

## Trials by Design (Go To Meeting)

Ray Murray—February 21, 2025

Why do we have trials and problems? As we've experienced today, the endurance of those that have stayed to hear the message. I thank you for that. And thank you for Steve and everybody working toward that end to make this actually happen so that the message could go out. We're asking the question: Why do we have so many trials and problems?

James 1:2: "Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything" (vs 2-4).

And that is what I want to focus on this afternoon.

James said: "**Consider it all joy...**" In other words, *it's the way that we look at things that is important!* Not necessarily what we're struggling through with the time.

So the way that we look at our trials and the things that we're going through is very important. Why? James gives the answer in:

Verse 3: "...knowing that **the testing of your faith...**"

- **testing** is proving
- **faith** is the evidence of things not yet seen

You all hung in there this afternoon for more than three-quarters of an hour in the hope and the belief that we would actually overcome the problems and be able to go through the Word of God together this afternoon. That has produced **endurance!**

Verse 4: "But **let** endurance have *its* perfect work... [have its fullness, perfect fullness of what it is intended to achieve within us] ...so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything."

This is what God is focused on, *that we don't be lacking in anything!* He wants us to be like Him.

Genesis 1:26: "And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness...'"

So, He's fashioning us to be like Him. Trials are key to that because they test our faith, they prove us.

Proverbs 17:3: "The refining pot *is* for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tries the hearts."

He tries our hearts through the problems and things that we struggle through. As He said, He said *He would never leave us or forsake us!* He's always at our right hand. That is where David constantly put God, in the right hand as a reminder to himself that God was always there. He conducted himself in that manner, as well.

So, it's interesting that the refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold. When you look at the original ore of silver, you first have to go looking for it. **Christ and the Father have personally chosen each one of us, personally selected us and called us!** When you go looking for silver, you have to look for where there is an abundant amount of it. So that it is worthwhile putting all the effort in to get it out.

But when they originally take the silver ore, it's not a silver color. It's actually a dull charcoal grey. It doesn't look like silver at all. The process is quite astounding, what it has to go through in order to be refined.

First they crush it. Then they put a silver precipitate through it to take out the impurities. They put it through a crucible, a metal furnace, to refine it. They add flux to it, which forms a slag and it takes all the impurities and floats them to the surface where they can be seen and removed.

They put an acid through it to dissolve the metal, and other substances as well, to be able to extract from the ore silver, gold and palladium. At the end of the process, having gone through all of that, you end up with pure silver. And pure silver is like a mirror.

It's interesting that this Proverb talks about silver. There is so much in the Bible that's said about silver. It's interesting being a mirror. When God looks at the silver that He's refined in us, He sees His own reflection back at Him because the impurities have been taken out. It's quite astounding!

In this world, we have struggles. There are three sources of struggling and trials, which I term the three S's.

- Satan
- society
- self

### **SATAN**

1-Peter 5:8: "**Be sober! Be vigilant!....**"

These are frames of mind. This is being watchful, being careful, not careless.

“...For **your adversary** the devil... [someone who is against us] ...is prowling about as a roaring lion, **seeking anyone he may devour**” (v 8).

Ephesians 6:12: “Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood... [people or one another] ...**but against principalities and against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age**, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*.”

It permeates the entirety of humanity. This is our adversary. This is what we are up against.

### SOCIETY

Christ identified another source. Another source of our problems and trials.

John 16:33—*Christ speaking to His disciples*: “These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you shall have tribulation. But be courageous! I have overcome the world.**”

Notice again *it’s a mindset; it’s a decision!* “...**Be courageous...**” Why? ***Because Christ has overcome the world! He has already done it!*** There is a way through.

### SELF

Romans 8:7: “Because the carnal mind is enmity... [it is an enemy] ...against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*.”

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. So, apart from God and without His Spirit the natural mind is an enemy against God. That is the state that we’re all born into.

God has done it by design, ***declared from before the ages of time***. The way that He would bring about having many sons and daughters. If there had been any other way, He would have done it. But this is the way that it needs to be so that we can have a choice:

- to love God
- to love one another

*And to actually want it, not to have it forced on us!*

So we’re struggling with these three sources of trials, and today I want to focus on the aspect of ***the testing of our faith*** that happens through trials.

Ephesians 2:8: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; ***it is the gift of God.***” *God gives us faith:*

- to believe in Him
- to know Him
- to trust Him

We need to exercise that gift of faith in order to grow to become like Him in nature and in character. If you notice at the first start of the verse:

**“For by grace you have been saved...”**

That’s in the past tense as far as God is concerned. The process that He has started with each and every one of us. He will carry it out, but it’s subject to our compliance and our willingness to do what is needed. We have a choice, ***but it is God Who is working in us!***

Verse 9: “**Not of works...**”

It’s not our own works that do anything. It’s not what we can achieve. Of and by ourselves apart from God. That’s not what it’s about.

“...**so that no one may boast**” (v 9). *So that we don’t fall in pride and compare ourselves amongst ourselves with others.*

As we know, ***‘all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.’ There are none who do righteous.*** And all of ***‘our righteousnesses are as filthy rags before God!’*** God judges the heart. He’s refining us to be like Him.

Verse 10: “For we are His workmanship, being created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them.”

We are expected to produce good works. As a consequence of what God is doing in our lives has done through the work of Jesus Christ and has sacrificed for us. Giving us of His Holy Spirit, that we might have the power to choose what is right, and to do those things that are right, done in faith. ***It’s because we believe what we believe that we do what we do!*** And we do those things that are right.

I’m just reminded of the Scripture where God said:

Zechariah 4:6: “...This *is* the Word of the LORD to Zerubbabel, saying, ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit’...”

It is God Who is the One Who is working in us, to will and to do His good pleasure!

Psalms 33:12: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, and the people He has chosen for His own inheritance.” ***They’re blessed!***

And blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. And the people he has chosen for his inheritance.

Verse 13: “The LORD looks down from heaven; He beholds all the sons of men.”

Can you imagine sitting there beside God and looking down on the earth, and seeing everybody. Looking through every rooftop and seeing what’s happening in the houses. And even more, to be able to look into men’s hearts. And to see what they’re actually thinking. He can do that at the same time in real time with every single person. *An astounding God!*

Verse 14: “From His dwelling place He looks intently upon all the inhabitants of the earth. Together He fashions their hearts alike; He considers all their works” (vs 14-15).

He looks at both the good things and the bad. He sees everything; there’s nothing hidden from him.

Verse 15: “Together He fashions their hearts alike...”

So, you’ve got people doing good things and bad things at the same time. And interacting with one another. And in that process, God is fashioning people’s heart and mind one against the other, like the silver being crushed. We knock off each other’s rough edges. Sometimes we have to put up with some problems from others, and it’s a painful process.

Verse 18: “Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon those who fear Him...”

- He’s watching
- He’s looking
- Who has respect for Me?
- Who is taking it to heart?

“...upon those who hope in His loving kindness... [Why?] ...to deliver their soul from death...” (vs 18-19).

- God is concerned
- He’s watching
- He sees everything

“...and to keep them alive in famine” (v 19).

He knows how to feed us and provide for us. It’s hard when we’re going through a trial. We’re doing everything that we can; we’re crying out to God, and yet still, it seems like the heavens are brass and that our prayers are not being heard. *But that’s just our perspective!*

God is watching all the time. The seven spirits of His seven eyes; there’s nothing that escapes Him. But it’s a matter of His timing as He fashions us. He purifies us from the impurities that we have to see how we’re going to choose when we’re under pressure.

- What are we going to decide?
- Are we going to decide to rely on God and exercise that faith and the things that are not yet seen in that belief?

*or*

- Are we going to cut and run and try and sort it out our way?
- Take a shortcut?
- Do things that are wrong?

*In order to satisfy an urgent need!*

- God knows what we need
- He’s able to supply

Verse 21: “For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His Holy name. Let Your loving kindness, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in You” (vs 21-22).

We just need to hang on! To let endurance produce that which God is looking for in us. The purifying and testing of our faith.

- Are we going to hang on to Him?
- Are we going to keep doing things the right way?

Psalm 34:7: “The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them.”

There are angels about us, to deliver us. This is what the Scriptures are saying. I had someone tell me once that they actually had their eyes opened to see an angel of the Lord in their campfire. Quite astounding!

Verse 8: “O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.”

We go through trials and troubles. ***But it’s by:***

- going through these trials and troubles
- keeping our eyes on God and on His Word
- doing those things that He said to do

that our faith is tested and increased! We see God’s deliverance and His provision. That is what it’s saying in:

Verse 8: “O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.”

We take refuge in God by keeping His Word; by continuing and enduring.

Verse 9: “O fear the LORD, all you saints, for there is nothing lacking to those who fear Him.”

It might be uncomfortable at the meantime. It might not be the situation we want to be in. But we’ve desperately tried to avoid. Yet, we find ourselves in

that situation still. God hasn't abandoned us. We just need to endure and keep on keeping on.

Verse 10: "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing." *God knows what we need, He will supply it!*

Verse 17: "The righteous cry, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of ALL their troubles."

Notice it doesn't say some of them, or some of the time; God hears and delivers them out of **ALL** of their troubles.

Verse 18: "The LORD is near to the broken-hearted..."

That's what happens when we go through trials. It's excruciating, and we become broken-hearted. It's a painful process. But God is near to those.

"...and saves those who are of a contrite spirit" (v 18).

- Contrite! Crushed!
- Respecting God!
- Recognizing where we are and where God is!
- Knowing the difference!
- Being humble!

Verse 19: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all His bones; not one of them is broken" (vs 19-20)

I had a friend who was riding a motorbike, years ago, and he was attacked by a guy in a vehicle, because he didn't like young guys on motorbikes out in the bush. He knocked him off his bike and ran him over. And, you know, God protected him. He didn't have one broken bone. In spite of what he went through, he did not suffer one broken bone.

Verse 21: "Evil shall slay the wicked; and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned."

The problems that other people bring upon us. Because they choose to behave badly. It's going to end badly for them. Ultimately, we will see that when we're on the Sea of Glass, and Christ intervenes in this world's affairs and fights against them. He destroys those who destroyed his people. But He does it out of love to teach them the consequences of wrong choices.

And as we know, there is the second resurrection for those that have not committed the unpardonable sin. They will have an opportunity to understand and to respond in a right way to God.

But at the moment under the inspiration of Satan the devil, and the seeming less ability to get away with things that are wrong, people carry on getting away with things that are wrong. ***But there is coming a day of judgment!***

Verse 22: "The LORD redeems the soul of His servants..." *He buys us back!*

Sometimes we can feel like we are sold into slavery financially, and in many other ways. But ***God can buy us back!***

"...and none of them who take refuge in Him shall be condemned" (v 22).

- we keep our eyes on God
- He is our deliverer
- He is our help
- we have peace through the blood of Christ

*We know the outcome that will be for us, and for those in this world that are causing us problems!*

So many times the testing of our faith can come in the form of our identity being challenged. That's exactly what the devil did to Jesus Christ.

Matthew 4:1: "Then Jesus was led up into the wilderness by the Spirit **in order to be tempted by the devil.** And when He had fasted for forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was famished" (vs 1-2)—*He was hungry! He was probably close to death!*

Verse 3: And when **the tempter** came to Him... [that is the devil] ... he said, '**IF** You are the Son of God... [he was challenging Christ's identity; trying to sow the seed of doubt] ...command that these stones become bread.'"

Verse 4: "But He [Jesus] answered *and* said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God.'" *Christ used the Word of God to answer!*

Verse 5: "Then the devil took Him to the Holy City and set Him upon the edge of the temple and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down...' (vs 5-6).

Here Satan is, again, a second time *trying to sow a seed of doubt.* Challenging Jesus' identity.

"...for it is written..." (v 6). *Now, here comes the twist, Satan is now reciting Scripture; quoting God!*

"...He shall give His angels charge concerning You, and they shall bear You up in *their* hands, lest You strike Your foot against a stone'" (v 6). ***Tempting Christ to tempt God!***

Verse 7: "Jesus said to him, 'Again, it is written, "You shall not tempt *the* Lord your God.'"

### ***Again Christ used the Scriptures!***

We, too, need to use the Scriptures in the situation that we are in and filter the things that we are going through with the Word of God.

Verse 8: “After that, the devil took Him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and said to Him, ‘All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me’” (vs 8-9).

*Satan was offering him a shortcut.* He didn’t have to go through the problem that Christ knew was coming. He could have it all now; just do what Satan said. It’s interesting that ***Christ did not challenge him that he did not have the power to do that, or the authority!***

Verse 10: “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve.”’ Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and ministered to Him” (vs 10-11).

Can you imagine how hard it would have been for those angels just sitting and watching; ***and the Father!***

- seeing what Christ went through
- seeing Him being tempted and challenged

Yet, Christ used the Word of God, and He endured, in faith ***knowing:***

- the Plan of God.
- that he had a work to do

### ***He overcame the evil one!***

Likewise we, too, have our challenges and trials that test us.

1-Thessalonians 1:2: “We give thanks to God always concerning all of you, making mention of you in our prayers. Without fail, we remember your work of faith, and *your* labor of love, and *your* endurance in *the* hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father; knowing your election, brethren, *as you are* beloved by God” (vs 2-4).

We see each other’s examples in the things that They do. That encourages us. And as the Apostle Paul said, ‘We don’t forget it. We notice. ***But we do these things because of what God is doing in us! It’s a work of faith!***

**“..Your work of faith. Your labour of love. Your endurance and hope...”** (v 3).

All of these things work together. We can’t have one without the other. The necessity of trials and tests ***strengthens us***, and gives opportunities for others to step in and help when we need help. When

we see an opportunity where someone else is struggling, so that we can help and share the burden; lighten the load for them.

1-John 1:4: “These things we are also writing to you, so that **your joy** may be completely full. And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that God is Light, and there is no darkness at all in Him. If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth. **However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin**” (vs 4-7).

This is our identity; it is in Christ because of what God is doing in us. The way that we live affects each other.

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (vs 8-10).

So, even though we try to do what is right. We still sin, and that sin has an effect upon one another, on each other. We need to make allowance for forbearance with one another. Recognizing the nature that we all struggle against. The problems that we are all trying to overcome. and giving each other time and space to make the changes, because their heart is in the right direction. Sin happens, and how we respond to it is up to us.

1-John 4:4: “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is He Who *is* in you than **the one who is in the world.**”

Ephesians 2:2: “...according to **the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience.**”

But our identity is that. ***we are the children of God!*** And we have overcome those around us in the world, not because of what we can do.

1-John 4:4: “...because **greater is He** [God] **Who is in you** than **the one** [Satan] **who is in the world.**” ***God wins!***

- Are we going to work with that in the choices that we make?
- Are we going to remember that in the heat of the moment?
- When we are under pressure in the fiery trials?

Verse 6: “We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us... [that’s why you are here today] ...the one who is not of God does not listen to us.”

You are listening to God; to the Word of God being expounded.

“...By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception. Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because God is love” (vs 6-8).

- Do we live love?
- Do we govern our decisions, our thoughts, our actions with the best intentions and approaches toward other people?
- For the best outcomes?

Verse 9: “In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.”

That’s the promise of eternal life, and also having a life worth living; overcoming the challenges, the problems, the trials, the difficulties one with another.

Verse 10: “In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins”—*the ongoing atonement for us!*

When we find we fall over, we sin; we can go back to God in repentance. Asking for His forgiveness, and the blood of Christ cleanses us.

Romans 8:1: “Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...”

Having that blood covering them. Because Christ has overcome the evil one in this world. It’s through Christ’s blood that we have the victory, and that last enemy that will be gone is death.

1-John 4:16: “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him. By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world. **There is no fear in the love of God...**” (vs 16-18).

There is nothing to fear except fear itself. A good bumper sticker would be: ***Fear God. No fear!***

The consequence of having the awesome respect of God, recognition of what He’s doing. Working with Him and responding to Him in the right

way. ***The outcome of that is that we have nothing to fear!***

Now we may go through trials and problems in the meantime, and scary situations. But ultimately there is no torment, and there is nothing to fear, because we know His promises. That He will provide. He will get us through. **And ultimately we will inherit eternal life!**

Verse 18: “There is no fear in the love of God; rather, **perfect love casts out fear** because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God.”

Sometimes we fear because we are about to lose something. But in the overall scheme of things, what is it that we are going to lose when we have the promise of inheriting all things with Christ (Heb. 12).

When we put things in perspective, see things from God’s point of view:

- let endurance have its perfect work in us
- in testing our faith
- hanging on to God
- keeping our eyes on Christ and in the faith of God
- keeping on, keeping on

Verse 19: “We love Him because he loved us first. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, **how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?**” (vs 19-20).

The way we interact with each other is crucial. As Christ said in some of His parables:

He gave Me water to drink, food to eat, and clothes for Me when I was naked.

When did we see You, Lord, in that state? He said, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of these, you have done it to Me (Matt. 25:40)

*God takes it personally!*

- He sees
- He is watching intently
- He is looking with expectation to each one of His future sons and daughters

***We now are the children of God***, but He is fashioning us to be like Him. How excited He must be when He sees us making the right choices. He is able to bless us and deliver us, because we made the right choices.

What joy there must be amongst the angels when they see us returning to God ***if*** we have departed from Him in some way.

1-Peter 2:9: “But you *are* a chosen stock, a royal priesthood... [that is speaking of us; those

whom God has specially selected; personally called] ...a Holy nation...”—***a nation without blemish!*** *Holiness: this is what God calls us through the Apostle Peter!*

“...a Holy nation, a people for a possession of God, that you might proclaim His *excellent* virtues, Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light” (v 9).

How do we know God’s virtues if we have never been through troubles, and never seen His deliverance or experienced it. We are going through these things that increases our faith, because:

- we see His answers.
- we see His deliverance

***It strengthens us and builds our faith even more!***

In the process we become stronger, more able to endure problems in the future, replaced with bigger problems, because we can then handle it. God wants us to be fully complete, lacking in nothing. He wants to give us all things with Christ, ***and inhabit an eternity with Him!***

Keeping these things in mind, it puts everything into perspective, and helps us to keep on keeping on.

Verse 10: “Who once *were* not a people, but now *are the* people of God; who had not received mercy, but now have received mercy.... [through what Christ has done] ...Beloved, I exhort *you*, as strangers and sojourners...” (vs 10-11).

That is *we’re temporary* here. We don’t belong to this world.

“...to restrain yourselves from fleshly lusts which war against the soul” (v 11).

We live in a world that has chosen no restraint; if it feels good do it.

Verse 12: “Having your way of life honest among the Gentiles so that although they speak against you as evildoers...”

These are people who don’t understand what God is doing, or the things that God has asked us to do. They look at you and me and they see us doing these things, they speak against us as if we’re doing something wrong.

*Peter is encouraging us to continue that:* “...through having witnessed *your* good works...” (v 12).

That is we’ve made the right choices in bad situations; where people have treated us badly and abominably. When we had every right to do what we wanted to do to extract justice.

- we ‘fore-bear’ with them
- we’ve worked with them

***to help them to overcome or work through a situation that’s been difficult!*** In so doing ‘heaped of coals of fire on their head.’ We haven’t responded the way that they would think that we should respond. They look at that and they think:

- What’s wrong with you?
- Why are you doing that?

“...through having witnessed *your* good works, they may glorify God in *the* day of visitation” (v 12).

They remember our good works, the things that we do. That stand out in situations where it’s been difficult. When God does visit them they will remember those things. Whether that be now in this age, or at the second resurrection. And it will make it easier for them, because they’ve already been witnessed to by you and me. Because the choices we made are based in faith. Going through that fire of the trial where everything inside us screams:

- I want revenge
- I want justice
- I want it now

Yet, we yield to God. We don’t return evil for evil, ***but we overcome evil with good!*** This is exactly what Christ was talking about:

Matthew 5:44: “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”

By taking this attitude. It actually lessens the burden on us. It also helps them.

Verse 45: “So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father... [in the image of God, how He would respond] ...Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and on *the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and on *the* unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?” (vs 45-47). ***The tax collectors were despised and hated!***

If we only do those things that they do, and we don’t behave like God does—Where’s the difference?

Verse 48: “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.”

***We can choose*** how we choose to respond. We can do it in a way of love. It doesn’t mean that we have to accept what they do or go along with what

they do. We can resist it, but we don't join in with it and stand against it. But it does mean that *we don't retaliate!*

But as we are able and as they're willing, we do what we can. To help them through the trouble, the problem that they're going through. We do that by walking in love, sifting it through what God says. What has God said about this situation in His Word? Ask God for wisdom, and He'll give it. Sometimes the wisest thing might be to make yourself scarce, to leave the situation.

Romans 12:17: "Do not render to anyone evil for evil, *but* be prepared to do what is right in the sight of all men."

This is walking in faith, with the belief and understanding of what God has said. It's exercising righteousness. It's giving and walking in love.

Verse 18: "If possible, as much as is your part, be at peace with all men."

Some people won't be. They'll flat out refuse. But just obnoxious. It doesn't matter what you say or do. There's nothing that's going to help.

But as much as we can. We be at peace. And as I said before, if necessary, leave the situation and go and pray about it and ask God to deal with it.

Verse 19: "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves; rather, leave *this* to *God's* wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine! I will recompense," says *the* Lord.' Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in doing this you will be heaping coals of fire on his head" (vs 19-20).

It's a totally unexpected reaction. And it will burn on their minds. And they will remember it.

Verse 21: "**Do not be overcome by evil...**"

With the choices we make, don't allow a situation or a bad situation to overcome us.

"...**but overcome evil with good**" (v 21). Do those good works that Christ and God the Father had prepared before the ages of time. Walk in them, which is the way of love. Walking in His Commandments, in wisdom and in righteousness.

1-Peter 5:5: "In the same manner, *you* younger men be subject to *the* older men; and all of *you* be subject to one another, being clothed with humility..."

How many problems would this avoid if we took this attitude, this approach. ***This is walking in faith!***

"...because God sets Himself against *the*

proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble" (v 5).

By taking an attitude of humility you'll be less likely to cause further problems, Or to generate them.

Verse 6: "Be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time."

We don't have to puff ourselves up. God is the One Who will do it in due time. Circumstances will change, and ultimately at the resurrection we will be exalted to eternal life. As we know, that first resurrection is the better resurrection, because we've walked in faith. We've been strengthened and endure, and we've let endurance produce its fruit.

Verse 7: "Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you."

Take it to God! Pour out your heart to Him. David did all the time; he went through some pretty tough things. So did Christ, and Moses.

Verse 8: "Be sober! Be vigilant!... [these are states of mind] ...**For your adversary the devil is prowling about as a roaring lion**, seeking anyone he may devour. Whom resist, **steadfast in the faith...**" (vs 8-9).

We stand against him [Satan]. ***We know*** what we know, ***we believe*** what we believe, ***because we've proved it to be true, and we've seen God's deliverance!*** As we get our faith tested.

Verse 9: "Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world."

The same problems happen to everybody in the world, but we have an advantage. ***We have Almighty God!*** His help, and the blood of Christ to cover us. We have the power of His Holy Spirit to be able to make the right choices; ***to exercise and walk in love***—with one another and to those not in the Church amongst the world that we live in—***as examples and witnesses!*** They see our faith. They may not respect it, but they do see it. One day they will respect it.

Verse 10: "Now, may the God of all grace, Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after *you* have suffered a little while... [it's just a little while putting it in perspective of eternity] ...Himself perfect you, establish, strengthen, *and* settle *you*. To Him *be* the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 10-11).

James 1:2: "Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be

perfect and complete, not lacking in anything” (vs 2-4).

***Keep on keeping on!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 1:2-4
- 2) Genesis 1:26
- 3) Proverbs 17:3
- 4) 1-Peter 5:8
- 5) Ephesians 6:12
- 6) John 16:33
- 7) Romans 8:7
- 8) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 9) Zechariah 4:6
- 10) Psalm 33:12-15, 18-19, 21-22
- 11) Psalm 34:7-10, 17-22
- 12) Matthew 4:1-11
- 13) 1-Thessalonians 1:2-4, 3
- 14) 1-John 1:4-10
- 15) 1-John 4:4
- 16) Ephesians 2:2
- 17) 1-John 4:4, 6-10
- 18) Romans 8:1
- 19) 1 John 4:16-20
- 20) 1-Peter 2:9-12
- 21) Matthew 5:44-48
- 22) Romans 12:17-21
- 23) 1-Peter 5:5-11
- 24) James 1:2-4

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrew 12
- Matthew 25:40

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