

How to Handle Difficulties

Rod Sargent

I. How do we respond to difficulties?

- A. We try to ignore our problems hoping they will go away.
 - 1. When we don't face problems immediately, they usually get worse.
- B. We blame others for our difficulties.
 - 1. Don't blame each other for your problems. (James 5:9)
- C. We ventilate our anger through irritable behavior, anger, and impatience.
- D. We complain about our difficulties.
- E. James 1:1-12 offers three suggestions on how to handle difficulties.

II. React with joy and happiness to trials. (James 1:1-4)

- A. Only the Bible has taught people to meet difficulties with happiness and joy.
- B. Usually we view difficulties as keeping us from our goals.
- C. Many of us yearn for the time when difficulties go away.
- D. The Psalmists paints a peaceful picture of the Christian life.
- E. James says that troubles will come in our lives.
- F. Solomon said man is born is trouble. (Job 5:7)
- G. If we welcome difficulty in our lives, it will produce a change in our lives.
- H. God changes our lives through trials.
- I. James is talking about enduring with radiance and triumph.
- J. Early Christian martyrs died singing – they were facing difficulties with joy.
- K. With God's grace, any Christian can endure trials with joy.
- L. God has never had a son on earth who did not experience suffering.
- M. The objective of trouble is to make Christians complete, perfect, and mature, lacking none of the graces of Jesus Christ.

N. Maturity does not occur through one major experience, it comes through years of experience and suffering.

III. Seek wisdom in difficulties. (James 1:5)

A. In addition to facing trials with joy, we must know two things:

1. What to do – Pray that God will guide you in the midst of the trial.

2. What not to do – some trials are meant to be lived with. God intends that we live with some trials.

B. Ask God for wisdom: He gives it generously and unconditionally. (James 1:5)

C. We can come to God with confidence when we want wisdom.

D. God gives wisdom if we ask.

E. He is always available.

F. He does not exclude anyone from receiving His wisdom, regardless of our past.

IV. We must not be double minded. (James 1:6-8)

A. James challenges those who ask not to be double minded when they approach God for wisdom. (James 1:6-8)

B. The double minded man vacillates over whether he wants God's wisdom or whether God will actually give wisdom to him.

C. James is talking about doubt that is stronger than belief. There can be doubt but it cannot be stronger than our belief in God.

V. Illustration: The rich and the poor. (James 1:9-12)

A. The poor and the rich have difficulties.

B. But each must endure difficulties with joy.

C. Those who do so will receive a crown of life from the Lord.

VI. Application

A. Have you welcomed the problem? Have I thanked the Lord for it?

B. Have I asked God for wisdom? Have I asked Him what to do or what not to do about it?

C. Have I doubted that God would help me if I asked? Do I expect God to answer?

D. We cannot do these things on our own, but only by the Holy Spirit that indwells us.