

December 15, 2021

**The Gifts Of Christ: We have maturity through testing.**

***James 1:2-4, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of you faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (NIV)***

When you face trials, not if. Trials will come to every single person. How you face these trials is indicative of what is on the inside. You will either react or you will respond. Do you see the difference here? Reactive is like a ‘knee jerk’ to the situation. Our selfish nature does not like to be pushed into trials. And so, we react with anger or bitterness or crying. We become mad at the circumstance and whatever caused it.

James says that we are to consider it pure joy. That is not what we usually want to do. It is not our first reaction. And yet, the Holy Spirit that lives within us sees this as a chance to respond. We can respond to the trial by seeing it from God’s perspective instead of our own. We can ask the question: Lord, what is it that you want to teach me in the midst of this trial? Is it faith? Is it perseverance? Is it trust? Most likely it is all of the above and each has its purpose; to make us mature and complete.

You can usually tell if someone (including yourself) is walking in the Spirit by the way they either react or respond. Reacting is of the selfish nature while responding is led by the Spirit. I can tell you that living in Houston, Texas for many years, I was tested every day by those who drove on the interstates and toll roads. It was so difficult to not react when someone cut you off or drove right on your bumper or went forty miles an hour in a sixty-five speed limit area. I have to admit, I wanted to react many times. But the Spirit inside would tell me to just respond because I didn’t know what that person might be going through. I could either yell at them or I could pray for them. Can you see that the Lord is doing His refining in the midst of the fire?

**Dear LORD, help us to count it joy when we go through trials. You are in the midst of the fire with us, and You will celebrate with us there just as You did with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Help us to respond to you rather than react to others. In Jesus Name, Amen**