

Count It All Joy: Finding God's Strength When Life Gets Hard | Sermon on James 1

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Date: 22 September 2025

[0:00] Count it all joy. Finding God's strength when life is hard. Trials.

Complain and moan. Throw your hands up in despair. And feel like quitting and giving up in doubt and unbelief. And fleshly reaction.

Now we'll go to the real word of God. To James chapter 1 and it reads, My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations.

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have her perfect work. That you may be perfect and entire.

Wanting nothing. Count it all joy. Count it all joy. When we fall into all kinds of trials. When we face all kinds of difficulties.

[1:15] Count it all joy. It sounds strange, doesn't it? Almost impossible. Count it all joy in time of trouble. Joy when I'm suffering. Joy when life gets tough.

How can we have that kind of mind shift? When things are hard to have joy. How do we humanly react?

Let's be honest. When we face a trial. Oh no. Oh this is horrible. When we face a trial. How do we react? Being honest with you.

We complain, don't we? I do. Moan. Not rejoice. And we get weak. Instead of that refining that should be making us stronger.

We get such that we feel like we're falling apart. We feel weak. And we feel this frailty. Feel like giving up. Throwing it in. Throwing in the towel. Rather than resilience.

[2:12] But let's look at what God calls us to. In such a time. And honestly. This is real. It's real for people. You might be in such a trial. A diverse kind of trial.

A time of testing. A time of hardness. A hard time. God's telling you here. This morning. Count it. All joy. As much as it's hard to.

Obey that. It's his word to us. And this is not some fake kind of happiness. It's a deep trust in God's plan. That actually he knows what he's doing. And I can count it all joy.

And these words are for these Christians here. As James writes this. Who are going through all this trouble. They were scattered. And battered. They were hurting. And they faced all kinds of pressure.

Persecution. All kinds of situation. Poverty. And the truth of it is. That trials are not accidents though. They are appointments. In God's plan.

[3:10] And trials can help us. Trials can help to shape us. Into the image of our Lord. That's what we're going to look at today. And God doesn't want us just to survive.

Just to kind of get through that trial. But to grow stronger. And to get stronger through those trials. And we can do. Brother, sister. There's promises here.

We can get stronger in our faith. Even in those hardest of times. It's a life changing truth. That we can face. Life's challenges with hope. And with faith.

With trust. In God's perfect plan. These are the word of God. To our soul. And to our present circumstance. And whatever faces us Monday.

And beyond. That we can trust God's perfect plan. Though we might face trials. We can have joy. Joy. Deep joy. True joy. Joy. Joy not dependent on our circumstances.

[4:07] And we can be stronger for it. Knowing our trust is strengthened. Trust. In his perfect plan. Brother, sister. Trust in his perfect plan. You might be contemplating things ahead.

Maybe next week. I am. Situations of test. And trial. And hardness. And things I'd rather not face. But with God's strength. We can face them.

You can face them. Sister. Brother. Whatever lies ahead for you. And firstly. We notice that there's a rejoicing. There's a rejoicing. In God's plan. Rejoicing.

In trials. And our Lord calls us to choose to rejoice. In the hardness. In the hard times. To rejoice. It tells us my brethren. My brethren.

Notice this. James starts with my brethren. We're a family. In Christ. We've got brothers and sisters here. That are in our corner. We're a family. And trials can make us feel utterly alone.

[5:03] But really we're not. We're not alone. We've got brothers and sisters in Christ. You're sat next to some of them. Today. And when life gets hard. You've got the church. The church family for prayer.

And for support. I know I was encouraged lately. I put something on the email prayer chain. And someone told me. I'm praying for you. About that need. It's not commonly out there.

It's a somewhat quiet need. But it's out there. So if you're not on the prayer chain. Hey that's a way you can encourage your brothers and sisters. See sister Shirley there. And she can put your name.

On the prayer email chain. So you get to here. Hey I can pray for my brother. Pray for my sister.

And I can make my needs known. So they can pray for me. My brethren. We're a family.

And when there's a trial. Hey we can hang in there together with each other. When life gets hard.

We can lean on the church support. Our brothers and sisters to pray for us to support. And we can choose joy.

[5:57] Notice this. The command. That we have joy. It says count it all joy. It's not about pretending to be happy. It's finding our strength in the Lord.

Like Nehemiah 8.10 tells us. That the joy of the Lord is your strength. The joy of the Lord. We can find our joy in him. So when life circumstances are difficult.

We've got something bigger and greater. And we've got his joy. In our heart and soul. The joy of the Lord is going to make you strong. For whatever lies ahead for you. You can find your joy in Christ.

In the Lord. And you can know a rejoicing. That's by faith. You can rejoice. Even though. Humanly. You want to complain. And moan. And whinge. No. I'm going to say.

In the Lord. I'm going to rejoice. I'm going to rejoice in him. It's a rejoicing by faith. Trusting in his promise. In his purpose. And the word count. Count it. The word count here.

[6:52] It means to reckon. It means to deliberately choose. It's a choice. We make a conscious choice. By faith. It's not about the circumstances. It's not about the trials.

It's not about a natural human carnal reaction. It's about choosing to have joy. It's like you're looking at that stormy sky. And you're choosing to search for the rainbow.

Where's that rainbow? God has promised. Even in the time of storm. We can know joy. All joy. And all joy. It means that no trial is excluded.

He says count all of this. All of this trial. All of this testing. All of these diversities. Various temptations and tests and trials. He says count all of them. All of them.

Every hardship. Joy. Every hardship becomes an opportunity. Regard all of those trials. Treat them he says as joy.

[7:48] All of those tough experiences. Maybe they're things you're contemplating. What lies ahead for me? There's some situations happening. There's some trials ahead. He says count all of that joy.

Count it all joy. Count all of it. Treat them. Each one of them. As an opportunity for you. For joy.

Those trials. They're going to produce spiritual growth. And endurance. And maturity.

There's good. In those trials. As much as in them. We don't always notice that. Or feel that. And it's telling you. Brother. Sister. Embrace all of your trials. Embrace them.

One by one. All of those trials. With that joyful perspective. That will trust in God's ultimate purpose for you. James says count it all joy.

Paul says rejoice in the Lord always. And again I say rejoice. Paul says to rejoice. This joy. This rejoicing. Notice he's got to repeat it.

[8:42] Because we don't get it the first time sometimes. Do we? Rejoice. And again I say rejoice. You didn't hear it the first time. So I'm going to tell you again. Rejoice. Rejoice. Again I say rejoice.

This joy. This rejoicing. It isn't a shallow cheerfulness. It's a steady. Deep. Gladness. In Christ. Anchored in God's purpose. I can rejoice. I'm saved.

And it's telling us here. It's telling us to maintain the joy. In the Lord. Regardless of the circumstances. To rejoice in the Lord. It means that we find our deepest source of joy. It's in him. It's in our Lord. It's in Christ. We think of his character. Of his promises. Of his presence. We rejoice in him. In the Lord. Not in fleeting circumstances.

Like wealth. Health. Or success. It's in the Lord that we rejoice. And these words in Philippians. They encourage believers to rejoice. Rejoice. Rejoice. Rejoice.

[9:39] No matter what. Rejoice. Whether in prosperity. Or adversity. Whether in wealth. Or health. Or sickness. Whether in freedom. Whether in captivity. Rejoice.

Always. Always. It's a lifestyle. To rejoice. And keep on rejoicing. Even in hardship. To rejoice. Always. When you think of it. It points to the sufficiency of your saviour.

That satisfaction. That ultimate satisfaction. That is in him. And this joy. It keeps you strong. No matter what comes. And there's another scripture. Of Paul's.

1 Thessalonians 5.16. It's a two word one. So you can remember this one. This is your Bible memory verse for the week. Rejoice evermore. Rejoice evermore.

1 Thessalonians 5.16. Rejoice evermore. Always. At all times. It's got that universality. Rejoice evermore. It's got that universality.

[10:35] And that continuity. Rejoice evermore. No exceptions. Regardless of circumstances. Be glad. It's present tense. It's a present tense ongoing.

So in other words. You could put it. 1 Thessalonians 5.16. Rejoice evermore. You could say. Keep on rejoicing. Keep on. Saint. Keep on rejoicing.

So what does that rejoicing look like? Rejoicing always. Doesn't mean we ignore the pain. But we entrust it to our Lord. Sure there's pain. There's difficulty.

There's hardship. That's life. It's been that way since Adam. Since Eve. Rejoicing doesn't mean we ignore the pain. But we entrust it to our Lord. For example.

We might pray. Lord I'm hurting. But I rejoice in your promise. To never leave me. Nor forsake me. Hebrews 13.5. We trust the promises of God.

[11:31] We claim them. We confess them. I rejoice in your promise. To never leave me. Even though I'm in hardship right now. Even though I'm hurting right now.

I don't know some people were telling me. When I walked in the church. They're still hurting. There's some hurting going on. There's physical pain. And that can be real for you. We're not discounting that. Or overlooking that.

It's real. Some of you are in pain right now. I know that. But God is for you. And God is with you. And you can even then. Even in that pain.

You can rejoice. And notice here what to do when trials come. Notice it says when you fall into diverse temptations. When. Notice he says when.

Not if. Trials are certain. They're not optional. You're going to have trials. Who knows what's facing you tomorrow morning. When you face those different kinds of temptations.

[12:28] Those trials. When. Not if. They're certain. And trials are something we fall into it says. We fall into them. It's like they're going to catch us off guard. Whoa. Where did that come from?

It's going to. You're going to fall into them. Fall into them. It's like. It catches you off guard like a ship. That suddenly the storm comes. Whoa. I wasn't expecting that.

You're going to fall into diverse temptations. It could come suddenly. Who knows. What can happen. Some people have. Some dread thing happen. And it's like an accident.

Or who knows what. There's trials. There's temptations. It's. It's our lot in life to have them. And they're going to. We're going to fall into them sometimes. And it's telling us here they're diverse. In other words. There's. Lots of kinds. There's many colors and varieties. Trials come in many kinds. In many shapes and sizes. We can face sickness. Loss.

[13:24] Financial struggle. Betrayal. Hurts from people we love. Doubts. Attacks. Fears.

There's all manner. And the word temptations. Here it means tests of faith. Your faith is going to get tested. Saying. Brother. Sister. You're going to get tests. And God's telling us.

Here's what to do. When the trials come. And. We can know. As the words of Peter tell us. That trials aren't strange. They're not strange things. They. Actually.

It's normal. As believers. We can. Expect them. Peter says. Beloved. 1 Peter 4.12. Beloved. Think it not strange. Concerning the fiery trial.

Which is to try you. Trials are the standard. For the Christian life. And they're part of. His plan. They are part of his plan. So how can it be. That we can respond. To.

[14:21] These things. And with all things. With joy. Joy. How. Why. Do we have joy.

We have joy. Because. Ultimately. God is in control. We're in his hand. And every trial. Is under his sovereign hand. Every trial. He's watching over. He's oversighting you.

He's supervising. Our life. He's oversighting us. Overseeing us. And every trial. Is under his. Hand. Romans 8.28.

Promises us. That. We know that. That all things work together. For good. To them that love God. We know that. This is something we can know. We can trust God.

To use trials. For our good. Because brother. Sister. God sees the end. From the beginning. He's watching. From a higher. Perspective than us.

[15:16] From a higher. Vantage point. And he sees beyond. What we see. As our horizon. He sees what's going to happen. And he's using his trials. For our good. He sees the end.

From the beginning. We can't see that. But he can. So there's real trust. There's joy. In that trust. Not only can we have a rejoicing. In trials. A rejoicing.

Rejoice in the Lord. Always. And again. I say rejoice. Not only can we count it all joy. Rejoicing in our trials. But there's also a refining. A refining.

In the trials. The purpose of the trials. Is a strengthening of your faith. Knowing this. That the trying of your faith. Worketh patience. There's a resilience here.

There's an endurance here. A strengthening of your faith. Notice we can know. Knowing this. Know for certain. James says knowing this. Not guessing or hoping.

[16:09] He says you can know this brother. For certain. For sure. From experience in God's word. We can know God's plan. We can know. He tells us. Get ready.

Know this. The trying of your faith. Is going to work patience. There's a calm assurance here. We can find peace. In the word of God. This is relevant. This is real life.

Knowing this. Know this brother. Sister. That the trying of your faith. Is going to work something. It's going to work patience. And we can find peace in that promise. There's a calm assurance in that.

Scripture that we can have. And another scripture tells us. The psalmist writes. Psalm 119. 75. I know O Lord. That thy judgments are right.

And that thou in faithfulness. Hast afflicted me. We can know that God is faithful. Can't we? Isn't he faithful? And we can know that his judgments are right.

[17:05] We can know that trials are not pointless. They are purposeful. And God's word is telling us here. Our faith is going to get tested. He's going to afflict. He's going to allow affliction.

Our faith is going to be tested. It tells of the trying of your faith. It's speaking of like a refiner. Refines gold. A refiner. He tests that gold. And it's tested in the fire.

It goes in the furnace. And the furnace strips away the dross. And leaves the real. The enduring. The pure. And trials burn off our pride.

Our Lord burns off our self-reliance. Our doubt. And the fire leaves a tested, trusted faith. There's a promise for us at such a time.

You think of the crucible. You think of the furnace. You think of the molten metal. And how the dross floats to the top. And he skims it off. And there's that pure metal.

[18:08] And it's a picture of that refining process. As Peter puts it in 1 Peter 1. He says. Of trials wherein you greatly rejoice. Though now for a season. If need be, err in heaviness.

Through manifold temptations. He says. Hey. It's a time that's heavy. There's all of these tests and trials. There's lots of them. There's manifold temptations. There's lots of trials. He says.

Why? That the trial of your faith. Being much more precious than of gold. That perisheth. Though it be tried with fire. Might be found unto praise. And honour. And glory. At the appearing of Jesus Christ.

You greatly rejoice. Even though there's heaviness. Because the trial of your faith. It's more precious. There's gold. Being made here.

Gold. Being manufactured. Trials are going to make your faith stronger. And purer. Trials are preparing you. To shine for Jesus. And when you think of another picture.

[19:03] You could put of. Our God as being the potter. He is the potter. And we are as the clay. And he presses. He moulds. He shapes. Then he puts the clay vessel.

Into the kiln. And there. He fires it. To be made. That strong. And beautiful vessel. To be strong. And useful. And trials are God's way.

Of shaping you. Saying. I know it's not always. How we want it. But. We can rejoice. By faith. We can rejoice. We can greatly rejoice. Because.

He knows. The best. And he's shaping you. To be that stronger. Refined one. And trials can be tough. But they are purposeful. Job found that out.

As we know of Job. He tells. He testifies. When he hath tried me. I shall. Come forth as gold. When he hath tried me. You know.

[19:59] We want to get to the gold. But first. He's got to do some trying. First. There's got to be some testing. Some refining. And God uses the heat. Of trials. Of life circumstance. Could be difficulties.

That we undergo. Those times of heat. Of testing. Of refining. It's the making of us. To be more like him. And God is shaping your character.

That you'll be more like him. That you'll shine ever brighter. He's working something for you. And we call to a rejoicing. In trials. We call to a refining.

In trials. And also. There's a resilience. We can find. He's building patience. He's making something. Such that you're going to be. A stronger believer.

For all of that. There's going to be. A learning. Of resilience. In trials. Notice the result. Of this testing. Is patience.

[20:52] It speaks of a. Steadfast. Active. Endurance. Knowing this. That the trying. Of your faith. Worketh. Patience. Patience. It's the sense of.

Endurance. It's not just. A waiting around. When something's going on. That's a test. That you're waiting around. Passively. He's producing. The trying.

Of your faith. Worketh. Patience. It's producing. Endurance. Resilience. Like a soldier. Standing firm. In the battle. Like a runner.

Running the race. Through pain. To finish that race. This is the picture. For you. Sane. Think of those. Soldiers. As they prepare. In their training.

They put them. Through their ropes. They put. A lot of. Pressure on them. In the recruit course. Such that. They'll be stronger. And they'll be battle ready. And we think.

[21:48] God is producing here. He's producing. Patience. Or endurance. That perseverance. And trials. Build that endurance. We see that. In Romans 5. Paul tells.

But we glory. Rejoice. In tribulations. Also. Hey. There's glory here. This tribulation. It's glory for me. Knowing that. That tribulation. Is working something.

It's working patience. And that patience. Is working experience. And that experience. Is working hope. We see that. Tribulation. Works patience.

Patience. Leads to experience. And hope. In other words. Trials. Build endurance. Brothers. Brothers. Sister. They're God's training ground. There's something. Going to be good. That's going to happen. From that. Trouble. That's going to be good. And this is the goal. Of trials. It's helping us get. More spiritually. Mature.

[22:42] Because we can hope. In his promises. Tribulation. Or trouble. It's going to give us. Patience. Or endurance. There's experiences there.

We may not like them. But then there's ultimately hope. There's a hopefulness. We can find hope. In God's promises. And God uses trials. To shape you. Brother. Sister.

Some of you. Are in better shape. Than others. Maybe you've been through. Some of that. Some of those trials. You're actually a good looking. Christian. Because of that. Shaping. That molding. That squeezing.

That firing. That tribulation. That you've been through. Honestly. It can be. Wow. I look back. And hitherto. Hath the Lord helped me. Amen. Thank God. In his faithfulness.

He's helped me through. To get through. And God uses trials. To shape you. Into spiritual maturity. And James says. Let patience. Have her perfect work.

[23:35] Let patience. Have her perfect work. That you may be perfect. And entire. Once in nothing. He's talking about patience here. Lord. Lord. Give me that patience.

I need it right now. That patience. That endurance. Let that patience. Have a perfect work. Note here. It's telling of our need. To let.

Sometimes we just gloss over. The little words. But it says. But let. Let. In other words. Let go. And let God. You could say. Isn't it? The word let.

It means we've got a choice. It means we've got a choice. You can say. Yes Lord. Let that patience. Or we can say. No. I don't want to. We can say. Let. Receive it.

Or we can say. No. We resisted. We can. Let. God. Do his work. Either we can resist God's process.

[24:31] Or we can say. Let God. Have his way. In me. I surrender. Let God. Either we can resist God's process. With grumbling. Oh.

No. That's too hard. I don't want any of those trials. And temptations. And tests. No. That's too hard. I want the easy Christian life. Or we can say.

Trust. Lord. Let. Let your Holy Spirit. Have his way. In me. Let your patience. Have her perfect work.

In me. Let. Let God. Have his way. Trust him. To finish his work. For the meantime. Brother. Sister. We're in God's workshop. There's that sense where. If you ever seen a workshop.

There's clanging going on. And there's noise. And there's fumes. And there's. A lot of. Works in progress. In the workshop. And.

[25:27] It's a sense where. We're in God's workshop. We're still on the potter's wheel. Spinning around. He's still prodding. And shaping. Maybe he's got to throw us back on. And restart it.

Trust that you're in his hand. In the workshop. In the master's hand. In the potter's hand. Even though you're in a tough place. It could be. And again. I don't mean. I know I'm using some.

Kind of colloquial. Language here. But. Honestly. It could be real for you. What I'm talking about. And I don't want to. Gloss over that. Or downplay that. Because it could be that.

You're actually in the pressure cooker. Right now. Of that trial. Of that situation. That tough thing. That's going on for you. You just feel like. Throwing up your hands. And. It's overwhelming for you. Let go. Let God. Let patience. Have her perfect work. Let God have his way with you. Don't resist the potter's hand.

[26:26] We can resist God's work. Or we can surrender to it. And patience needs time. There's a process here. Patience. It's talking about time. Isn't it? Sometimes we want God to work on our time schedule.

Lord. Do the work. And hurry up. Get through that trial part. I want to get to the gold part. Hurry up the furnace part. Because I want to be that gold. Hurry up that time on the potter's wheel.

Because I want to be that vessel. But we've got to let God do it in his timing. And patience needs time. To shape us fully.

So don't be impatient. Don't be impatient. It's like a chef letting the bread rise before they bake it. There's a process. There's a time. There's a waiting time.

There's a certain interval. There's a certain time that God has in his perfect schedule for you. And Hebrews 12 reminds us that while discipline is grievous now, after what it says.

[27:26] After it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. There's no chastening. No discipline. And for the present it seems to be joyous.

Sometimes it's hard to get glad about a bit of suffering. About a bit of discipline. A bit of chastening from God's hand. It feels grievous. It feels hard. It feels difficult. Nevertheless, afterward, afterward, afterward, it yieldeth a peaceable fruit.

There's fruit. There's peace. There's righteousness. We've got to be exercised thereby for the meantime. So trials hurt now. And refining can be hard. But afterward, afterward, it'll all be clear to you.

Afterward, it'll be clear of the producing of fruit, of lasting fruit. One day we will see that finished product that he's making. As with that vessel that's been through the kiln and we're in his hand, ready for the master to use that chosen vessel in his hands.

And God is working something through this trial. Brother, sister, whatever you're going through or whatever you're going to be going through, there's a joy that's beyond the circumstance.

[28:39] And there's a finished product. It says there's a work happening here. And we notice here that we will be perfect and entire. Perfect and entire.

Wanting nothing. Here's Christian perfection. One day we will be perfect. One day. And my wife's going to be even more perfect. But one day we'll be in glory, won't we?

And we'll have that perfect work. We'll be that perfect glorified body. That perfect one. And we will be perfect and entire when patience has done his work, her work.

And this means becoming spiritually mature. Perfect and entire. It means that we'll be complete. We'll be whole. For the meantime, we're not complete. We're just in part.

But then we'll be perfect. We'll be complete is the meaning of it. And for the meantime, there's a process. But ultimately, it says we're going to be perfect and entire.

[29:36] Wanting nothing. Wanting nothing. In other words, we'll have every spiritual quality that we could wish for. That we need to live for our Lord. We're going to be wanting nothing.

Meaning that everything is going to be how he wants it to be. And God is giving us what we need. It's through that process. For the meantime, the trials are part of that preparation.

Wanting nothing. It means that one day we'll be fully furnished with every spiritual quality that we need to live for God. We know for the meantime, well, we're not perfect. We are imperfect.

And there's always room for improvement. We're still under construction. But let patience have her perfect work. And we can think of this perfecting. And his word assures us of a perfecting.

That it says all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, etc. That the man of God may be perfect. Thrillily furnished unto all good works.

[30:32] It's through his word. And trials as well as his word work together. It's the trials that are doing that work of patience. It's the furnishing of the scriptures unto all good works.

He's equipping you for his work. His service. Think of the trials. Brother, sister. Who can identify? Who's had some trials? I'm sure we all have.

Trials, they're God's sandpaper, aren't they? Think of God's sandpaper. Smoothing out the rough edges. Well, I've got a few. I've still got a few. A few rough edges.

Trials. They're smoothing out those rough edges, aren't they? As the sandpaper, as the carpenter rubs the sandpaper over the furniture and makes it smooth and strong.

God is doing a work. And that's life. That's the real life. The day by day life that we all live. The good news is that God is doing a work.

[31:32] And it starts when you get saved. So if you're not saved today, trust him. Trust him. I want Jesus.

I want Jesus to save me. I want Jesus to take away my sin and make me whole and give me new life. Give me eternal life. I want Jesus to pay for my sin. I want him to be my saviour.

And then that's the beginning. And then it says, he that's begun a good work. That's day one. And he that's begun a good work is going to perform it. And he's going to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

When we see our Lord, when he comes or we go to him, when we come before his face, then he's going to perform it until the day. He's going to keep us and keep growing us and finishing off that unfinished product that we are.

He's going to begin that good work when we get saved. And he's going to complete it. He's going to perform it. He's going to finish it. And for the meantime, we're still in that intervening time. But we can be confident of this very thing.

[32:38] Here that has begun a good work in you, we'll perform it. God's work in us is never wasted. Sometimes we don't understand God's work in me. Sometimes we don't like God's work in us, but he's doing it such that there'll be a finished product.

He's going to perform it. He's going to finish it. We're still in the construction phase for the meantime. And it's a phase we must undergo. Some thoughts further about how can we actually apply these truths?

How can we go through trials with faith, with joy? How can we actually count it all joy? Here are some Bible-based steps I put to you. How you can face your trials with faith?

We see, firstly, trust God's control. God is never caught off guard by our troubles. He says, in the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. He says, have courage.

I've overcome the world. He says, for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. Think of it. Our Lord's never caught off guard by our troubles.

[33:39] He's already worked the way through for you to get through as you trust his plan. And sometimes our thoughts just can't conceive. What's God doing? We don't understand.

Why is this happening? His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. Sometimes we don't understand what God is doing because he sees beyond our limited brain space.

He sees beyond our own ways and our own thinking. Our trials have a purpose and an end. And if we trust God's plan to bring peace, we can know the way through.

We can trust God's control. Another advice is to pray for God's wisdom. When trials confuse you and you don't know what's going on, ask God to help.

Ask God for wisdom. Pray. James says, if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. That giveth to all men liberally. He's bountiful in giving you wisdom.

[34:40] And he upbraideth not. In other words, he doesn't scold you. He says he's going to give it to you. Ask for wisdom and he'll give it to you. Pray for wisdom. When the situation is difficult, you don't know what's going on, ask him to guide you through.

And of course, prayer, as we're numbers of times exhorted to pray. And the peace of God is going to be there for you. Pray and God's going to turn your worry into peace.

Let your requests be made known to God. His peace, his peace is going to keep your hearts and minds. God's going to turn your worry into peace and worship.

Another tip is to lean on God's strength. We're not strong enough on our own. But God's grace is enough. The familiar one of Paul crying out in this torment of his thorn.

God says, my grace is sufficient. My grace is sufficient. And Paul says, well, most gladly, therefore, will I lack rather glory in my infirmities. That Christ will be glorified.

[35:46] Though we may feel weak, God's power will strengthen us. Another one, hold on to hope. Looking unto Jesus, looking beyond the trials, as he did, for the joy that was set before him.

Our trials are temporary, but God's glory is forever. And 1 Peter 5 says, but the God of all grace who hath called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.

Our trials are temporary, but we have his enabling. He's called us to glory. Another one, learn from hardship.

Trials teach us to trust God more. Psalm 19, Psalm 119, 71. It tells us, it is good for me that I've been afflicted, that I might learn by statutes.

Learn. Let it be a learning time. One of the most stretching times of your life is being a student, isn't it? And it's the same with the school of life.

[36:53] We're stretched, but we're learning. In those times that we're afflicted, we're learning. If we let him teach us, let affliction drive you to God's word. And let's learn to value eternal things above the temporary things.

Think of it how you could picture like a hiker climbing a steep mountain. The path is tough, but each step builds strength and brings us closer to the mountain top.

It's the same with the Christian life. God's word is our man and his promises are our strength. We can learn. Trials are like these steep paths, but they lead us to spiritual heights.

And in all of this, God gives us strength. Think of the strength that you have beyond your own strength. Trials show us how we need God and he provides us strength through his word.

He says, again, the psalmist, Psalm 119, 92. So, unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. God's word is our lifeline.

[37:55] We get strength through the word. That's why it's great for you, brother, sister, to get the promises of God. Write them down. Stick them on your fridge. Write them on the tablets of your heart.

The promises of God that you can claim when affliction comes, when tests come, that you can claim the promises of God for you. Hiding God's word in your heart is one of the best things you can do to get strength.

Words like promises of the scriptures, like Isaiah 41. There's courage there. Fear not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God.

I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee. Verses like that, that you can memorize in those times of trial and you can confess them to yourself in those times of testing.

You can get strength through his word. You can get strength through his Holy Spirit. Romans 8, 26. The Holy Spirit helps us when we're too weak to pray. The Holy Spirit prays with that groaning.

[38:57] That we can groan to God in prayer. And God hears our cry. Our hearts cry. And the Spirit strengthens our hearts when words fail us.

And we get strength through his people too. Galatians 6, 2. Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Two is better than one, for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow.

God calls us as a church. And James calls us brethren. He says, as we started off, my brethren. We're not meant to face trials alone.

We're meant to hang on to one another. And hey, if we see a brother or sister slipping or hurting, let's reach out. God helping us. Because we're not meant to face trials alone.

We can bear one another's burdens. And hey, share your struggles. So other believers know. Pray for me. Pray for me. So that other believers you trust can pray and encourage you.

[39:56] The strength through the word. The strength through his spirit. The strength through his people. And the strength through his son. For we have not a high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

But was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace. That we may obtain mercy. And find grace to help in time of need.

Our Lord Jesus, he understands our pain. And he prays for us. He was in the fiery furnace with the three Hebrew children. They weren't alone. The fourth man was there in Daniel 3.25.

And brother, sister, know Jesus is with you in your trials. When you get those hardship times. When you get those troubled times. That Jesus is right there in the trial. In the fire.

Walking with you. Our greatest comfort is his presence. And brother, sister, we can find God's plan in our pain. Sure enough. Think it not strange.

[40:56] It's going to happen. Our Lord tells us that we can face these hardships. And these manifold temptations. These various, these diverse temptations.

These various trials. We're assured that they will come. But we're assured of his presence too.

We're assured of his plan. That he can turn those trials into tools.

That are going to make us more like him. And you are his masterpiece. You are that clay vessel for the meantime. Maybe it looks a bit messy still on the potter's wheel. But ultimately, he's going to

bring you to completion.

So meantime, brother, sister, count it. Count it all joy. Reckon it. Choose joy. Make it a deliberate faith-filled choice. Choose joy.

Count it all joy. Doesn't matter whether you feel like doing that or not. And probably you don't feel like doing that. But God commands you to do it. Count it all joy. In other words, trust God.

[41:54] He's working. He's working it out. Even when life hurts. Even when it's painful right now. We can find joy even then. Even now. In that. Rejoice in the Lord.

Most of the time. Rejoice in the Lord. In the good times. Rejoice in the Lord when you feel like it. No.

Rejoice in the Lord always. Always. Make that choice to rejoice. Through the trials. Through the triumphs. And everything in between. And this joy is sustained by God's presence, isn't it?

Think of his joy in his presence. His fullness of joy. And hey. Does his presence leave us? Not really. He's always with us. So in his presence is fullness of joy.

And our joy is sustained by his presence. And it empowers us. It gives us strength. And it serves as a witness too. Of his faithfulness. When everybody else is despairing.

[42:57] We can actually rejoice. Even though we feel like joining the ones despairing. Trials are not the end of the story. They're the beginning of growth. Of maturity. Of strength.

And when hard times come. Brother, sister. Pray. Trust that God is in control. No matter how you feel. Trust that God is in control. He promises to watch over you.

Trust that God is in control. Have faith. Ask for his wisdom. And hope. Cling to his promises.

They're unailing. They're yay and amen.

Guaranteed. Stamp. With his authority. This is true. His promises are for you. And hang together too. Ask for prayer.

Let others know. Pray for me. It's not a sign of weakness. It's what we're called to do, isn't it? Pray for me. Pray for one another. Don't be afraid to call out. To reach out.

[43:54] Sometimes people, they have a need. But no one knows about it. And then how can we pray? If we don't know. How can we respond? Respond if we don't know.

So it's not weak to say, hey, I need prayer. That's a good thing. And we can lean on God's people. We can have a mutual strength. Strengthen one another. Amen. And there's many scriptures like we've talked about of late that tell us to have courage.

To know that God's not going to fail us. He's not going to forsake us. And God's strength is enough, brother. God's strength is enough for your sister. That his joy is going to sustain you. And he's never going to fail.

His love never fails. For the meantime, it feels like there's pressure. And it's like how diamonds are formed under that intense pressure deep in the earth.

And it's the same for you as God's saints. As God's dear children. That there's intense pressure sometimes. There's diamonds being made. Trials of God's pressure.

[44:53] They're shaping us into the treasures that reflect his glory. That gold quality faith. That's been through the fire. Trust him. Trust him. To finish his work.

Keep on trusting him. Keep on rejoicing. Even though humanly you don't want to rejoice. It's the last thing you want to do. But it's the first thing you need to do. Is to rejoice.

Count it. All joy. Whatever you're facing. Choose joy today. Choose it. Choose it. Not because it's easy. Not because you feel like it.

But because God is faithful. Count it. Count it. All joy. Let him shape you through the hardship. Knowing he is making you that perfect and entire.

Wanting nothing. He sees what will become of you. He sees what that work of patience will do in your soul. That you will be perfect and entire. Wanting nothing. For the meantime now.

[45:50] The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. That you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Let us pray. Lord we thank you. That we know these things are real.

I'm sure all of us can say. Lord there's things going on that I don't like right now. There's stuff happening to me that I don't relish. There's aches and pains. There's sickness. There's heartache. There's sorrow. There's loss. There's grief. There's confusion. There's doubt even. Lord yet you show grace to us still. And we can rejoice. We can count it all joy. Count all of it joy. All of it. All of those things. That unsettle us. Lord we pray each one today might be assured that they're on that walk of faith. He that has begun a good work. Has begun a good work. We've got saved. If not we can be saved today. By simply saying Lord Jesus. Forgive me of my sin.

[46:57] Save me. I trust you. I believe. In your saving. That you've done everything to pay for my sin. And save my soul.

Lord we pray each one might have that heart's trust. And then walking from that. Lord too. That we'll know. You've begun a good work. And you will complete it. You will finish what you've started. Lord we can trust you to see us through. Even though our steps at times falter. And the devil dogs our steps. And our own self doubt. Our own carnality. And inclination to slip. Gets in the way. Lord help us to nevertheless. Count it all joy. To trust you more. Let patience have her perfect work in us. Lord be glorified we pray. Do that work we pray. That we'll have that heart to trust you. That we'll have a rejoicing. That we'll see the refining.

[47:58] And Lord we'll see that wonderful work. of that finished product one day. As we see your face. And we are like you. Lord help us to be that people.

Give us strength we pray. For whatever lies ahead. Help us to keep that rejoicing heart. Even when we humanly don't want to. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.