



EQUIPPING U

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION/APRIL 2013

Testing of Your Faith

James 1:2-13

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

LET HIM ASK IN FAITH

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.



Growing Through Struggles

Although we know from Scripture that God uses trials to both test our faith and produce steadfastness in our lives, how we tend to adore the comfortable life! Yet James invites us, even commands us, to “count it all joy...when you meet trials of various kinds.”

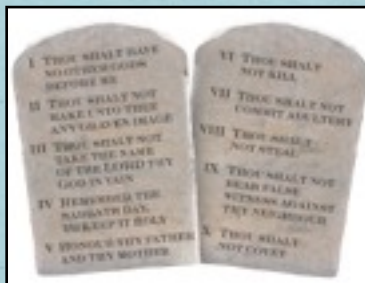
To the unbelieving world trials are the antithesis of joy. To eyes

enlighten by faith, they are the doorway to steadfastness.

If your eyes are on your light and momentary afflictions—your wounds, your hurts, your disappointments—you might be tempted to believe the lie that God has forgotten you and demand that he prove Himself to you in ways He has never promised.



TEACHING TIP. Invite your students to delight in the Creator. Encourage them to pay attention to the changing scenery, reminding them of the beauty and the renewal of spring.



TEACHING TIP. As you are teaching, remember that the purpose of the law is to lead us to Christ. (Galatians 3:24) No one is justified by the law, but by faith in Christ.



TEACHING TIP. During quiet moments pray for those you teach. Consider recording your thoughts and requests in a notebook to remind you of God's faithfulness in their lives.

As I shared last month, making demands of God is nothing new. It began the moment the forbidden fruit was eaten in the garden. Since then each of us have had expectations of what God should do, along with when and how He should accomplish it.

Each of us have had expectation of what God should do

Constant and unyielding demands flow from people who do not recognize God and His ways. However, we are people who know God and if we don't understand His ways, He invites us to ask. God will provide the wisdom we need to remain steadfast under trial.

While writing this I was reminded of a Christmas letter my husband and I sent to family and friends shortly after I was diagnosed with cancer in 2010. Allow me to share some of it with you.

Since I was diagnosed, I have felt a confidence in my heart that my cancer was for God's glory and our faith, and it has proven to be so. God is using this trial to refine us. We have grown in ways we would not have grown had we not walked this road that required we trust God's word more than our feelings.

We have clung to His promises that "He will never leave [us] or forsake [us]" (Hebrews 13:5) and that He "causes all things to work together for good to those

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Marilyn McMichael

ICEA is a volunteer staffed ministry. Each month Equipping U highlights and honors one of our faithful volunteers.

Marilyn boldly and faithfully, through the ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship, shares the gospel so that children may know Jesus Christ.

ICEA is grateful to have Marilyn serve on our teaching faculty. Through her training many have been equipped to share the truth of God and His salvation with children in their communities.

that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Our feelings don't always align with the truth. But throughout this year we have been learning anew that God is faithful to us, even when our circumstances are not what we would have chosen or expected. We have discovered that trials are necessary because we do not walk easily into maturity.

What trial are you facing? Remember God is using it for good to produce steadfastness in you. By faith, choose to count it all joy.

FROM THE EDITOR



"Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within; grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin."

As I reflect on past trials and on God's faithfulness to me, the hymn above wells up in my heart.

We don't naturally walk through trials well, but by God's grace we can.

Serving with U,

Kimberly von Oeyen
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SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for the 2013 Equipping U Church Ministries Training Conference on October 19 at Ward Church in Northville, Michigan. Registration information coming soon!

PERMISSIONS

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