

- 1) Let's jump back into where we were last time and continue looking at the progression – trials to endurance to completeness ...

James 1:2–4 (NASB 2020)

The Testing of Your Faith

² Consider it all joy, my brothers *and sisters*, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- 2) As we discussed last time, James uses a ***progression*** technique here.
- 3) In this case, it is a building progression:
- 4) **Encounter** trials → **Testing** of faith → **Produces** (builds) endurance → **Completes** in perfection and lacking in nothing.
- 5) Here, the trials are trials that are severe enough to become a “testing of your faith.”

We then asked the question; how would we recognize one of these trials?

- 6) By definition, it tests your faith.
- 7) In most cases, this rules out many of the minor inconveniences of life – they really do not test our faith.
- 8) Then we got to the serious discussion – what faith is James talking about?
- 9) I read the comment from Bruce Barton:

We cannot really know our own depth [*of faith*] until we see how we react under pressure.⁴

- 10) I think everyone agreed with that statement -

Anyone change their mind?

- 11) We ended with a question regarding a quote I ran across.

Faith is not believing that God can – it is believing that God WILL!!

- 12) We had some discussion on this and one quote I made I wanted to confirm.

Matthew 21:21–22 (NASB 2020)

²¹ And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what *was done* to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will happen. ²² And whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive it all.”

- 13) So, at least in this instance, it appears that Jesus is telling the disciples “faith and not doubting” is all it takes.
- 14) Does this make God into a Santa Clause?

⁴ Bruce B. Barton, David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson, [*James*](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), 7.

James – Faith Demonstrated – 2025

- 15) I would think additionally that though not stated, God must want to cast the mountain into the sea.
- 16) This seems to indicate the believing that “it is believing that God WILL” is the best definition.
- 17) All that being said, I think what we were saying regarding God’s will is that what we ask for has to align with what He wants.
- a) It cannot be frivolous or self-serving or used to try to test God.
- 18) Now, we may be able to change His mind but, it is still up to Him in the end.
- 19) But we still need to get back to the original question...

How do we recognize one of these trials that tests our faith?

Does that really mean we doubt what we believe or, perhaps does it mean we doubt the ability of God to handle the trial?

- 20) Perhaps it boils down to any trial that makes me doubt if God is in control – regardless of the outcome being what I want or not.
- 21) So, let’s take a quick minute to look at the rest of the words of James’ progression to make sure what we understand what we are dealing with.
- 22) **Encounter** trials → **Testing** of faith → **Produces** (builds) endurance → **Completes** in perfection and lacking in nothing.
- 23) I think we have the trials and the testing of faith part down, so what about producing ENDURANCE...

The question is what is the endurance that the trials and the “testing of your faith builds”?

- a) BDAG – ENDURANCE = The capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty.
- i) In other words, patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance⁵
- 24) This is not just passively accepting the trial and waiting until it is over.
- 25) Instead, it is actively standing on our feet, grabbing God’s hand, and trusting Him actively to bring us through to the end.
- 26) Finally, we get to the **completeness, perfection, and lacking in nothing**.
- 27) In breaking this down, we must look at what James means (or does NOT mean) by these words. Here...
- 28) Completeness – does **not mean** we are all done with trials.
- 29) Perfection – has **nothing to do** with being perfect and not sinning.
- a) We are never promised perfection in this life.
- 30) Lacking in nothing – does **not mean** we have everything we ever wanted or need.

⁵ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1039.

James – Faith Demonstrated – 2025

- 31) Instead, completeness and perfection in handling trials is the final outcome of the particular trial we are experiencing.
- 32) As we progress, we attain those basic life skills in these trials that we, with God's help, can use.
- a) We use them to handle the next trial and the next and in that way we build to completeness.
- 33) Another comment Bruce Barton sums this up very well:
- It is like being proven in practice so you will be prepared for tougher competition.³

- 1) In these next verses, James begins talking about wisdom.
- 2) Wisdom is not the idea of "knowledge" or in biblical times as some thought, the Stoic notion of "science."
- 3) In fact, in the Hebrew mind, it is **the** concept of knowing how to conduct life in conformity with God's Law – it is practical, not theoretical.
- 4) I love chapters 2 and 3 of Proverbs.
- a) It is a treatise on the values and reasons we should pursue wisdom.
- b) Here are the first few verses of chapter 2...

Proverbs 2:1–7 (NASB 2020)

The Pursuit of Wisdom Brings Security

- ¹ My son, if you will receive my words
And treasure my commandments within you,
- ² Make your ear attentive to wisdom;
Incline your heart to understanding.
- ³ For if you cry out for insight,
And raise your voice for understanding;
- ⁴ If you seek her as silver
And search for her as for hidden treasures;
- ⁵ Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,
And discover the knowledge of God.
- ⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom;
From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding.
- ⁷ He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
He is a shield to those who walk in integrity
- 5) As one reads further, we see the rewards of having God given wisdom and what happens if we seek a different way of living.
- a) If you have a chance it would be great to read that whole section as you think about what we are discussing.
- 6) A little bible trivia...

Who was the most famous person in the OT who asked for wisdom?

2 Chronicles 1:9–12 (NASB 2020)

James – Faith Demonstrated – 2025

⁹ Now, Lord God, Your promise to my father David is fulfilled, for You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. ¹⁰ Now give me wisdom and knowledge, so that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of Yours?” ¹¹ Then God said to Solomon, “Because this was in your heart, and you did not ask for riches, wealth, or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor did you even ask for long life, but you asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge so that you may rule My people over whom I have made you king, ¹² wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. I will also give you riches, wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed, nor will those who will come after you.”

- 7) If we apply our definition of wisdom to Solomon, I think we can see that he had that wisdom as demonstrated even in what he asked for.
- 8) God found his request pleasing to say the least.
- 9) So, let's look at these next verses ...

James 1:5–8 (NASB 2020)

⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- 10) It is funny that James finished that last passage with “lacking in nothing” and begins in this passage looking at something we might be lacking – **wisdom**.
- 11) If I lack wisdom, and if we are correct in looking at it from the Hebrew mindset then this speaks to a principle we discussed in our Philippiian study as well ...

Philippians 2:12b–13 (NASB 2020)

... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for *His* good pleasure.

- 12) As you hopefully recall, working out our own salvation is actually figuring out how to live our lives in a saved condition.
 - a) In other words – living the way God wants us to.
- 13) Given what we said a moment ago ...

In the Hebrew mind, wisdom is the concept of knowing how to conduct life in conformity with God's Law.

How do the acquiring of wisdom and the working out our own salvation fit together?

- 14) For me, it is a really important for us to have this deep desire.
- 15) This wisdom is at the heart of working out our salvation by what we have discussed before.
- 16) However, James throws a caveat into the mix ...

James – Faith Demonstrated – 2025

⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

17) So, we are back to the idea of faith defined as believing that God WILL!

18) I find what James says about those who do doubt very disturbing.

19) If doubting causes us not to receive anything – that is rather serious.

20) There are some varying opinions on what James is talking about with the word “doubting.”

- a) Some think it is doubting that God can or will do what we ask.
- b) Others think it is a more serious doubting – a vacillation between believing in self and God.
 - i) In context and in the sense of asking for wisdom, I have to say it is not doubting that God can **but** will provide what we are asking.

21) But in the bigger picture, the Hebrew writer actually encompasses both principles...

Hebrews 11:6 (NASB 2020)

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and *that* He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him.

22) In the last verse of this passage, James says the doubter is “a double-minded man”

- a) *Dipsychos* (DI PSY COS) which literally means “double-souled” is a word that James used first in writings.
 - i) Meaning simply that it is not found in scripture or in contemporary Greek literature before this letter.
 - ii) It is, however, used by others after James’ use – especially the church fathers when they refer to his works.

23) Looking at all that we have just discussed

So, let’s talk about this some.

Is James telling us that if we doubt at all we might as well not pray or is there some wiggle room in his statement?