

Day 1

## Consider it Joy

Read James 1

Father, Creator of heaven and earth, I praise you because you are my constant – the one thing in my life that will never change. Thank you for every good and perfect gift in my life, for all you are and all you do. You are worthy of my highest praise.

Today, when troubles come my way, help me joyfully choose to see them as opportunities for growth. Help me to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. Give me the courage to hear your word and do what it says. Amen.

Day 2

## This is a Test

**“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4 NIV**

While walking through the North Dakota State Capitol building recently, I was struck by the magnificence of its building materials. The spacious hallways and grand staircases are adorned floor to ceiling with polished stone and bronze accents. Important buildings like the “Skyscraper on the Prairie” are so often constructed using timeless, natural elements such as marble, granite, bronze, and brick. It is amazing to think that something so extraordinary began as something very ordinary.

The clay and rock used to make bricks, for instance, are simple ingredients found in abundance on planet earth. However, when combined and fired in a kiln at temperatures up to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit, the substance fuses together into something that has a natural aesthetic beauty, incredible strength and longevity, and requires little to no maintenance.

Likewise, our Creator takes something simple – ordinary people with ordinary faith. He desires to develop us through testing and trial, into a finished and refined work, not lacking anything. This process at times will include impossible pressure. James encourages us to face these trials, when they come, with great joy. This work will strengthen our faith, reveal our capabilities and produce lasting endurance to withstand the wear and tear of life.

Dear Father, thank you for the challenges in my life that are testing my faith. Give me strength today to embrace these opportunities with joy, as you grow my ordinary faith in extraordinary ways.

Day 3

## Faith-Life Preserver

**“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.” James 1:5-6 NIV**

1. What are the area(s) of your life for which you need wisdom today? List them below and be as specific as possible.



2. The word “overwhelm” originates from the Middle English word meaning “to capsize” or “overturn a vessel.” Prayerfully consider the list above and ask God for wisdom. Affirm your full faith in God alone and do not waver or allow unbelief to capsize your faith.

O Merciful God, Take full possession of my heart; raise there Your throne and command there as You do in heaven. Being created by You, let me live to You; being created for You, let me ever act for Your glory; being redeemed by You, let me render to You what is Yours and let my spirit ever cleave to You alone. -John Wesley

Day 4

## When You Are Tempted

**“God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.” James 1:12-15 NLT**

Everyone is tempted. Temptation in and of itself is not sinful. The Word tells us that temptation left unchecked gives birth to sinful actions. Rather than looking to place the blame on someone else or worse on God in these times of temptation, we must seek that which is true. In his book, *The Great Exchange*, Jerry Bridges cautions "Don't believe everything you think. You cannot be trusted to tell yourself the truth. Stay in the Word."

Enduring temptation today might look like a deeper time in the Word, time in prayer or meditation, or seeking the help and accountability of a trusted friend to eradicate temptation before it is fully grown.

Lord, I choose to trust in your life-giving name to overcome the temptations of this day. I confess that too often I allow my own desires to drag me farther from you. You alone are my triumph. Amen.

For deeper study:

1 Timothy 2:1-3, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 12:1-3, Psalm 118

Day 5

## The Gift that Keeps on Giving

**“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like the shifting shadows.” James 1:17 NIV**

On May 19, a Texas woman brought a little more laughter into the world with the record-breaking video that has come to be known as “Chewbacca Mom.” In the video, Candace Payne could barely contain her excitement as she unboxed and demonstrated a toy mask of the beloved Star Wars character Chewbacca, a birthday gift she’d purchased for herself. When worn, the bear-like mask produces guttural growls that Candace found hilarious. In the moments that followed, the Chewbacca mama laughed hysterically, showing the world why this present brought her so much joy. Millions of views later, the world shares in her simple, contagious joy.

James’ reminder that every good and perfect thing in our life is from the Lord comes with a unique privilege. Because of his generosity, we have a responsibility to share those gifts with others. Today may we demonstrate, with infectious joy, the light and love inside of us.

Thank you, immutable God, for the good gifts in our lives. Help me to joyfully share your goodness and grace with others today in a way that will point others to the cross.

