

## Faith, Endurance and.....**JOY!**

Dear brothers and sisters, whenever trouble comes your way, let it be **an opportunity for joy!** For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, **you will be mature and complete with no 'weak spots'.**

If you need wisdom--if you want to know what God wants you to do in the trouble - ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking. But when you ask him, *be sure that your asking is also an expression of faith*, for a doubtful mind is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. People like that should not expect to receive anything from the Lord! They can't make up their minds. They waver back and forth in everything they do.

Christians in humble circumstances should be **glad**, for God has honoured them. And those who are rich should be **glad**, for God has humbled them! In this world a rich man fades away like a flower in the field. The hot sun rises and dries up the grass; the flower withers, and its beauty fades away. So also, wealthy people caught up with all of their achievements will fade away.

**God will bless the person who patiently endures** testing. Afterward he or she will receive **the crown of life** that God has promised to those who love him. And remember, no one who wants to fight their own way out of their trouble should ever say, "Well - God is tempting me to!" God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else either. Temptation comes from the lure of our own evil desires. These evil desires lead to evil actions, and evil actions lead to death. So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters.

My dear brothers and sisters, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Your anger can never make things right in God's sight.

So get rid of all the 'natural' thinking (actually it's evil and defiling) in your lives, and humbly accept this 'word' God has planted in your hearts, for **it is strong enough to save your whole person.**

And remember, this 'word' is a message to *obey*, not just to listen to! If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself. For if you just listen and don't obey, it is like looking at your face in a mirror but doing nothing to improve your appearance. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law--the law that sets you free--and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then **God will bless you** for doing it. (*James 1 NLT + modifications!*)