

# TRUE VINE MINISTRIES BIBLE STUDY ALIVE

Zoom Edition

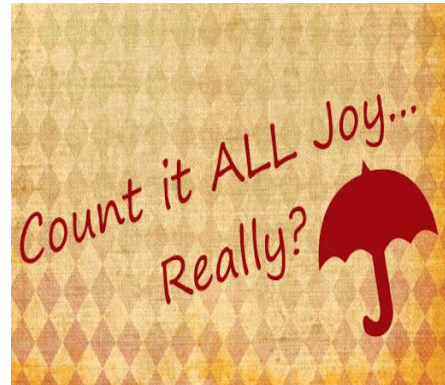
## Pain and Problems Are an Opportunity for Joy

James 1:2-12

What is your response to suffering? Do you trust in the goodness of God? Is our faith one that is strong enough to endure the furnace of suffering?

God never says, “Oops.” God is in control of the trials. God is not on his throne wringing his hands as he waits for the outcome of events. Even if you can’t see *how*, you can be confident that God *is* working for His glory. Pain is not without purpose.

Trials produce steadfastness (endurance), which, in turn, produces spiritual strength and growth. God’s desire for his children is that they become “perfect and complete,” words which refer to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness. For this reason, you can experience joy in the midst of trials, even alongside your grief, when you count these promises to be true as you walk through your valley of suffering.



To “count it all joy” does not refer to being happy about the trial itself. Nor does it withdraw your permission to grieve. James is not saying, “No matter how painful your loss is, you need to just put on a happy face. Pretend, if you have to. Don’t let anyone see how much you are hurting.” No. True joy is not a spiritual facade. “Count it all joy” is a divine command which calls for a certain attitude of mind. In other words, it is a Christian duty to pursue joy “when you meet trials of various kinds.” Everyone understands having joy when a trial is *over*, but that’s not what is on James’s mind. It is *while* you suffer that you must choose the path of joy.

James is not encouraging you to deny the reality of your sorrow. Trials *are* hard. Loss hurts. Life is sometimes very painful. But the “testing of your faith” is designed for your growth, not for your failure, in order to produce endurance. *Steadfastness* is a compound word meaning to stay, abide, or remain. It pictures someone carrying a heavy load for a long time. But endurance (as virtuous as it is) is not even God’s ultimate goal. His bigger purpose is that this steadfastness will have “its full effect” by moving you toward completion, maturity in Christ (Romans 8:28-29).

### Conclusion

We will all face seasons of suffering--believers and unbelievers. Yet, none of us will experience the full weight of suffering as Jesus experienced it. He experienced suffering so that He could ultimately redeem our suffering. Through Christ suffering it can actually become a means to joy.