

**Lesson 2**  
**James 1:2-12**  
**From Trouble to Triumph**

**Memory verse:** “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.” Romans 15:4 (NIV)

G.K. Chesterton said, “I believe in getting into hot water. I think it keeps you clean.” And there is, to be sure, the need in our lives for a testing to see if, in fact, we are genuine; and sometimes there is no better test than hot water, or the water of sorrows and trials. How one handles trouble is an indication of their faith, and trouble coming into your life and my life will speak to the reality of our faith, or the lack of it. Therefore, in the purpose of James, which is to give us tests of living faith, the first thing he wants to talk about is the test of trials, for trials will reveal whether your faith is living faith or dead faith, whether it’s genuine faith or imitation faith, whether it is saving faith or non-saving faith.

It’s a very natural starting point, for the simple reason that everybody who lives in the world lives through trials. In fact, we are fallen creatures, we are sinful creatures, we live in the midst of a fallen and sinful society, and as a result of that we experience constant trouble. In fact, it just seems like it never goes very far away, if it goes away at all. Job put it this way; in chapter 5, verse 7, he said, “Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.” It’s as if to say man’s fallen nature is a fire that spits up sparks. The natural consequence of the fire of man’s fallen nature is trouble. In fact, in Job 14:1, he said, “Man that is born of a woman” – and that includes all of us, obviously – “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.”

In Psalm 22:11, David said, “Be not far from me” – crying out to God – “Be not far from me, for trouble is near me.” In Isaiah 8:22, God speaks through Isaiah of His judgment in the world that left men, quote: “To look unto the earth and find only trouble.” And no doubt you can remember, if you’ve read that wonderful insight into human wisdom that we know as the book of Ecclesiastes, these familiar words in chapter 2, “Therefore I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me, for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” And then verse 23, “For all his days are sorrows and his travail grief; yea, his heart takes not rest in the night.” Trouble, trouble, trouble, vanity – day and night, life seems but trouble, and trouble alone.

Frankly, even for Christians, even for those of us who are the children of God, there’s a constant kind of facing of trouble, a constant facing of trial in a very troubled world. And even when we sort of get our own little world under control, somebody invades it and messes it up, inevitably, and you will know that if you’ve had a group of kids over to your house lately. No matter how you protect your insulated little world, they have a way of doing damage to it. And they are but a small illustration of how life is. We do everything we can to protect ourselves, to get the perfect peace and comfort, but inevitably, trouble comes either from outside or from inside.

Perhaps you have seen the bumper sticker that reads, “When life hands you lemons, make lemonade!” It is easier to smile at that statement than to practice it, but the basic philosophy is sound. In fact, it is biblical. Throughout the Bible are people who turned defeat into victory and trial into triumph. Instead of being victims, they became victors.

Things to learn: 1) Joyful Attitude and Understanding 2) A Surrendered Will and Believing Heart 3) Encouragement in Trials

**Discussion Questions:**

1) What do we need to know from verses 2 and 3 when faced with trials or testings as believers in Christ, our Lord and Saviour?

2) Discuss the important points that James in this epistle (found in verses 4 to 12) for believers so that they can be victorious in trials.

3) How could you use this passage as an encouragement when trials come your way?