“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.”

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?

**PERSEVERANCE**

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.

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

I KNOW that, God is faithful and has a plan for me. 2. He will never give me beyond what I can handle. 3. I can comfort others because of my trials.