

**Vital Supplement for Spiritual Vitality:
HOW DOES ONE COUNT IT ALL JOY?**

JAMES 1:1-5

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” How does a child of God count it all joy when he or she is in the midst of adversity? Well, before we can richly understand how one is to count it all joy, it is important to understand what “joy”, “patience”, and “wisdom” mean in in the context of James 1.

Joy. In sum, “joy” means “sovereign confidence.” In other words, “joy” is the benefit or result of sincerely trusting in the sovereignty of God. Though the answers may never come why you are experiencing some adversity, you can trust Him because God is the sum-total of His infinite perfections. No matter how difficult the trial becomes, no matter how severe the pain, and no matter how great the loss, you can trust Him because God, who is unequivocally sovereign over His creation, will never do anything less than His infinite perfect best. Therefore, you can trust Him. Thus, because of the nature of God, whereby He can never love you anymore or any less, if you place your trust in Him, anxiety is replaced with peace, emptiness is replaced with meaning, and silence is replaced with His presence. God is sufficient.

Patience. To be sure, abiding trust in God produces “patience.” Patience means more than just “bearing affliction.” Rather, “patience” is a “staying power” that turns “adversities into opportunities.” Once again, because God is infinitely perfect, one’s trust in Him offers a new perspective on those events. If one remains constant to this doctrinal truth as one experiences adversity, then one possesses “enduring patience.”

Wisdom. If one is not able to trust God in the midst of the trial, then the believer should ask God for “wisdom.” The “wisdom” that God gives is not necessarily new information to miraculously liberate one from the particular trial (s). Rather, “wisdom” is God-given “insight” on how to learn from one’s difficulties (cf. Prov. 29:15). It seems that the wisdom God gives is one that offers a Christ-like outlook, living out adversity with the mindset of Christ, seeing and doing things from His perspective. Jesus, who was not exempt from horrific suffering, displayed a genuine reverence for God and His ways (Psalm 111:10; Prov. 9:10), and a settled conviction to do nothing less than the will of God. Obedient even unto death, Jesus glorified the Father (Philippians 2:5-11). Steadfast was Christ! And

because we are intimately united to Christ, identified with Him (Romans 6:5), we can glorify the Father as well (John 18). As the hymn writer proclaims, “And He walks with me, talks with me, and tells me that I am His own.”

Therefore, how does the believer know if he or she is “counting” it all joy when one is in the midst of adversity? Even if one may never know the answer to the question “Why this God?” or “Why me Lord?” or “Why did this have to happen?” or “What reason could there be in this...?” the believer who is in intimate fellowship with God can do the following:

Look to God!

Rely on God!

Place his or her trust in God!

Have confidence in God and His perfect plan, purposes, and ways!

Truly trusting God produces “peace”, an “inner contentment”, an “enduring hope”, “faithfulness,” and freedom to love and be loved in return-For God is here and He is not silent.

In conclusion, always remember that Jesus Christ is sufficient. Jesus Christ is always available. Jesus Christ is always necessary. Always turn to Him. If you do, then you will experience His peace in the midst of the storm and become more mature in Christ (Romans 8).