

# JAMES 1:2-4 NO PARKING IN SELF-PITY

“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.”

DEFINITION: PERSEVERANCE

1. continued effort, steady persistence to do something despite difficulties, failure, opposition, or discouragement

Consider it **JOY** when trouble comes your way? Yeah, right! Why should I be joyful when I am **not** happy? Maybe James wasn't so clued into the world of middle school.

*My headache started in math class when Ms. Meyer sprang a pop-quiz. The whole class got an "A," except me. At lunch I spilled yogurt on my new skirt (Mom's NOT going to be happy) and then I managed to skin my knee doing a not-so-graceful fall down the brick steps of the cafeteria. I seem to have no friends since I moved to this new school and who's gonna like a yogurt-smelling, leg-bleeding, math dropout like me?*

**STOP!** If you have had a day like this one, you need to take a serious **U-TURN!** Parking here in self-pity will only buy you a ticket to misery. God understands your tough days but He also wants to build your character through them. Counting it all **JOY**, especially when hard things happen, is a crazy **change** to our normal way of thinking. We tend to focus only on ourselves when we are challenged by trials. But God wants us to shift our **FOCUS** off of the situation and on to HIM. Why? Because He **KNOWS** our personal trials expose our faith ~ what we **REALLY** believe in. He allows challenges in our life to **build** our confidence and trust in HIM.

Trusting in God when life is easy is . . . easy. But when life gets hard **U-TURN YOUR EYES on HIM.** He is building your **FAITH** so that you will be mature and complete. **Don't STOP! PERSEVERE!** Keep going despite all the bumps in the road . . . or stains on your skirt.



## DIRECTIONAL QUESTIONS

1. What trials are you going through right now?
2. Trials aren't easy. How can we be **joyful** in the middle of them?
3. When trials hit your life, because they will, where is your **FOCUS**? Does self-pity raise its ugly head or do you focus on **GOD, TRUSTING** that He is building your confidence in Him?
4. Looking back, how have you persevered during a trial and become more mature in your faith because of it?

## BACKROAD DRIVIN'

**HAVE** you ever been sick and did not finish your medicine because you were feeling better? What happened? Chances are, you got sick again. Medicine, just like **perseverance**, needs to **finish** its work so you can be healthy again. When we are faced with trials, we can't park in self-pity. We **MUST** keep our **FOCUS** on God, be patient, and keep taking the medicine of **perseverance**. Our effort to keep going, despite opposition, will finish its work to make us more mature and complete in our faith!



AND PRAY

**Lord**, thank You for the trials in my life. I pray to count it **all joy** when I am challenged. I pray to **KNOW** Your truth and not to get so emotional that I cannot see the facts through the tears. You have a **PLAN** for me and it is good. Help me to see **YOU** in my times of testing and persevere as I **GROW** in my faith and **TRUST** in you.  
**Amen.**

## ADDITIONAL SIGHTSEEING

**LOOK UP:** Jeremiah 29:11, 1 Corinthians 10:13, and 2 Corinthians 1:3,4

\* What can we **KNOW** about our faith during times of trial? Identify three things from these verses. (Answers on bottom)

James 1:2-4

CHOOSE HOLINESS OVER HAPPINESS!