

“The Testing Of Our Faith”
James 1:2-8
Jerry Grey 2023, WBC

James 1:2-8

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

NIV

Introduction: In the winter of 2022 I experienced a tremendous amount of stress and testing. My mother was very sick and the care of her became overwhelming. Covid had been raging and ravaging the nation and we did not escape its clutches. I contracted Covid and then mother did as well. The Covid sent mother's dementia into overdrive. After three hospital stays, and an eight-week nursing home visit, I had almost had it. I had the weight of the church on my shoulders with all the duties of a pastor and very little help at home. That's not a criticism of anyone else because when you are the caregiver there are things you do that no one else can do but you; that's just the way it is. The church volunteers and my staff took up all the slack. Without my church family there would have been no way I would have survived it all. My staff filled in the holes for me. I would have had to take a bit of time off if not for my staff and deacons.

In all of the testing, I say with humility and godly pride, that I never let me duties as your pastor go unattended. I never came to

the pulpit unprepared or let my calling slip in the priorities of importance. However, I knew God was in charge and sovereign in the testing. I was being put on the tribulation block. I was literally being crushed from top to bottom. God was remaking me for His purpose. God was giving me a taste of what the Lord Jesus suffered as He died for our sins. Only in the breaking and remaking can we come to know Him in His fullness. God had found an enormous amount of dross and it had to come to the surface. I wish I could say that I passed all the tests and that I am 100 percent pure gold today but that is not the case. However, I do know that I didn't quit and that I am not the same after the testing. As a matter of fact, the testing is still in progress. I guess it will be until the Lord returns. From that testing came the blessings that we are experiencing today. My preaching has been blessed and the church as a whole.

I am reminded that Jeremiah had a similar experience. God came to the weeping prophet and told him to go to the potter's house and he could get his message for the people of the House of Israel. God had a Sunday sermon to give Jeremiah.

Jer. 18:1-7

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." 3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. 4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

5 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.
NIV

God can evaluate us at any time He chooses. He can remake us into what he desires. We are to be clay in His hands. Clay, many times, can become unusable. The potter has to stop and push the clay back down and start over. The Saints are often unusable and have to be remade. That's when the testing comes. James tells us about that in James 1:2-8.

Now, Concerning the clay that is used to make pottery... the pottery makers will tell you that often there is not good clay to use. Usually, out back of any pottery business, there is a pile of unusable clay that has been found to be useless. Many times, out back of the church, so to speak, there is a pile of lives that have become unyielding and useless too.

- Sometimes the clay is too hard. A person's heart can be like this. God tries to lead and guide a person and they just will not submit to God. The Lord of the pottery wheel has to smash it down and start over. He remakes the clay into something that is beautiful and useful. This is the rebellious and stubborn heart of a foolish Christian, and even a lost man. This is the unyielded spirit of a rebel.
- Sometimes the clay is too soft. Many hearts are just too soft to stand up under the pressure of the wheel. The clay is weak and will not allow the Master to shape it into anything useful. Many Christians are like this. They operate off of emotions and sentimentality without the truth or doctrine. They are nice people, but have no foundation or backbone. These folks are not givers, servers, or good disciples. They are blown by every wind of doctrine and often get fooled by the false teachers.
- The damaged life or heart. Dr. Gray Allison told a story about a pottery place he visited and saw a beautiful piece being used as a door stop. He asked about why the beautiful

piece was being used as a door stop. The owner said that many times the pottery will have an air bubble or foreign body in the clay and when the heat of the kiln is apply, a big gaping hole will show up in the piece and it will not be able to be sold.

Many times “a life” will have a problem, a crisis, or foreign body in it that will harm it and leave a big gaping hole in it. The ugly hole can be seen and will hinder that life and its effectiveness. The owner of the shop asked Dr. Gray to look on the back of the piece, and he did; there it was, a hole the size of a quarter right on the back. Now, your life and mine often times gets a big hole in it from sin, adultery, divorce, unfaithfulness, dishonesty, drug abuse or alcoholism.

Whatever the sin, it has to be fixed. The vessel has to be remade. Israel had to be remade on many occasions. King David had to be remade. Saul was remade into Paul. Abraham and Moses were remade. Many times, God remakes us into a better and useful vessel. If we do not respond to the remaking, we may end up on the scrap heap of useless pottery out back. We can become a useless life.

Quote: “Faith that is not tested is not faith.”

When the testing comes, you must know God is remaking you to make you more useful in His Kingdom. James explains this perfectly.

1. The Paradox of Testing: Verse 2 (Consider It Joy)

James 1:2

2 Consider it pure **joy**, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds...

- **Consider** it joy (**hegeomai**). To think about. Suppose, think, judge, or deem. When I was going through my difficulty I stopped and considered what God was doing. I prayed for guidance and understanding. I deemed my trials necessary and useful (**Aorist middle imperative**).
- We are also told to consider the test joyful. **This is the paradox.** Why in the world would I consider difficulty a joy? I am supposed to work with God to consider my testing a joy. This is also a command, not a suggestion. God is working with the Christian during the trial. We are to consider this action, not just complain about it.
- The text uses the word **pas**. (**πασαν χαραν: pasan char**)- This is **all joy** or **great joy**. From **pas**- all, every, whole, as many as, whatsoever, or whosoever. **Every part of joy** is to be expressed. **Char** is joy, cheerfulness, calm delight, gladness or fullness.
- Wait a minute! I am supposed to consider this difficulty in my life, this remaking process, a joy? You got to be spiritually kidding me, right? Nope, that's right.
- The first lesson is this... James is talking to the **brethren**, not the **unbelievers**. Only the Christian can count the trials and testing of life as joy. *The unbeliever cannot produce spiritual success through difficulty. This is the work of God.* God brings purpose into the testing. The testing is a part of the plan. God is making a product, you! God will even focus our sin and its consequences to shape our lives. Remember, the Potter always knows what He is making.
- Notice the word **whenever ('otav, hotan)**. This is **not** the word *if* or *maybe*. This is the word **when** or **whenever**. This word refers to certainty. Peter actually says that we are not to think that it is strange or be surprised about the testing. Testing will happen. Testing is in the plan.

1 Peter 4:12-13

12 Dear friends, do not be **surprised** at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something **strange** were happening to you.
NIV

- **Trials** is **peirasmos**. This means to be put to the proof, the testing of one's discipline, by implication, adversity. The root of **peirasmos** is **peirazo**, to scrutinize, entice, examine, tempt, prove, or try.
- **Divers** (KJV)- **poikos**. Various in character, or manifold. If there is one thing we know as a Christian it is this... trials and testings come in many *shapes*, *sizes*, and *colors*: Health problems, money problems, your children and their health, tribulations, trials, stress, strife, attacks, criticism, loss of employment, failure, and a million more.
- **Experience** is when you fall, when it happens, or when you experience. This is the word **peripipto** (Note Luke 10:30, The man fell among thieves). This is to fall into something that is all around. Isn't it strange that trouble is all around, all of the time. This is to light upon or be surrounded by. If there was ever a soul that could just happen upon testing, it is me. But remember, there are no accidents in the life of the Christian. God is in control.
- This is a 2 Aorist Active Subjunctive Second Person Plural. The Aorist tells us that this is something that will happen at some point in time. Testing can happen just whenever. The subjunctive means that there is the possibility of testing at any moment (potential action). The possibility is always there. If we pay attention, we can learn lots of spiritual lessons just by being aware or considering it all joy. We can even learn from other's trials if we are alert and cognizant. The verb is plural so we know that this will happen to everybody. Sometimes we think we are the only one that gets tested, not true. "When," we encounter testing, is the idea.

Translations:

- NASB- When you encounter a lot of trials.
- KJV- When you fall.
- ESV- When you meet.
- CEV- When you have a lot of trouble.
- HCSB- When you experience.
- NIV- Whenever you face.

* This shows the difficulty in translation and that the whole translation arguments are just unnecessary.

- So James, Paul, Peter, and even Jesus, tell us that we are to have Joy during the testing. Mercy!

1 Peter 4:12-19

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But **rejoice** that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be **overjoyed** when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are **blessed**, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, **do not be ashamed**, but praise God that you bear that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And,

"If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

19 So then, those who suffer **according to God's should** commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

NIV

2 Tim 1:8

8 So do not be **ashamed** to testify about our Lord, or **ashamed** of me his prisoner. But **join with me** in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life —
NIV

2 Tim 1:11-12

11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 **That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed**, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

NIV

Many people think that trials and suffering are a reflection of our sin or failure. Peter and James tell us they are from God and that they have purpose. I am not happy I have trouble or glad for the trouble, but I have joy knowing I am in the hands of, and being guided by, the hands of my Lord.

Testing and trials should not make you ashamed, depressed, or alarmed. We can have joy because we are identified with Christ in the testing. ***There is purpose in the difficulty and it identifies you as a Christian.***

1 Thess 3:2-5

We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, 3 so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them. 4 In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. 5 ***For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out***

about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.
NIV

2 Thess 1:3-4

3 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. 4 Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

NIV

1 Peter 1:6-7

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

NIV

2 Peter 2:9

9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

NIV

2. The Purpose of Testing: Verse 3 (Endurance)

James 1:3

3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.
NIV

“Because.” You can have joy in the trials **“because” (hoti)**! This is a big word in the text because it gives us the purpose for

the testing. We will get to endurance in just a moment but for now learn this... You can have joy because you know why the testing has come. You are being taught a confident trust in God (**Endurance**).

“You know” Ginosko. This is the word for knowledge, to be aware, to be sure, to perceive, to resolve, or my favorite, experiential knowledge. James says that we have the knowledge as to why we are in a pickle. We are to be aware that God put us in this test.

When we tell a child they cannot do something and they say, “why not;” you say, “because.” They say, “why not;” you say, “you know why.” Same process happens with God. Lord, “why is this happening?” “Because” I want to create an unyielding trust in your life of me, (GOD). I have told you why and you should know this.

“Testing” dokimion, which means trial, testing, checking for trustworthiness. We don’t like testing, but we do the same to our own children “because” it’s necessary. Love is given, trust is earned. They must earn trustworthiness. And they must learn to trust their parents.

Illustration: When we test materials we do so to the breaking point. We shatter glass, bend steel, and crash cars before we put them into public domain. The very steel that is over our heads was test to see if it can hold the weight up before we enter the building. When a material slips by and does not get tested, people get hurt. Make your own spiritual assessment. **Your talent can take you where your character can’t keep you.**

The testing of our faith does the same thing. We do not disparage engineers today because their work will save lives tomorrow. Even

though they busted up a bit of some perfectly good material in the testing.

Illustration: There is a documentary called, *Great Engineering Failures*. I think there are a few TV shows that investigate the same. I was amazed at all the simple mistakes in planning that caused bridges to fall and buildings to collapse. All because of poor material, little cracks in concrete, or poor planning.

If our lives and contributions to the Kingdom are more important than earthly testings, and they are, then our testing and trials are important and necessary. Character flaws that go uncorrected today will cause great disasters tomorrow, spiritually.

God is not tempting you to sin. We sin when we get tested because of our sinful humanity. We say, “God is tempting me to sin, to quit, or to lash out. Actually God is testing us to teach us endurance. Hear me well, “God never tests us to make us quit.” Never!!!

Illustration: A cornerback or safety on a football team has to be tested before the big game. The coach has to know how fast he is and if he can cover the opponent. If not, he will be a failure in the defense. He will give up big plays and cause the team to lose. The coach doesn’t test him to make him fail or quit; the coach tests him to make him better. The player’s weaknesses have to be exposed before the game.

Endurance is produced! **Hupomone**. This is translated as constancy, enduring, patience, or waiting. The purpose of the testing is to teach us endurance, not to make us quit or sin.

Hupomone comes from hupomeno:

-hupo, to be under, in, or with.
-meno- to remain or abide

~Hence, to remain under.

Illustration: White mice tested to see how long they could swim. The mice that were pulled out just before they drown learned to swim longer because of the hope of being pulled out. Many of the mice that only swam for a few minutes began to swim ten times that long.

Therefore, we may say that God's testing, trials, or experiences that He is giving us, is to teach us to remain under the difficulty so as to produce perseverance and spiritual fortitude. You are **“knowing”** this. Confidence in God's testing is what it's all about.

I have often said that if I know God's in it, I can endure it. Confusion and disillusionment bring weakness to us. Disillusionment and discouragement are from Satan.

God doesn't just take a life or make a person sick or cause a tragedy to harm us. But make no mistake, God works in all things to produce endurance and holiness in the life of the Christian. God never wastes a trial. We shouldn't either.

Just ask God to teach you, and teach you quickly. All things work together for the good to those who love God and are called to His purpose. Now you know what the purpose is.

Verse 3: Notice the different translations for the oft missed word “produces.”

Translations:

Produces- HCSB, NKJV, ESV

Learned- CEV (Common English Version)

Develops- NIV

Worketh- KJV

Easy To Read Version- “You know that when Your faith is tested, you learn to be patient in suffering.”

3. The Process of Testing: Verse 4 (Maturity)

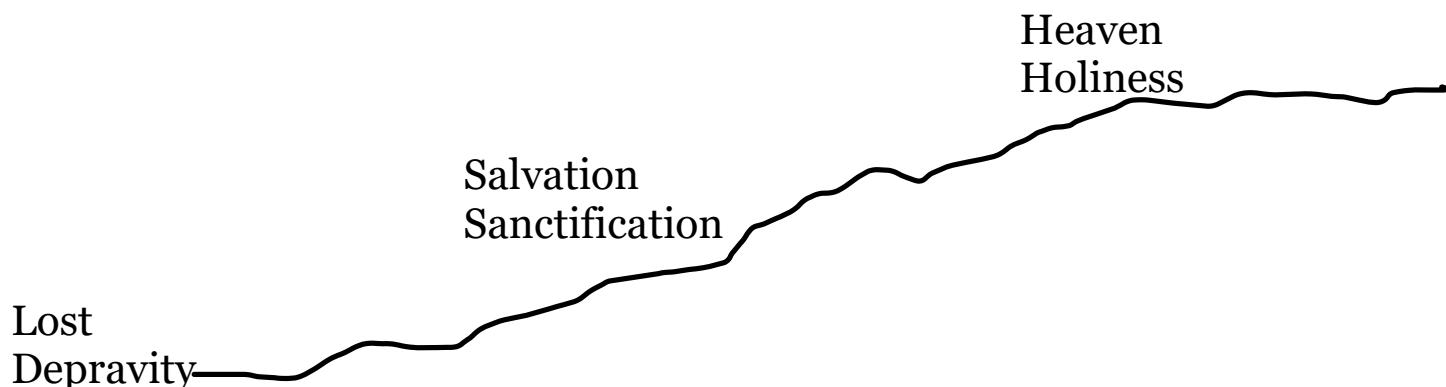
James 1:4

4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
NIV

The key words here are matriculation, continual progress, and destination. Let me say it this way... you start enduring at salvation, you never quit, and you continue until Jesus takes you home. God wants you to be mature in your faith. There are a multitude of blessings and peace in maturity.

We are saved and then put on a growth plan for spiritual works. The process is continual. God teaches us to make war spiritually. God is constantly teaching us. The patient person will learn to endure.

The Scale of Endurance



η δε 'υπομονα— But let this patience or work have her way.

How do we let the process succeed? Don't quit! *Spiritual Intestinal Fortitude*. You have to let God work. **This is called submission.**

James 4:7-10

7 **Submit** yourselves, then, to God. **Resist** the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you.

Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

NIV

~If you do not submit you cannot resist. If you quit, you do not submit.

Translations:

- Perseverance must finish her work- NIV
- But let Patience have her perfect work- KJV
- And let steadfastness have its full effect- ESV
- And let endurance have its perfect result- NASU
- But endurance must have or do its complete Work- HCSB

Easy To Read Version: “If you let patience work in you, the end result will be good. You will be mature and complete.”

Why do this? **'ινα (hina) So That!** Here, this is a subordinating conjunction. James is telling us why we are to let patience and endurance work. This is the **“so that”** of the clause. Let it happen “so that” you will be mature and complete.

So that you will get the full effect, the perfect result, finished product, which is expressed by the phrase **τελιον εχετω**, that is, so you will **have perfection**.

Notice the words *might be* or *may be*. This is **ἢτε** which is *might* or *may*. This is a subjunctive which refers to potential action, therefore, it may or may not happen depending on you. This is used with forms of verbs to be. So that you **might** be entire.

The text uses the words for **perfect** and **entire**:

(τελειοι και 'ολοκληροι). James, says Rogers, is continuing the OT thought that perfection represents a right relationship with God. This is expressed in undivided obedience and an unblemished life. The imperatives and being verbs with the **hina** speak of a continuing process with purpose. That purpose speaks in juxtaposition of endurance and maturity in all its parts... It is entire, whole, and healthy as in the sacrificial animals offered as offerings. The word indicates the entirety of all the Christian virtues (Mussner, quoted by Rogers, In Loc).

Τελειοσ— complete in labor, growth, mental and moral character, full of age, perfect.

- **Holokleros**- entire, whole, complete in every part.

-ολοσ, all together, every whit, throughout whole.

-κληρος, Throughout, comes from the idea of using bits of wood. By implication, a portion, an acquisition, patrimony, heritage, lot, part, an inheritance.

You get the idea... God takes every minute part of you (all the parts) and puts them together or remakes them into a healthy, whole, and complete person for His use.

Illustration: To drill a hole you need a drill, bit, battery or electricity, and a board. All the parts need to be working and in good shape to accomplish the task.

Without complete endurance, what happens?

The Purpose of endurance during testing is so that you do not lack anything.

The last word in verse 4 is enormous.

- **λειπο— (PPPTC)** To fail, to leave, to be absent, to be destitute, wanting, **to lack**. I know many Christians that are lacking in their walk with Jesus. We have members of the body that are missing and apathetic. When there is lack, the person suffers; the body of Christ suffers when there is lack. **Did you ever think your testing is not only for you but for the body of Christ.**

God does His work of testing and trials so that we as a body do not lack.

- **μηδεις— nothing.** Not even one man or woman. Not even one. Nothing, none, no delay.

Illustration: What would it be like to live as a Christian, so maturely, that you can handle any circumstance that comes your way. You would lack no wisdom, or spiritual virtue, no strength, or spiritual fortitude. You would be complete and healthy, lacking nothing. God has given you every spiritual tool He offers to build the kingdom and for your good spiritual health.

This is the application of the message. The **paradox**, the **purpose**, and the **process** are all to end in Christian maturity. Then we are complete and can experience or endure in all things and in various trials with joy.

4. The Promise of Testing: Verse 5 (Wisdom)

James 1:5-6

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.
NIV

Trials and testing bring confusion. No matter how long you have served Christ, there will be circumstance and difficulties that will test your limits of endurance. Many unanswered questions will arise. You will find yourself in a test that makes no sense to you.

Questions we ask:

- Why is this happening to me?
- Have I unknowingly sinned?
- Why is God not answering my prayers.
- Does God not love me anymore?
- What good could ever come from this?
- Why is this happening *at this time*.
- Doesn't God know what I am already dealing with?
- Why now, my life was going along just fine?
- I have been more faithful recently than ever, why?
- Is God trying to kill me?

All great questions, and may I say, you need to take them to the source. God can handle your questions. It's not unspiritual to seek answers. Even Jesus asked why. As a matter of fact, God tells us through James *to ask*. In reality, life just does this to people; however, for the believer, God is involved in, and works in, all things for our good. God is Sovereign in our lives or He's not. I choose to believe that nothing comes to me without His permission. I would rather believe that no matter what happens that a loving God has given me this trial for a purpose than to think my troubles are just a product of random life circumstances.

God loves me more than that. The testing will work for my good even if it's in the next life. That is not a cop out either. Most of my tests have proven productive **in this life**, no matter how painful.

God is Sovereign in the lives of all people but weaves, knits, and brings endurance to believers. **There's purpose in our various trials, no matter how devastating and painful.**

The promise is this... **εἰ**. The conditional particle means **if**. If you lack wisdom or a spiritual virtue, ask God for help. If you are missing a drill bit or battery of holiness or endurance, then ask for help. Same word used as in verse 4 for *lack*. If you lack it... ask for it.

Sophia- Wisdom. The text is a *first-class conditional sentence* in Greek. The passive form of the verb in verse five (lack) picks up the passive participle form in verse 4. This forms the construction of the first-class conditional clause. What does this mean?

Rogers says that this presupposes a standing fact. This is an accepted fact as true.

You may not understand the Greek grammar but let me put it this way for you to grasp. God has used James to write a spiritual promise in this grammar that absolutely says that God has committed Himself to a certain promise. **This is a statement of truth. That if you ask God for wisdom about your situation that God is bound to answer you by giving you wisdom. Now that's a promise. God has put Himself in an obligated position to encourage you to ask.**

This is an accepted fact of truth that If we ask for wisdom about our testing that God has promised to answer us and give us wisdom.

God does not discriminate in this. He gives to anyone that asks and does not get mad about your asking.

Translations: **Upbraideth: Oneidizo**, to defame, chide, rail, reproach, revile, or taunt.

Upbraideth- KJV
 Criticizing HCSB,
 Without reproach- ESV

James 1:5- Easy To Read Version

5 Do any of you need wisdom? Ask God for it. He is generous and enjoys giving to everyone. So he will give you wisdom.

God not only has promised **not** to chide us when we ask for wisdom, but has also promised to give us wisdom generously (**haplos**). This word means bountiful or generous.

God will give... God shall give, **didomi**, which is also a **divine passive** in the original. God shall give, future passive indicative.

5. The Problem of Testing: Verse 6 (Doubt)

James 1:6

6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. NIV

The verse starts with an imperative. Let him ask in **faith**. If you ask, ask in faith, or don't ask. If you do not have faith, you become a wavering wave of the sea. Tossed by the wind and the storm.

Wavering- diakrino. To discriminate, judge, question, discern, stagger, waver, be partial, oppose, or separate. You get the idea. You judge what God has said to be true. You start thinking and reasoning and stop believing. You have been told to consider, but consider in faith, not doubt.

Driven and tossed- anemos, the four corners of the earth. The air that blows from the four corners.

Tossed- rhizo- to breeze up, agitate, toss.

Faith and trust in God are a lot easier than unbelief and getting tossed around like a wave of the sea and driven by the winds that come from every direction.

6. The Premise of Testing: Verse 7 (Assumption)

James 1:7

7 That man should **not** think he will receive anything from the Lord...
NIV

Oiomai- To assume or think. If you doubt you **cannot** assume upon God. You get nothing without faith.

Heb 11:6

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.
NIV

We are professionals at assuming upon God. We assume we know who God is, and how He acts, and even think we know what He is doing. His ways are not our ways. That's why we need to ask for wisdom.

CHS: *When you go through a trial, the sovereignty of God is the pillow upon which you lay your head. A little faith will bring your soul to heaven; a great faith will bring heaven to your soul.*

Get the faith of the limpet (Marine gastropod). All it knows how to do is cling to the rocks in the ocean. The only thing it knows to do is hang on. Its entire existence rests in clinging. Ours should be also.

7. The Psychosis of Testing: Verse 8 (Double-minded)

James 1:8

8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does
NIV

If we are talking about terrible spiritual conditions, let me tell you, this is awful. This is it! If you think your mind is confused or troubled now, just think if you had two minds in one head. And think about the fact that the two minds are not on the same page. Why, it would be impossible to live in any world with clarity or peace. Can you imagine the confusion in your head if you had two brains or minds?

May we call this the Bipolar Spiritual Christian. You want to trust God but your mind talks you out of it. You can't make a decision because you are, as the text says, unstable. Not trusting God makes you a mess. Your second brain responds to lies, falsehoods and delusions.

Double minded: *dipsuchos*, two-minds. Two-spirited, two opinions, two directions, two purposes.

Unstable: *akathistemi*, alpha privative... the opposite of *Kathistemi*, which means ordain, appoint, conduct, also from

histemi which means- stanch, stand, constitute, establish a covenant, appoint, continue, or abide.

A double minded person is not stable. You can't abide, or establish anything without faith. We literally become spiritually psychotic without faith. None of our ways are stable. Have you seen these people? Are you that person?

Closing: I know that life can be difficult and I know that it can be unbearable. I also know that we cannot endure it on our own. God will bring more upon you that you can stand so that He can teach you endurance. When God becomes the most important thing to us, then we are where we need to be. When the testing of our faith becomes a joy because of an abiding and stable faith, then we are receiving wisdom and endurance as a gift from the Father. I promise you that it will be worth it all when we see Jesus!

Illustration: An artist made a beautiful vase and it was very valuable. It was his finest work to date. As he displayed it to all his friends they marveled at its beauty. Then right in front of their eyes he took a hammer to it and crushed it into small pieces. His friends were shocked and distressed at the seemingly unnecessary act of ridiculousness. The party was over and all the disturbed guest departed. He then began to sweep all the small pieces up and took them to his work station. There he began another work more beautiful than the first. He took each broken piece and put it back together with gold. He inlaid gold into each crack and crevasse of the broken vessel. When it was finished the vase was more beautiful than ever before. This is a great picture of the sovereign hand of God that loves us enough to shatter us occasionally so as to rebuild us into a more beautiful and useful vessel. How broken you are is not the most important thing; whose hands you are in when you are broken and how you are put back together is what makes the usefulness of the vessel.

1 Peter 1:6-9

6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. **7** These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. **8** Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, **9** for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

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