

DOES THE BIBLE REALLY SAY...

“God Won’t Give You More Than You Can Handle”? “Maturity Through Life’s Challenges” May 17, 2020

“Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials.” James 1:2

The Inevitable

Whether we like it or not, maturity comes through the experience of good and bad. Can you name a single mature Christian who hasn’t walked through valleys of struggle in addition to the mountain peaks of joy? I doubt it. Both are inevitably tied to maturity.

With that reality in mind, read the wisdom from James 1:2-12.

- On this path of a mature life of faith, what does God wisely tell us to expect to experience?
- What trials have you experienced that distinctly shaped your faith? (If in a group, take some time to share more.)

The Power of Testing

James shares a defining distinction (see 1:13).

- Where does temptation come from? Who is the source of temptation in our lives? Explore James 1:14-15, 1 John 2:16, and Matthew 4:1-11.

While temptation is not of God, testing consistently is. It is often not desired (who really likes being tested?), yet the outcome we want cannot appear without the trial. Consider the tangible wisdom of 1 Peter 1:5-7.

- How do you distinguish testing from temptation? What striking characteristics stand out related to God’s purposes around testing us?
- In those trials you identified already, or others that come to mind, how was ‘testing’ a part of the experience?

Focused Endurance

In the end, we might love the comfort this saying brings us. Yet in faith, we know that God does in fact give us more than we can handle on our own. He doesn’t do so recklessly and nonchalantly, but He allows these experiences to shape and mold us. All with His presence.

Let’s find encouragement in those who have gone before us. Visit Hebrews 11.

- What trials and challenges did each ‘faith great’ face as part of their refining process?
- How do you think they persevered these incredibly circumstances?

Their living faith is a great example for each of us. Let’s wrap up with Hebrews 12:1-2.

- Consider times when you had unswerving focus on Jesus. Also consider times when your focus wandered. How did your experience differ?
- Where is God stretching and maturing your faith right now? Are your eyes focused on Jesus, the One who gave it all for you?