

## Faith That Works

It is put to the test

9/9/07



Text: James 1:1-18

Our first theme is that a “FAITH THAT WORKS” is PUT TO THE TEST. We’re talking...TRIALS.

**1. They are U** – v.2 “<sup>2</sup>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds...”

**2. They are Designed to Thicken,**

**M** **Our Faith** – v.3-4 “<sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

There are times when we achieve victory and other moments when we stumble.

Know two things:

- 1)
- 2)

**3. They Cause Us to D** **Our**  
**D** **on God** – v.5-

**8** “<sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. <sup>6</sup>But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup>he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

My encouragement to you here is again two-fold:

- 1)
- 2)

**4. They Strip Away T**

**Footers** – v.9-12 “<sup>9</sup>Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, <sup>10</sup>and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. <sup>11</sup>For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. <sup>12</sup>Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.”

**5. They are to be Distinguished from T**

– v.13-15 “<sup>13</sup>Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. <sup>14</sup>But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. <sup>15</sup>Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”

**CLOSING WORD –**

**Never Allow Trials to Question God’s Goodness** – v.16-18

“<sup>16</sup>Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. <sup>17</sup>Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. <sup>18</sup>Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

Psalms 73:26 – “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION THOTS

Name a couple of trials (past, present) in your life....

Can you recall a time when a trial that originally seemed impossible to endure ultimately grew and matured you, so that you are now grateful you faced that trial? Explain...

How can a person consider trials a reason for joy? (Feed on Romans 8:31-39).

How do you become *steadfast* (v.3, 12) and yet remain supple/tender amidst trials?

Define “maturity.”

*“My life is but a weaving,  
Between my Lord and me;  
I cannot choose the colors.  
He worketh steadily.  
Ofttimes He weaveth sorrow  
And I in foolish pride,  
Forget He sees the upper  
And I the under side.  
Not till the loom is silent  
And the shuttles cease to fly,  
Shall God unroll the canvas  
And explain the reason why,  
The dark threads are as needful  
In the Weaver’s skillful hand,  
As the threads of gold and silver,  
In the pattern He has planned.”*

With James’ counsel and this poem in mind.... When a non-Christian friend turns to you for comfort amid a trial, how can you sensitively point him/her to Christ?

*“The common feature of the faith that escapes suffering and the faith that endures trials and suffering is this: both of them involve believing that God Himself is better than what life can give to you now, and better than what death can take from you later.” Agree/Disagree? Why?*

Name some biblical examples (or even those down through the ages) who *stood the test* (v.12)?

What might be a temporal footer (point #4) you need to remove in favor of the “eternal footer” (who is Christ Jesus)?

What’s the difference between a workless faith and a faith that works?

Recommended reads:

Larry Crabb – *The Papa Prayer*

Ravi Zacharias – *The Grand Weaver*

John Piper – *Don’t Waste Your Life* (esp. chapter 5 on “risk”)