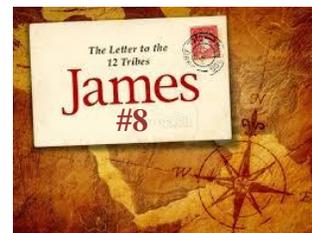




Chico Alliance Church  
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## “The Way of Endurance”

### Review

Today, Christians all around the world suffer unspeakable suffering because of their faith in and commitment to Jesus. Many suffer death because of their refusal to renounce their faith in Jesus. Although persecution of our Christian faith grows by the day in America, we have yet to experience the level of persecution occurring in nearly 75% of our world. People raised in an indulgent, comfort-driven, self-centered culture resist denying any pleasure and find it difficult to sustain endurance. Every culture encounters hardship at every level. Every culture encounters hardships that challenge faith. James' letter offers instruction and insight regarding the things that challenge faith. His instruction helps test the true nature of our claim to truly trust God. His letter jars us out of self-denial regarding reality of our level trust. When Jesus admonished His disciples about the state of their faith it usually came in conjunction with some test. James opened his letter with instruction concerning how true faith responds to trial.

### I. Faith's response to trials 1:2-18

- A. Consider it all Joy knowing trials produce endurance.
- B. Continue enduring knowing endurance produces maturity
- C. Confidently ask God for wisdom knowing He will give it.
- D. Focus on spiritual riches because material wealth is temporary
- E. God rewards endurance 1:12

*Blessed is a man who endures trial; for having been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. James 1:12*

James provided incentive to endure by looking to the reward for passing the test. God rewards (blesses) the one who endures testing or trials. God promises the crown of life to those who pass the test (get approved) by enduring all the way through the trial. There is no reward for partial endurance.

*You have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. Hebrews 10:36*

*Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoicing in hope, enduring in tribulation, continuing in prayer. Romans 12:11-12*

*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:7*

*But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. 1 Timothy 6:11*

God promises to reward endurance. The word “endure” means to “remain under”.

### Definition of endurance.

*Faith produced endurance is the decision to continue pursuing and doing what we know is right before God (God's will), despite my feelings, or fatigue and despite any impulse to escape, grumble, or crumble under the test.*

Endurance is the ability to respond to life's challenges as Christ would respond. Trials are those actions of people or events of life that produce physical, psychological, spiritual discomfort, pain and/or pressure in my life.

It can be negative external circumstances  
It could be negative internal mental and emotional struggles  
It could be difficult relational conflicts.

I believe the reward for enduring trials is increased quality of life.

*Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. Galatians 6:7-9*

You can't live any way you want and expect to reap the benefits of living according to God's standard.

If you endure testing and temptation you experience new dimensions of life.

If you succumb to testing and temptation you experience weakness and death.

The life of an enduring Christian shines like a victory crown to those observing.

Paul realized life even out of devastating circumstances.

*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 2 Corinthians 4:6-12*

How do we develop endurance? In some ways, it is like physical endurance training. It requires intentional practice over time. Such physical training develops muscle memory that results in auto responses. Enduring spiritual trials develops spiritual muscle memory. Endurance brings stability, maturity, contentment.

You have need of endurance so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what has been promised – life instead of death, light instead of darkness, contentment instead of covetousness, rest instead of restlessness; peace instead of chaos, response instead of reaction.

The development of endurance involves numerous elements. I will share eight key elements related to the development of endurance. I urge you to think about a particular struggle you face today requiring endurance.

### **1. Regularly interact with the Scriptures.**

One main source of developing endurance is the Scriptures.

*For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15:4-6*

The Scriptures provide the spiritual nourishment necessary endure.

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

It is impossible to endure without regular interaction with the Scriptures. They teach us, reprove us, correct and train us. They give us hope amid hardship. They nourish the starving soul.

*God's divine power has granted to us **everything** pertaining to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence... 2 Peter 1:3*

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Without faith we cannot endure. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Without regular interaction with the Word of God will not develop the faith that empowers endurance.

**Lord,**

Stir a new hunger in my soul for Your word.

Give me a passion for Your word expressed by the Psalmists.

*Your law is perfect, reviving the soul; Your testimony is sure, making wise the simple; Your precepts are right, rejoicing the heart; Your commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; Your rules are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is Your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Psalm 19:7-11*

*Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you? You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again. Psalm 71:19-20*

*My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to your word! Psalm 119:25*

*I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have revived me. Psalm 119:93*

*I am severely afflicted; revive me, O LORD, according to your word! Psalm 119:107*

## 2. Consider the example of Jesus and others

Hebrews 11 includes a whole list of people who endured difficult, even impossible situations. All of them exercised faith in God to carry them through their specific trial. All of them were flawed but faithful. I call them unlikely heroes of faith. Hebrews 12 urges all of us to run the race with endurance as they did.

Paul offered himself as an example of endurance.

*You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my **endurance**, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra— which persecutions I **endured**; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted... 2 Timothy 3:10-17*

*We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great **endurance**, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything. 2 Corinthians 6:3-10*

Jesus impressively modeled endurance.

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with **endurance** the race that is set before us, looking intently on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him **endured** the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider (contemplate) him who **endured** from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.*

## 3. Consider the future reward greater than the present one.

*By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the*

*reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. Hebrews 11:24-26*

*Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us... Hebrews 12:1*

*I (Paul) consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Rom 8:18*

*We do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18*

*Do not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. Gal 6:9*

## **Prayer**

Lord, help me to consider the future blessing of endurance greater than the temporal benefits of an easy comfortable life. May I be like Moses who was willing to give up temporal toys and the fleeting pleasures of sin for the lasting reward.

### **4. Accept, don't resist or resent God's training**

*In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted (endured) to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Hebrews 12:1-11*

*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 1 Peter 4:12-13*

It helps to keep the possible purposes for trials and suffering in mind. I am willing to endure the present trial...

- To bring about purity and maturity
- To cultivate deeper compassion for others
- To teach me to trust God alone (tests my faith)
- To realize present and future blessing
- To spread the Word of God
- To bring glory to God
- To keep me obedient

The variety of difficult life situations serves to make us more like Jesus. The fruit of divinely supervised training is a righteous life.

## **Prayer**

Lord, I accept this trial as a necessary part of my spiritual journey. What needs my attention? Where do I need to improve?

*I draw near to You and You will draw near to me. I Cleanse my sinful hands, and purify my double-minded heart. I am willing to be miserable and mourn and weep and let my laughter be turned into mourning and my joy to gloom. I humble myself in Your presence Lord, and one day You will exalt me. James 4:8-10 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. Psalm 139:23-24*

## **5. Entrust your soul to a faithful Creator.**

Part of accepting God's discipline is trusting His loving purposes for me.

*Behold, we consider those blessed who **endured**. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. James 5:11*

It's what Jesus did when facing suffering.

*and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously 1 Peter 2:23*

*You have been called to suffer, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:21-24*

*Let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. 1 Pet 4:19*

Amid the storm, consciously place your soul into the hands of the One who created you, who is always faithful to do what is best to His glory and our good.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6*

Give Him the controls of your life no matter what. Deposit your life in His secure bank expecting maximum return on the investment.

The Hebrews chose our current Greek word for endure or remain under to translate the Hebrew word "wait on" in the Greek version of Isaiah 40:31.

*They who **wait** (remain under) for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31*

We remain under the load fully expecting or anxiously anticipating God's empowering grace to enable us to endure the test.

*We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Heb 4:15-16*

This is the critical opportunity for faith. Will we look up or bail out? Will we trust God to meet us in the storm or lose heart?

*Do not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. Gal 6:9*

## **Prayer**

Lord, I not only accept this trial, but I consciously entrust my soul into Your loving and faithful hands and ask You to help me respond in a way that brings honor and glory to You and furthers Your glorious work.

to You be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:21

## 6. Look for God's way of escape

*You have not received a temptation, but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to **endure** it. 1 Corinthians 10:13*

Notice, God doesn't always promise to remove testing but does promise a way to endure it. Often, only the elongation of trials brings about the intended result. I am trying to increase the minutes of discomfort on the elliptical machine to reap desired results. God supplies ways to help us keep going; look for them. James said to keep enduring knowing it will result in maturity.

*And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:10-11*

### Prayer.

Lord, I would love to see this difficult situation disappear, but I am willing to endure if You will provide the means. Give me the vision to see Your way of escape.

## 7. Pray for and support one another

Paul prayed for endurance on behalf of the family.

*And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Col 1:9-12*

We live worthy of our calling by the saturation of God's will.

God supplies His glorious power that we might endure whatever comes our way.

*May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ. 2 Thessalonians 3:5*

*With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, Ephesians 6:18*

*If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and **God will for him give life** to those who commit sin not leading to death. 1 John 5:16*

*The prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Jam 5:15-16*

*My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. Jam 5:19-20*

*But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. Jude 1:20-21*

This assumes that we humbly share our struggles with others. This assumes we take the time to be involved in the lives of others.

**Prayer.**

Lord, please strengthen me with Your glorious might for all endurance and long-suffering so that I might joyfully give You thanks for Your powerful work in me and those I bring before You today. Instill a new desire to fervently pray for others.

**8. Resist the Devil**

At times, our struggle has to do with something the devil directs our way. We “remain under” trials allowed by God for our development but “resist” temptations orchestrated by the devil for our destruction. James instructed his readers not only to submit to God but resist the devil.

*Submit to God. **Resist** the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. James 4:7-8*

*...give no place to the devil. Ephesians 4:27*

*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **Resist** him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 1 Peter 5:8-9*

Essential to resisting the devil is consciously putting on God’s armor.

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Ephesians 6:10-13*

Jesus resisted the temptations of the devil by the power of the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

**Prayer,**

I embrace the purposes of God for my development in this trial but refuse and resist Satan and all his purposes for my destruction in the powerful name of Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior.