

## **Trials = Joy and Maturity**

### **Ready:**

“Consider it great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.” — James 1:2-4

### **Set**

As a coach or athlete, you have no doubt experienced your share of trials. Whether it be difficulty at home, relationships with others, poor choices by players or yourself, lack of support from administration or heartbreaking losses on the field. Trials hurt and can often derail progress in your life and coaching or playing career. How you respond to trials in your life will greatly impact you and others around you. Understanding the purpose of trials will enable you to properly respond to them.

God's word through James, has something to say about the proper response and purpose of trials. James is writing to early Christians who are experiencing various kinds of trials, just as you do as a coach. He begins by giving them the proper response to trials. Many people respond with anger, bitterness, giving up, complaining, fear, surprise, depression or denial. Paul calls them to respond with joy. This is the proper response to trials. When you look at this on the surface it seems a trivial way to respond to trials, but it is only trivial if you do not understand the purpose of trials.

James says the purpose of trials is to test your faith in order to produce endurance. Endurance here implies being under a heavy load and resolutely staying there, instead of trying to escape. This ability to resolutely stay under a heavy load results in maturity. God uses trials in our life to mature us and conform us to be more like Jesus, so that we will perform at our best in life. When we understand this, we are then able to respond properly with joy in the midst of a trial.

Even if we know the purpose of trials is to mature us in our faith, it is still tough to respond with joy. The great news is - Jesus is not only our example of how to respond to trials, He also gave us the power to properly respond to trials as He has given us the Holy Spirit to dwell in us.

### **Go**

What trial are you currently going through?

How could responding to trials with joy and an attitude of growth help you get through them?

### **Workout**

Romans 8:29

Hebrews 12:2

### **Overtime**

“Lord, my first response to trials is not joy. Remind me that You are using trials for my good; to make me more like Jesus. Strengthen me to respond with joy and grow me in spiritual maturity through them. Thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the example of Jesus. In Your name, amen.”



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