

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

*James 1:2-4 (NIV)*

## Pure Joy

I don't know about that. **You don't know about what?** I'm not sure how to have pure joy when I'm going through trials. **Why is that?** I'm not sure I can or even want to have pure joy when I go through trials. You should know, I am no fan of trials. I don't like trials. I like to avoid trials. I have no interest in going through trials. I do my best to leave a trial as soon as possible. **Do you think I want you to be joyful for your trials?** It sounds like it to me. **Then you better listen a little more carefully.** How so? **There is a huge difference between being joyful in and through a trial and being joyful for a trial.** Can you explain that to me? **Yes, I can.**

Let me ask you a few questions. I'm listening. **Have you drawn closer to me as you have gone through trials? Have you felt my nearness as you have gone through trials? Has your life with me grown more intimate as you have held on to me through trials? Has your faith in me grown stronger as you have gone through trials? Have I strengthened you and made you able to persevere as you have gone through trials? Have you learned to call out to me and ask me for help as you have gone through trials? Have I heard and answered your prayers as you have gone through trials? Have I generously given you wisdom as you have gone through trials?** Yes, you have done all these things in and for me as I have gone through trials. **Are you thankful for all that I have done in and for you as you have gone through trials?** Yes, I am thankful. Yes, I am grateful. **Would you even say that you are joyful for what I have done in and for you as you have gone through trials?** Without, a doubt, I have joy in my heart because of all that you have done in and for me as I have gone through trials. **Remember that. Have this joy in you as you go through trials.** Now, I understand. **That's good.**

One more question. What's that? **If you could, would you trade all that I have done in and for you through trials for never having any trials in the first place?** Not, for a second. **Then you can have joy and give thanks in the midst of trials because you know that I will be continuing my good work in you.** Yes, I can. Yes, I will. **That is very good.**

*Lord, I am no fan of trials. I have had a negative attitude toward them. Yet, I know that you can and do use trials for good in my life. Help me to persevere and grow stronger in my faith as I go through trials. Help me to rely on you for all I need in every trial. Amen*

