

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Oh, Happy Day!

Bill Brinkworth

James, who many believe to be the brother of Jesus, gives practical advice in James 1. One of the oft-experienced situations, especially noticed by believers, is discussed here. The “positive” side of going through challenges is examined (James 1:2-6).

Here James identifies the difficulties, trials, and enticements all face as “divers temptations.” Although most initially shudder at even the thought of going through different problems, James exposes what can positively be gained by going through our individual “valleys.” Instead of agreeing how terrible it is to have problems, James encourages Christians to, “... count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;” (James 1:2).

How could anyone be joyful when facing joblessness, heartaches, financial problems, family problems, or the thousands of difficulties we all face in our lifetime? James tells us we can be “joyful” because:

- The trying of our faith during the hard times builds our patience (James 1:3). Since there usually is not much we can do but wait until the trial passes, we learn to patiently wait and trust on the Lord during those hard times.
- The practical lessons on patience we learn build a good Christian into a “tested” believer. Most of us have some person in our life that we have observed as more spiritual than ourselves. We are often amazed at how cool, calm, and patient they are when they face difficulties. They did not wake up one morning and decide to be patient for the rest of their lives. They got that way because they went through hard times, got close to God, and saw that His help was sufficient to deliver and guide them. The next time they faced an unfavorable situation, they remembered all He had done in the past and did not get frazzled. Their learned patience (James 1:4) built their character and trust in the Lord.
- When we are going through a “temptation,” we go to Lord in prayer more than usual. In doing so, we get closer to the Lord, see how he supplies wisdom as to how to handle our trial (James 1:5), and have the potential to have our faith increased.

Trials and tribulations are not something anyone desires to go through, but after going through many of them, and drawing close to God during those times, we can learn that they are not so bad. The valley of “temptation” can be joyous, as our God guides us through the treacherous pathways.

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” *1 Corinthians 10:13*

Avoid Temptation

Charles Spurgeon

What settings are you in when you fall? Avoid them. What props do you have that support your sin? Eliminate them. What people are you usually with? Avoid them.

There are two equally damning lies Satan also wants us to believe:

1. Just once won't hurt.
2. Now that you have ruined your life, you are beyond God's use, and you might as well enjoy sinning.

Learn to say no. It will be of more use to you than to be able to read Latin.

“No one can ask honestly or hopefully to be delivered from temptation unless he has himself honestly and firmly determined to do the best he can to keep out of it.” — *Ruskin*

There's a Battle Raging

Bill Brinkworth

Finishing his letter to the Ephesians in Ephesians 6, Paul reminds them of one crucial fact that they and we should never forget. We need to remember that there is a daily spiritual battle going on. We cannot see the enemy, or who the struggle is against, but it constantly rages.

The battle may not be between people that we think are the reason for our conflicts. Its root may not be with those we do not get along with or those who seem to be making our lives miserable. We often struggle “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

A “principality” is a supreme power and can be the territory of a prince. Since Satan is the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2) and is the author of much spiritual wickedness, it is he that is often the instigator of many of the troubles we face. With this in mind, we need to remember our battle is not against our parents, a person we work with, our neighbor, or someone in the church. Our conflict often originates spiritually, and it can be stirred up by satanic forces.

Because it is a real battle that we as Christians fight almost daily, we need to protect ourselves the way God says. Our protection is not locking ourselves in our room and keeping away from everyone, and it is not by being nasty to those that are not treating us right. Since the battle is spiritual, we need to protect ourselves spiritually. This is done by:

- Being filled with the truth from the Word of God. It is the only thing that will shed real light on where the battle is, and what it is actually about (Eph. 6:14). One cannot be full if one does not read it!
- Purpose in your heart to live righteously, no matter what happens in your life (Eph. 6:14).
- Walk in the way the Gospel commands, not altering your direction just because everyone else is walking in the opposite direction (Eph. 6:15).
- Let faith and trust in what the Word of God says lead you and protect you from what you may think will happen (Eph. 6:16).
- You have a new mind in Christ when you are saved (I Cor. 2:16). Let holy thinking and decision making guide you (Eph. 6:17).
- All the above are spiritual “armors.” One defensive weapon in a Christian’s arsenal is their knowledge and use of the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). Obedience and the following of God’s commandments, recorded in its pages, will be how we are delivered from spiritual challenges and battles.
- The other defensive weapon a Christian has is his ability to reach the throne room of Heaven in prayer. Since it is a spiritual battle, it often takes our spiritual Father to fight and get involved in our dilemmas (Eph. 6:18).

There is a daily spiritual battle going on. Too many have been wounded and are out of service for the Lord because they never armored-up for the spiritual war that is all around them. God knows best as to how we can survive and win, no matter what is happening around us. The only way to win is to put on our spiritual armor daily.

“When you are driven to your knees by the battle, pray there!”

Too Much Bridle

Wermullerus, 1551

When a horse-breaker giveth a lusty young horse too much bridle, it is wild and wanton, and goeth not well. In a slippery place, the animal may fall headlong and hurt himself.

If our Creator should give us too much liberty, we may soon wax wild as that young horse. It might happen that we should destroy ourselves. God giveth us a sharp bit in our mouths, and helpeth us to bridle our flesh, that our precious soul perishes not.

As the horse-trainer controls his horses with a whip, and striketh them sharply when they do not go forward, yet he spareth them also that he may enjoy them for a longer amount of time. Even so, God striketh us when we do not right, and yet spareth us, and will not make an end of us. His trials are meant to help us!

“The difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is how you use them.”