deny reality**

We rejoice under pressure, because we understand **God's good purpose** for us.

**Is this realistic? How can we rejoice under pressure?**

Shall we **celebrate** when our world's coming apart?

Can I be glad when I'm seriously ill?

In financial crisis, can we rejoice?!!

If pressure weighs on me day after day, is it time for **joy**?!

How about a family crisis—a broken marriage; when we lose a loved one—is that included?

**How can we REJOICE under such pressure?!!**

Doesn't say “consider it joy **IF** you face trials!

He *assumes* struggle is part of life,

esp. among people who seek to live godly lives.

We **rejoice** in affliction because we understand **God's good purpose** for our life.

**2. Principle of God's perspective 3-4** “*Because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature & complete, not lacking anything.*”

Perspective: our problems are designed to lead to maturity

**PRESSURE=>PERSEVERANCE=>PERFECTION**

God sends pressure to produce **endurance**

Pictures person bearing up under heavy load, determined to carry it instead of trying to escape.

Endurance produces maturity (“perfection”)

Perseverance/endurance isn't the end in itself!

It's a **lifestyle that leads to maturity!**

We accept pressure because we know Who sent it.

God who loves us seeks to perfect us.

Heat + pressure => produce a diamond.

=> **pressure of life makes US into God's treasure!**

**Pressure is process God uses**

**to enable us to become all he wants us to be**

Parents experience this with children.

When they begin to grow, they face hard times.

Another child makes fun of them or picks on them.  
 We want to jump in and set the other child straight.  
 But if we jump in, our children won't develop  
 To develop, kids have to learn to handle pressure!

**Only way to become all God wants us to be: endure the pressure!**

*That's why we can rejoice when pressure rises!*

God doesn't send trials to **destroy us**

He sends them to **transform us** into all He wants us to be

**Oswald Sanders** cites anonymous author:

When God wants to drill a man,

& thrill a man, & skill a man,

When God wants to mold a man to play the noblest part,

When He yearns with all His heart to create so great

& bold a man that all the world shall be amazed,

Watch His methods! Watch His ways!

How He ruthlessly perfects whom He royally elects!

How He hammers him & hurts him, & with mighty blows converts him into trial shapes of clay  
 which only God understands;

while his tortured heart is crying

& he lifts beseeching hands!

How He bends—but never breaks

—when his good He undertakes;

How He uses whom He chooses

& with every purpose fuses him;

By every act induces him to try His splendor out.

**GOD KNOWS WHAT HE'S ABOUT!**

**3.principle of patient endurance 4** "Persever-

*ance must finish its work so that you may be mature & complete, not lacking anything."*

We seek quickest way out from under pressure.

—like steam in pressure cooker=>"Let me out of here!"

**God wants trial to continue**

**until we receive full benefit!**

So we'll be complete, not lacking anything.

Different philosophies of eating: I eat to get fed!—get it over with! <=> Helen's attitude: *savoring* meal

**If we want to "lack nothing," we have to "savor it!"**

God wants to **keep** us in the pressure cooker—it's *in* the pressure cooker God perfects what He's preparing!

**So, how should WE react to the pressure?**

**When people of faith face pressures of life,...**

**1. We can have joy in midst of pressure 1:2**

**2. We don't focus on our problems,**

**but on God's purposes 1:3-4**

**3. We're willing to endure pressure**

**to see God's work completed in us. 1:4**

**Corrie Ten Boom** "*In order to feel the worth of the anchor, we need to feel the stress of the storm!*"

**A.W. Tozer:** “Keep a Christian from entering the church sanctuary & you have not in the least bit hindered his wor-ship. We carry our sanctuary with us. We never leave it.”

***For people who set our heart on becoming like Christ, this is cause for JOY!***