

**Erlo Stegen:**

**James 1:1-3 - "... My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials ..."**

**This is not the same James who was one of Christ's disciples; he was Jesus' half-brother. He had probably been the bishop of the church of Jerusalem. He wrote this letter to the twelve scattered tribes.**

**Despite his being the half-brother of our Lord, when he addresses the believers in his epistle he does not refer to the human connection between him and Christ. What was glorious to him was that he could be a servant of Jesus Christ. The most distinguished title for James was to be known as the servant of God and Christ. Here he is showing us that there is nothing more important than to be the servant of Jesus.**

**James wrote this letter because of the degeneracy which was among them. It is sad to see how a person's burning zeal fizzles out. Has there been a time when you were more on fire for Christ than now?**

**Some of the degeneracy James was referring to included: their failure to control the tongue. The belief that one could have faith without works; wars and strife in the church; love of the world.**

**Consider It Pure Joy When You Face Trials, we are told by God's Word.**

**Many churches have accepted the slogan 'Health, wealth and prosperity.' However, the reality is that when you're a Christian the unexpected happens and there are times of severe trial.**

**We should consider it pure joy when they do come. Will it be the greatest joy for us to sacrifice something we truly love, e.g. as Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son whom he loved so dearly?**

**The testing of our faith develops a good character i.e. it develops patience and perseverance. Trials produce perseverance and diligence.**