

Book Overview - THE MATURE CHRISTIAN:

Chapter 1: **Confidence** in Turmoil (TRIALS)

Chapter 2: **Conviction** in Action (WORKS)

Chapter 3: **Control** of Word & Behavior (TONGUE)

Chapter 4: **Cleansing** of Self (LUST)

Chapter 5: **Connection** with God (RICH)

4 Steps to Maturity (from James, chapter 1)

1. **EXODUS – your salvation** - 1:18 *“In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth”*
2. **EXAMINE – your self** - 1:23-25 *“For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.”*
3. **EXERCISE the truth** 1:22 *“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”*
4. **ENDURANCE through trials** 1: 2-4 *“let endurance have its perfect result ...”*

TODAY’S TEXT – James 1: 2-8

- 2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,
- 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
- 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
- 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
- 6 But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.
- 7 For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,
- 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Re: TRIALS

Key truth: God can withhold any trial – therefore, every trial I face, God has allowed for a purpose

THE SPIRITUALLY MATURE APPROACH TO A TRIAL

1. See each from a positive (joyful) perspective, believing God has a purpose (v. 2)
 - a. 1 Thess. 5:18 In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus
 - b. Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
2. Know that persevering through the trial will test and PROVE your faith and character – both to God, yourself and others. (v. 3)
3. Know that the trial will build endurance for other trials in life's "long haul" (v. 4)
4. Know that the trial is necessary for "Christ formation" in you – the path to perfect completeness which is God's goal for you (Romans 8:29)

Re: WISDOM

5. Seek God for His wisdom through the trial – for attitude and decisions (v. 5)

Q: When do we most need wisdom?

A: In turmoil – times of doubt, difficulty, despair

- a. We must RECOGNIZE our need for wisdom outside of our own resources
- b. We must ASK GOD – verbalizing our need and humbling our attitude
- c. We must BELIEVE in the promised provision, watching alertly for it
- d. We must know the GOD WILL GIVE generously and w/o humiliation or scolding. He WANTS you to ask, He WANTS to give you wisdom

LORD I NEED YOUR WISDOM by Craig Crawshaw

Lord, I need Your wisdom. I want to know your way. Speak dear Lord, and I will obey.

Lord, I need Your wisdom. I dare not trust my own. So, I come, waiting at your throne.

So many ways to choose - I come to You confused. I need Your light to guide my way.

Though some may choose their own, I trust in You alone. And so, I come and humbly say:

Lord, I need Your wisdom to foil the tempter's power. Share Your light 'specially for this hour.

Lord, I need Your wisdom. My mind is Yours to fill - that my thoughts might express Your will. Amen.

James 1: 2-8 (My Paraphrase)

2-4. Take a different perspective at the many trials you face, seeing the positive in them, rather than the negative. One, your faith is being proven and strengthened. And two, you are developing endurance for the long haul of life. Don't balk at being tested, but hang in there, letting the tests accomplish their Godly purpose: your maturity, that you may be spiritually "buff" without flabbiness or weakness of character.

5. Remember, if you need wisdom (and who doesn't?), just ask God, who gives it abundantly and without making you feel bad for asking. Just ask, and Godly wisdom will indeed be given to you.

6-8. But you have to ask really believing the answer will come. No doubting allowed! Because if you doubt, you are acting just like the waves of the sea blown around by the wind – up one minute with your belief and down the next with your doubts. This kind of supposed “faith” won't get you anything from God. He doesn't accept on-again, off-again faith, which by the way, indicates instability in other areas of life.