



Anchored in Faith, Forged in Trial, and Relevant Today

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” (James 1:1-5)

A Call to Joy in the Fire of Trial

James, the brother of our Lord, opens his epistle with a thunderbolt of divine wisdom that reverberates through the ages: “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” This is no passive suggestion but a bold, countercultural command to embrace trials with a heart full of faith. To the early Christians scattered abroad, facing persecution and uncertainty, James offered not sympathy but a clarion call to see trials as divine tools, forging patience and character. This same spirit of resilient faith echoed in the founding of America and remains a beacon for us today.

Historical Resonance: The Founding of America

When we cast our eyes back to the birth of the United States, we see a nation forged in the crucible of trial. The Pilgrims, landing at Plymouth in 1620, faced “divers temptations” of their own—bitter winters, starvation, and the uncertainty of a new world. Yet, like James’ audience, they counted it joy, sustained by their faith in God’s providence. William Bradford, governor of Plymouth Colony, wrote in *Of Plymouth Plantation* that they relied on divine guidance, trusting that God would supply wisdom for their lack. Their perseverance laid the spiritual and moral foundation for a nation built on liberty and trust in divine sovereignty.

Consider, too, the Founding Fathers during the American Revolution. Men like George Washington and John Adams faced impossible odds—outmanned, outgunned, and beset by



internal division. Yet they leaned on the wisdom James speaks of, seeking God’s guidance in crafting a Constitution that would endure. Washington himself, in his 1789 Thanksgiving Proclamation, called the nation to gratitude for God’s provision, echoing James’ assurance that God “giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.” Their trials produced patience, and their patience birthed a nation that, though imperfect, sought to reflect principles of justice, freedom, and reliance on divine wisdom.

Character Principles for Today

James’ words are not relics of a bygone era but a living exhortation for us in 2025. The trials we face—cultural division, personal struggles, or global uncertainties—are opportunities to cultivate the character God desires. Here are three principles from James 1:1-5 that resonate as powerfully today as they did in the first century or the founding of America:

1. **Joyful Endurance in Trials:** James’ call to “count it all joy” is a radical act of faith. Today, we face temptations to despair or division, whether from political polarization or personal setbacks. But like the Pilgrims enduring their first winter or Washington at Valley Forge, we must see trials as refining fire, shaping us into people of patience and resilience. Choose joy, not because the trial is pleasant, but because God is working through it to make us “perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”
2. **Patience as a Path to Maturity:** Patience is not passivity but an active trust in God’s timing. The “perfect work” of patience James describes is a call to steadfastness, a virtue that defined America’s founders as they labored through years of war and debate to establish a nation. Today, we need this same patience—to listen rather than lash out, to build rather than tear down, to trust God’s plan amidst chaos. Patience molds us into men and women who reflect Christ’s character, steady in a world that sways with every wind.
3. **Seeking Wisdom with Confidence:** James’ promise that God gives wisdom generously to those who ask is a lifeline for our time. The founders sought divine wisdom to navigate uncharted waters; we, too, must seek God’s guidance in a world of competing voices and moral ambiguity. Whether facing personal decisions or societal challenges, we can



approach God boldly, knowing He does not scold our lack but supplies wisdom liberally. This is the bedrock of godly character: a humble dependence on the One who knows all.

A Word for Today's Believer

Let us not shrink from trials but embrace them as James urges, with joy and expectation. The same God who sustained the scattered tribes, who guided the Pilgrims through perilous seas, and who granted wisdom to America's founders is alive and active today. In a culture that often mocks faith and exalts self-reliance, let us stand firm as servants of God, counting trials as joy, cultivating patience, and seeking wisdom without fear. Our nation's history proves that faith in God's provision can birth enduring fruit; our lives can prove it still.

So, rise up, believer! Face your trials with the courage of those who came before, trusting that God is forging in you a character that reflects His glory. Ask for wisdom, stand steadfast, and let patience have her perfect work. In doing so, you will not only endure but shine as a light in this generation, pointing others to the God who never fails. Amen.