



SOAR

Marriage Growth-Track

Week 10 - Day 3

Trials and Joy

by Wes and Kim Holloway

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:2-4

Sounds crazy, doesn't it? Be glad when troubles come? How about when troubles go? But no, that's clearly not what James is telling us. This is what we see in these verses:

- Trials should be met with joy;
- Trials help to develop our faith further as we become more steadfast;
- Steadfastness equates to 'firmly fixed' which means trials help us to become more 'firmly fixed;'
- When we see our trials as opportunities to strengthen our faith, we can begin to view them joyfully

Most of us, if we're being completely honest, sort most of our problems and into one of two categories: those we can handle by ourselves and those we think we need God to help out with. But that's not the way God sees it or the way James tells us to, either.

God wants to handle all of our problems and James goes so far as to encourage us to be happy when we get to turn our problems over to Christ. To be clear, it's not that James is suggesting we actually enjoy the dilemmas of life; he's just pointing out the opportunity they present: the opportunity to draw closer to God to help us out of our pitiful state. James is preaching about viewing troubles with a big-picture mindset, not an in-the-moment-can't-see-past-tomorrow short-sighted kind of way. We get all wrapped up in relief and resolution and we want it now, now, now; James tells us there's more than meets the eye when troubles arise. He tells us every challenge—every challenge!!!-is an opportunity to get closer to God. And how, as Christ-followers, could we not want that?

Keep this in mind the next time you hit a snag in the road or Plan A goes awry. Before jumping in ready to tackle every trouble, ask God to step in. Allow him to guide your

words and control your actions. Ask him to oversee the outcome for His glory, not only what you want.

Call out to the sovereign creator—the true master of the universe. His ways are always intended for our best. His ways are meant to bring peace. And his ways provide endless opportunities to grow closer to him on the good days, the in-between days, and especially, the difficult ones.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever experienced what it is like to grow closer to one another as a result of weathering a storm?

Action Steps:

When a trial comes resist the urge to jump in and try to fix it. Instead pray together as a couple and ask God for the direction in solving the situation.

Prayer:

God, we realize you allow trials into our lives so that we may grow closer to you and so that our faith may be strengthened. Help us, from this point forward, to view these difficulties as the opportunities they are to grow in our steadfastness. Forgive our choices of the past when we have tried to orchestrate outcomes and handle problems on our own and help us to be more cognizant of the opportunities every trouble brings with it and not to be consumed with the temporary setbacks before us.