

A Right Response

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No one who has walked the earth has ever lived a life completely free of trials and troubles. Scripture and common sense both reveal that life is not always easy, especially during this particular time in history. We live in a world full of confusing and frightening trials. How are we to respond?

In facing these issues, it often seems impossible to meet the challenge of [James 1:2](#), **"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials."** Rather than finding joy in our trials, we often resort to a variety of unhealthy, negative responses. For example, we may exclude God from the situation altogether. This was particularly evident immediately following the September 11 terrorist attacks, when scores of people "excused" God's involvement by saying, "There's no way God had anything to do with this at all. I don't believe in a God that would allow such a thing."

The danger in this type of thinking is twofold. **First**, it goes against the sovereignty of God. If certain things happen that God specifically does not allow, then the implication is that He is powerless to prevent them. **Second**, this type of reasoning leaves no room for God's ability to bring joy out of the trial. By removing God from the matter altogether, there would be nothing left but the pain and emptiness of the hardship itself. If we are really supposed to "count it all joy," then there must be a better explanation.

We will never be able to grasp God's reasoning as long as we view the situation from our own human point of view. Our simple minds alone cannot comprehend the subtle nuances of God's purpose for trials. This can only be accomplished with godly wisdom. God's wisdom allows us to see things from His perspective. Within that framework, a harvest of joy can be reaped from the fields of despair.

I am certainly not saying that you should be happy when you are in extreme pain. There is nothing "happy" about suffering. However, true joy—the joy that can only come from our Lord—often works itself into our lives in the midst of our darkest times. If you are currently experiencing a trial that seems more than you can bear, I encourage you to hold on tight and seek the heart of Jesus Christ. In His arms, you will find the strength not only to survive, but to thrive.